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First name: George and Frances

Last name: Alderson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Please consider this message as our comment for scoping for an amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan. We have visited many of the 17 national forests subject to the NWFP. I (George) first visited the Mount Hood National Forest around 1950 as a guest of friends who had a cabin near the village of Rhododendron. The Zigzag River was a few hundred feet from their cabin, and you can bet we did some fishing. My duties in the military took me to the East Coast, where we have nothing comparable.

We thank the Forest Service for undertaking this revision. Much has changed since the original NWFP was adopted 30 years ago. The problems of climate change have grown, and now wildfire is a more common event. It has also become more clear how important and valuable old growth and mature forest ecosystems are for residents of the Pacific Northwest, for people who visit the forests from afar, and for the wildlife that depend on old growth forest habitats. We have these suggestions for the revision:

1. We would like to see the NWFP amendment strengthen protection for mature and old-growth forest ecosystems, including those that were omitted from the protection of the 1994 plan. These are essential for ESA-listed species, including the Marbled Murrelet and Northern Spotted Owl. We would like to see a complete list of the ESA-listed birds and mammals that depend on these national forests.

2. We want the NWFP amendment to address the growing problem of wildfires, as influenced by the changing climate. New strategies are needed to make the forests more resistant to fire and to make them more resilient after fires. Please invite indigenous tribes to share their knowledge of fire in the forests. We hope cultural burning practices can help against wildfire.

3. The NWFP amendment should set standards for off-road vehicles (ORV) and set up a process for reviewing existing ORV routes for compliance with those standards. ORV routes should be closed and rehabbed if they don't meet reasonable standards to protect the aquatic habitats, riparian habitats, and upland wildlife habitats. We have seen ORV routes that ruined the habitat and made an unsightly scar in the forest. The Forest Service should consider banning ORVs from traveling within Inventoried Roadless Areas. It should be obvious to keep them out of rivers and streams, as they stir up sediment that damages fish spawning habitat.

4. The NWFP amendment would be a good medium for adopting a principle of co-management, in which the indigenous nations help the Forest Service with protection of the landscape and its ecosystems. It was worked well at Bears Ears National Monument in Utah.

Thanks again to the Forest Service for taking this constructive step forward.