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Comments: I am writing to comment on the revision of the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP). I have lived in Oregon nearly my whole life, with the exception of two years that I served in the Peace Corps in Namibia. Namibia is far better at conservancy than us. In Oregon, I have watched the green lands of my childhood burn. Wildfire has gone from a rare occurrence to a yearly occasion. I moved away from Ashland Oregon, my former home, because I was sickened by the yearly month of smoke.

Simply put, our Oregon forests are in a dire condition, and every year it grows worse. For a long time, we have let timber companies log large swaths of Oregon forests. These companies have left the forests in a sad state. Replanted trees left by themselves wither and die, making new kindling for wildfire. Clear cut areas fill with brush and grass, which burn quickly in wildfire. As the climate gets warmer wildfires have become more and more common and our weakened forests burn away.

We need to do more to protect our current old growth forests, ensuring no more forest land is given over to timber. We also need to increase the amount of land that we protect, helping our weakened forest lands develop into healthier old growth forests. These steps will help protect all of our forests from wildfire. It will also protect biodiversity.

For too long we have ceded forest health to timber company profits. In this modern age, few Oregonians benefit from the timber industry, but all Oregonians benefit from keeping our forests intact and healthy. We need to move to a system with healthier forests for a better Oregon.

Thank you for reading our comments.

Dylan Hinson