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Comments: This public land is the last stronghold for mature and old growth forests.

In order to make good on its original intent, the Northwest Forest Plan must be improved in these ways:

The category Matrix lands is outdated. Mature and old growth trees exist beyond the Late Successional Reserves.

Public forests provide just a relatively small amount of timber to the mills.

?Matrix designation occurs on many FS properties, mostly adjacent to routinely clearcut, private properties.

Exempting them from LSR protections leaves those lands vulnerable to fragmentation and the continuity needs of wildlife. The cumulative effects of such fragmentation increasingly harms wildlife. The little acreage left for wildlife is mostly on public lands where it is in the interest of the public to provide wildlife protection.

Claims that wildlife such as songbirds need more early seral habitat are not credible. There is already plenty of early seral habitat on clearcut private property. Public land is the only refuge left for wildlife that depends on natural forests.

The Matrix category can and must be eliminated, and can be done without harming the local economy.

In the decades since the Plan was first implemented, conditions in the forest have changed in many ways:

- o Larger and more frequent wildfires have become the new normal, making protection of mature and old growth trees all the more urgent.

- o Climate change has become significant and is getting worse. Mature and old growth trees play a major role in sequestering atmospheric carbon.

- o The Tribes' needs have long been ignored and can begin to be met by retaining and improving the natural forest.

- o Covid has generated a great increase in visits to the great outdoors. No one wants to visit or hike in "managed" forests.

The timber industry has always coveted public trees. Now is not the time to go backwards to the old days that changed our natural forests for the worse.