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First name: Michael

Last name: Honkomp

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I appreciate the opportunity to provide my comments to the US Forest Service as it seeks to amend the Northwest Forest Plan ("NFP").

I am a resident of Texas but I have been coming to Oregon for 30 plus years. I come two or three times a year for the primary purpose of outdoor recreation. I hike your forests. I paddle your rivers. I work conservation projects that protect the unique resources you have here. Oregon provides me with outdoor opportunities that are not easily found in my home state. I care deeply about this place.

When I encounter a mature or old-growth tree while hiking, I stop and look up the tree and it never fails to amaze me. Mature and old-growth forests are the foundation of what makes the northwest such a special place. Perhaps some take northwest forests for granted. They see the timber industry as economically vital to the region. And while that is true, forests can be managed responsibly so that their value can be protected; their value as an economic stimulant not only in terms of the production of timber, but also in terms of their ability to provide unparalleled recreation. The northwest recreation and tourism industry has grown substantially since the creation of the 1994 NFP.

Simply said, the amendment to the NFP gives the northwest Forest Service a generational opportunity to protect mature and old-growth forests and the economic and non-economic value they provide:

1. Climate change mitigation thru carbon capture and long-term sequestration; US and State governments and commercial enterprises are spending vast sums to create Carbon Capture and Storage (CSS) systems none of which come close to the CSS capacity of mature and old-growth forests, if we leave them alone.
2. Wildfire resilience; legitimate science provides evidence that mature and old-growth trees are far more resilient to wildfire. The focus of the amended NFP should be on proper wildfire management rather than elimination of fire-resilient trees. That management includes prescribed burning and thinning of tree plantations planted to recover from past clearcutting. The provision of resources to properly manage for wildfire will also create jobs, an additional economic stimulant.
3. Water filtration, capture and storage / flood mitigation; mature and old-growth forests are the champions for clean water, a resource that is now of grave concern.
4. Recreation; northwest forests provide unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities and the associated economic stimulation.
5. Responsible timber production without the destruction of mature and old-growth trees.

Finally, please consider that the amended NFP can be a model for the US Forest Service nationwide. The Forest Service in the northwest would become the champion for responsible forest management and allow the US Forest Service to meet its fiduciary responsibility to the citizens of the US by protecting an asset that is owned by the People.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Forest Service's proposed amendment to the NFP.