

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/19/2024 11:15:15 PM

First name: Bruce

Last name: Hlodnicki

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Since its establishment in 1994, the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP) has been a success story: Slowed the decline of several endangered species, Protected large swaths of old-growth forests, and Improved watershed conditions.

However, the changes in climate and temperature and precipitation patterns throughout the Pacific Northwest are driving new threats to forest health. They are magnifying the damage from insects, disease, and extreme wildfires. These rapid and profound changes require increased scientific understanding and more complete information gathered from the NFPs monitoring protocols. They highlight the need for updates to the plan to maintain healthy, resilient forests.

Dealing with these challenges is required to preserve the health of these forests into the future. The agency should use targeted, science-based, and climate knowledgeable approach to amending the NFP.

Specifically, the amendment should focus on:

Defining goals for sustaining ecological integrity of these national forests, as well as strategies for their achievement that are informed by an understanding of the ongoing and anticipated effects of climate change.

Improving landscape resilience to wildfire by restoring forest health where it is impaired and returning ecosystem-appropriate fire to the landscape.

Conserving existing old-growth forests and recruiting future generations of old-growth forests.

Incorporating Indigenous knowledge to help inform the agency's management goals and strategies to further the agency's general trust responsibilities.

Supporting the sustainability of communities located near these national forests by providing an array of sustainable recreational opportunities and forest products.

Thank you for undertaking this timely, targeted, and science-based update to the Northwest Forest Plan.