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First name: Grace

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Organization: Cascadia Wildlands

Title: Wildlands Director

Comments: Attached is a letter submitted on behalf of 61 organizations calling for the Forest Service to advance all of the Tribal inclusion components presented in each of the action alternatives in the Draft EIS and urging the agency to revise and further expand the Tribal Inclusion section in the Final EIS. Thank you for your consideration.

Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology (FUSEE)

FireGeneration Collaborative

Cascadia Wildlands

Cultural Fire Management Council

Elderberry Wisdom Farm

Illioo Native Theatre at Very Little Theater

Silvix Resources

Association for Fire Ecology

Grassroots Wildland Firefighters

Climate and Wildfire Institute

Women in Wildfire

Life with Fire Podcast

Hotshot Wellness

Megafire Action

Forest Stewards Guild

Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)

Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center

Bark for Mt. Hood

Coast Range Association

Western Environmental Law Center

Oregon Wild

Sierra Club

Earthjustice

The Wilderness Society

WildEarth Guardians

Bird Alliance of Oregon

Seven Capes Bird Alliance

Spokane Audubon Society

Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center

Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition

Center for Responsible Forestry

Friends of the Breitenbush Cascades

Williams Community Forest Project

GreenSnohomish

Watershed Research & Training Center

Mid Klamath Watershed Council

Umpqua Watersheds

Willamette Riverkeeper

Upper Willamette Stewardship Network

Water League

Regenerate Northern Willamette Valley

Lost Valley Education Center

The Mountaineers

350PDX

350 Seattle

350 Eugene

350 Everett

350Wenatchee.org

350 Spokane

Mason County Climate Justice

Climate Writers

Olympic Climate Action

Wallingford Indivisible

University of Oregon Radical Organizing and Activism Resource Center

Oregon Unitarian Universalist Voices for Justice

CHANGES

Oregon Folklife Network

Earth Neighborhood Productions

Cascadia Fire Ecology Education Project

The Stewardship Project

Northwest Youth Corps

March 17, 2025

Regional Forester Jacqueline Buchanan Pacific Northwest Region

U.S. Forest Service 1220 SW 3rd Avenue Portland, OR 97204

Regional Forester Jennifer Eberlien Pacific Southwest Region

U.S. Forest Service 1323 Club Drive

Vallejo, CA 94592

Submitted online via <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?Project=64745>

Re: Tribal Inclusion in the Northwest Forest Plan

Dear Regional Foresters Buchanan and Eberlien,

The 17 national forests in Oregon, Washington, and California that are included in the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) are integral parts of the ancestral homelands of over 80 federally recognized Tribes and several other Indigenous communities. For many millennia, Indigenous peoples nurtured the land with time-tested stewardship practices that sustained their communities with abundant resources and resilient ecosystems based on a rich diversity of habitats and species. The forced removal and genocide of Indigenous peoples and the criminalization of their stewardship practices had dire social and ecological impacts including devastating physical and mental health issues particularly in Tribal communities, loss of resilience to wildfire events and climate change, a decline of landscape and biological diversity, and numerous other adverse impacts that threaten long-term sustainability across the region.

Thirty years ago when the NWFP was created, the Forest Service failed to meaningfully engage Tribes, and Indigenous Knowledge, values and perspectives were excluded from the final analysis. The agency now seeks to amend the NWFP, and this represents a crucial opportunity to make amends for this foundational flaw in the original NWFP, and make meaningful commitments to respect Tribal sovereignty, honor treaty rights, fulfill trust responsibilities, and facilitate co-stewardship.

The agency's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) contains wide-ranging plan components to advance Tribal inclusion in national forest management. These were derived from the NWFP Federal Advisory Committee's (FAC) consensus recommendations, input gathered from roundtables with Tribes, public scoping letters, and participation of Tribal staff on the Draft EIS writing team. While this effort is unprecedented in a Forest Service NEPA process, and the Draft EIS represents a remarkable improvement compared to the development of the

original NWFP, the current proposed amendment can and should be improved in response to public comments, especially from Tribal entities.

The issues analyzed within the scope of the amendment process (e.g. fire resistance, climate change, forest stewardship, and community sustainability) are all critically important and will require significant changes in management direction. The inclusion and centralization of Tribal leadership and Indigenous Knowledge in national forest management is undoubtedly profound and goes well beyond undoing past wrongs. Implementing

Tribal plan components provides direct solutions to many of the significant issues presented in the DEIS, and coupled with strong public support, it is imperative for the USFS to carry out Tribal inclusion in the Final EIS and Record of Decision.

We, the undersigned, call for the Forest Service to advance all of the Tribal inclusion components presented in each of the action alternatives in the Draft EIS, and urge the agency to revise and further expand the Tribal Inclusion section in the Final EIS. The agency needs to provide a more comprehensive analysis that reflects the breadth and importance of the proposed plan components to Indigenous communities, and more accurately discloses the impacts of the proposed amendment on Tribes. The agency needs to utilize the groundbreaking work of the FAC and other Tribal engagement to produce an improved FEIS and amended NWFP that centers Indigenous Knowledge and collaborates with Tribes in forest management policies, programs, and practices in perpetuity.

Sincerely,

Attachment [Final] Tribal Inclusion - Org Letter 3.17.25.pdf includes 61 names/signors and contact information for organizations.