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First name: Dorothy

Last name: Mason

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dorothy Mason

PO Box 446

Baker City OR 97814

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Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision Team

72510 Coyote Road

Pendleton, OR 97801

Dear Blue Mountain Forest Supervisors and Revision Team;

I am Dorothy Mason, Baker City resident for 36 years, professional natural resource specialist and manager for BLM for 38 years, Baker School District Outdoor School Director for 10 years, President of the Board of Directors for the Powder Basin Watershed Council for 12 years, Community Volunteer, Small woodland owner and outdoor enthusiast/conservationist for life.

My goal is to protect, manage and enjoy these National Forests and public lands consistent with a long-term, science based, healthy ecosystem approach.

First, I request the 3 Forests 'Pause' this planning process now to allow review of the 2026 fire impacts, acreage, potential and changes to the proposed action needed to allow for treatments, impacts and protection. In light of the extent of this year's fires, there must be an analysis of what has changed and no longer needing thinning or other treatment.

I offer the following comments, requests for edits and reconsiderations regarding the Blue Mountain Forest Plan DEIS. The Plan offers analysis of 3 alternatives with variations on specific management actions. I do not concur with any of the Alternative management actions as displayed in the DEIS. I do support compiling a new Alternative that consists of components from the Alternatives provided, to build a better, more responsive revised proposed action.

Landscape Corridors - Pages 27 - 28 of 356 discuss the need to manage corridors, rather than provide protection (as required in Alt 1). The analysis seems to assume that there are alternatives to wildlife during management in surrounding areas. I believe the current impacts to all remaining habitats are significant enough in some areas to prohibit movement or long-term survival for some species, if the remaining old growth, and 'pristine habitats' are modified or managed to change their current condition. Therefore, I propose using Guidelines/Requirements for protecting connections between all late and old structure forest stands when planning vegetation management activities whenever possible consistent with the Alternative 1 requirements. Please be very conservative in conducting management actions within these corridors of old growth and 'pristine corridors '. They are irreplaceable within our lifetime and longer.

Old Growth trees greater than 21 inches in diameter are protected within Alternative 1 by the standards specified in the EASTSIDE SCREENS. The other Alternatives allow cutting under different conditions. No overall protection is required in Alternative 2 to allow more 'flexibility for management'. Alternative 3, tweaks the EASTSIDE SCREEN requirements. I concur with emergency protection of human life, but not, for road construction, projects, or other 'inconveniences' to change or adjust the project to protect old growth trees. The need for the EASTSIDE SCREENS was the result of too much flexibility of management. I request retention of the EASTSIDE SCREENS in the preferred the Alternative.

Riparian and Aquatic area management - Pages 43-45 of 356 discuss water resource outcomes of the alternatives. Alternative 1 would continue the use and guidance of PACFISH/INFISH protection and maintain/improve watershed conditions, accelerated by restoration treatments within riparian habitat areas while adhering to State Water Quality standards and continued application of watershed best management practices. Alternative 2 and 3 would "allow for a great variety of active management treatments throughout the riparian management areas with Alternative 2 having fewer resource constraints and providing additional flexibility and options to encourage treatments throughout the riparian management areas". I have worked with the PACFISH/INFISH implementation throughout the Oregon, Washington and Idaho area since its beginnings in the 1990's and observed the improved conditions through the implementation of these standards. I know there is significant supporting data on record within the Region 6 office of the Forest Service and at the districts, as to the success of these findings. Therefore, I am requesting that for this resource component that you stay with the Alternative 1 requirements from PACFISH/INFISH. No need to re-invent the wheel.

Grazing - Page 175 of 356 says, Livestock grazing is a historical use that is still permitted today to help sustain local economies and manage fine fuels and vegetation on the landscape. Grazing on public land is often an integral component of the local community, culture and economy. I accept this statement. Alternatives 1 and 3 propose continuing grazing at the current level. Alternative 2 however, adds 5000 acres of additional targeted grazing to 'treat' fine fuels and noxious weeds. I do not concur with providing 'target numbers' for grazing treatments that are currently unknown. I believe the USFS district ranger already has the authority on selected cases to authorize target treatments when needed, as well as to rest areas from grazing when needed. Therefore, I would remove targets for additional grazing to prevent unnecessary overuse of resources. Targets are not necessary. I further request that a standard operating procedure be added to the final Proposed action to require a minimum of 2 years of rest from grazing after fire or other treatment. This action has been shown throughout burned areas and treatment areas in the west to assist in re-establishment of desired species.

Wilderness and Roadless areas - Please retain and protect all existing Wilderness areas regardless of what short term 'direction' is provided. Designated Wilderness must be protected in perpetuity. Designated Roadless areas have been protected from development and resource extraction in accordance with laws and regulations for some time. This protection should continue until Congress evaluates whether or not to designate. The Forest Plan is not the place to make the decision to remove protection of these lands. Therefore, I recommend continued protection for the Roadless Areas and of course the Wilderness Areas. Pg 58 of 356 says, "Alternatives 1 and 3, more than 720,000 acres would retain protections similar to those provided by the Roadless Rule.

In summary, I request the changes I have described to the proposed Alternative to reflect a decision that supports the mission of the US Forest Service, and pertinent laws and regulations. These lands are critical to the future of landscape ecology of this continent.

Respectfully submitted,
Dorothy Mason
Concerned citizen