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Comments: I believe the Forest Service needs to maintain a balanced approach to forest management. Within that balance needs to be a recognition of climate change. In my home State of Oregon, we have large areas of unhealthy forest, extreme fire hazards, and roads that do not meet the standards prescribed. Relatively small areas where timber cutting is actually taking place the young trees are being removed while the overmature decadent ones are left for the future. I understand what the objective is, but managing just the understory that does not pay enough to maintain the forest roads being used does not seem right to me.

Up through the late 1980s the Forest Service was very timber production oriented. Even as huge areas were being set aside the timber production continued on at an unsustainable rate. Since the early 1990s the Forest Service has backed off of timber production so much that the forests are seeing large areas of insect and disease kill and the fire danger has continued to increase.

Maybe my biggest concern with the Forest Service is their leadership. You have done so little for so long now I wonder if there is even the inclination to do anything to actually manage the forest.

A couple of years ago I was at the Hells Canyon overlook. Driving up the Forest Service Roads to get there, I saw dozens (maybe hundreds) of dead trees leaning out over the well-advertised scenic byway. Brush was growing out over the paved roads blocking the sight distance around at some road corners providing ingress to the overlook. The signs provided near the overlook were in need of repair as well as the on-sight facilities. The only thing that made this unique was the Forest Service Crew at the overlook standing around doing nothing! I asked one employee what they were doing and was told that personnel from the Portland office had arrived at the district office, and they were just avoiding them. That tells me as much about Forest Service management as it does about its employees.

Planning has been going on now for decades with little to show for the effort. The Forest Service has enough intelligent and well-educated people to know what should be done and how to accomplish it. I do not know if you are asking for my permission or looking for an excuse to not do what needs to be done.

I would just like to see the National Forest managed well with an eye to forest health and protection of the roads and other facilities.

Thanks for giving me an opportunity to share a few thoughts:

John Erickson