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Title: Grassroots Organizer

Comments: Please find the attached letter.

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: Northwest Forest Plan Amendment

Dear Regional Foresters Buchanan and Eberlien,

Please accept this comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Northwest Forest Plan Amendment.

The Northwest Forest Plan continues to be instrumental in keeping the Pacific Northwest a special place through the restoration of forests and watersheds damaged by decades of destructive logging and road building, recovery of economically and ecologically valuable salmon runs, protection of wildlife habitat and old-growth forests, and ensuring our national forests are part of a natural climate solution. The landmark plan warrants updates to address Tribal inclusion and incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge, address the dual climate change and biodiversity crises, and increase wildfire resilience.

The Forest Service should retain all of the Tribal inclusion plan components that are analyzed in the DEIS and improve its analysis of related impacts. I support elements of the amendment that include a beneficial fire approach and support of Indigenous cultural burning and co-stewardship agreements.

I am concerned that the Forest Service's proposed amendments weaken protections from logging in our region's forests. Without safeguards, these changes would double or even triple logging levels across our public forests increasing wildfire risk, impairing water quality, and inhibiting climate resilience. Managing forests for biodiversity and connected wildlife habitat across the region should be a core principle of the forest plan amendment.

Fire resistance and resilience can be bolstered by conserving and restoring mature and old-growth forests. Fuels and fire management should focus on the home ignition zone and on non-commercial treatments and beneficial fire use, not commercial logging. Indigenous cultural burning and managed wildland fire should be prioritized. Commercial logging for fuel reduction can negatively impact wildlife habitat, remove large fire-resistant trees, introduce invasive species, and create hazardous fire conditions. Standards must ensure that fuel reduction is both needed and effective before logging is allowed.

The amendment should recognize the wide variety of social and economic benefits national forests provide for local communities and the region as a whole - not just timber, but also clean water, climate stability, quality of life, and outdoor recreation.

The Forest Service should do the following:

- \* Adopt all Tribal inclusion components analyzed in the DEIS in any final decision. Go beyond Tribal consultation to involve Tribes and Indigenous communities in forest management decisions. The Forest Service must support co-stewardship agreements, cultural burning practices, first food harvesting, and youth education while ensuring equitable access to planning processes. Pairing these components with weakened environmental protections is a false choice manufactured by the agency.
- \* Strengthen protections for mature and old-growth forests to ensure habitat, water quality, and carbon storage persist, and recruit more forests with old-growth characteristics to restore a functioning ecosystem. Choose an alternative that allows natural processes to flourish, ensure connectivity for wildlife, and support the recovery of imperiled species.
- \* Authorize prescribed fire, Indigenous cultural burning, and managed wildfires for ecological benefits across landscapes. Shift wildfire strategies to prioritize community safety and preparedness measures over logging.
- \* Address environmental justice by analyzing impacts on air, water, and communities and ensuring fair, sustainable working conditions.
- \* We need a strong forest plan that ensures robust Tribal inclusion, advances ecologically-sound forest management for climate and wildfire resilience, and supports the needs of current and future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Attachment [Final] Cascadia Wildlands Comment Letter on NWFP - Individual Letter Petition 3.17.25.pdf includes 416 names/signors and contact information.