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First name: Ward

Last name: Barker

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Forest Management Direction for Large Diameter Trees in Eastern Oregon

Dear USFS Region 6 Planning,

This message is a public comment on the Environmental Assessment to amend the Wildlife Standard of the Eastside Screens. Eastern Oregon's National Forests have become overstocked, fire-prone and insect infested. Active forest management is needed across all eastside forests to restore forest health. There is no science supporting the current approach (No Action alternative).

A growing body of science supports the removal of some trees greater than 21 inches in forest restoration projects. In overstocked forests, for example, removing some large fir trees can help pine trees grow larger and make them more resilient to fire. For this reason, I support the Adaptive Management Alternative to allow land managers to use the best available science to implement the most effective forest health treatments on a given landscape. This is a concept similar to thinning fruit, where some fruit is removed to allow the remaining fruit to grow larger; in this case, it allows mature trees to be harvested so that younger trees can compete for resources, but also increases the space between the trees to make it more difficult for wildfires to grow out of control, as happens in unmanaged forests (e.g., in California).

The Adaptive Management Alternative will increase opportunities for proactive forest management, timber harvests and safe public access. It will also ensure some stability for the region's forest infrastructure, and increase capacity for forest management in future years.

Sincerely,

Ward Barker