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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Intro

Dear Regional Foresters Jacqueline Buchanan and Jennifer Eberlien,

As a resident of Hood River, OR I am spoiled by having close access to the wonderful PNW Temperate Rainforests in both Washington and Oregon. I have spent many days working in, recreating and exploring this land, which is mostly governed by the NFS. This place is home to me, it is my sense of place and where I want to live my entire life. Please accept this comment as part of the scoping period for the proposed Northwest Forest Plan amendment.

Sustainability of Mature and Old-Growth Ecosystems

The Northwest Forest Plan was instrumental in protecting much of the remaining old-growth forests in our region, ensuring that these places can continue to function as habitat for endangered species and other plants and animals associated with these forests. But not all of the remaining old-growth was protected. Amendments to the plan must protect the remaining old-growth forests and trees outside of reserves and work to grow, expand, and connect these vital ecosystems. Please consider mandating that these places are not on the market for timber production. While thinning and prescribed burns may help to protect these places for future generations, the largest trees in these areas should not be allowed to be harvested. These places have stood for hundreds and in some places thousands of years. Consider our place in time when proposing actions to these fragile ecosystems.

Fire "Resistance and Resilience"

Since time immemorial, fire has had a critical role across the northwest and will continue to shape these landscapes and ecosystems into the future. Amendments to the plan need to recognize the important role of fire and work to shift policy away from full suppression of all fires. Amendments should prioritize protecting communities, while also recognizing that during extreme weather events, the effectiveness of "fuels treatments" is dramatically reduced.

Amendments should bolster efforts to reintroduce beneficial fire to dry forest ecosystems while prohibiting "fuels treatments" that aren't grounded in the current and growing understanding of fire and its role in the variety of forest types across the Northwest Forest Plan area.

Fire management should be at the forefront of the updated NWFP as it is the biggest threat to both timber harvest and conservation of the area. Clear cut logging should be banned as it creates even aged stands of trees that burn hotter and have little resistance to forest fires. The forest's best defense against fire is Old Growth trees, which should not be cut in any "fuels reduction" actions. Beneficial prescribed burns should be mandated throughout Region 6 in order to reduce fuels for unpredictable large scale forest fires. Fire is a natural part of this place and should be used as one of our greatest tools, not fought against. This fight has resulted in the forests overloaded with fuel we see today. In addition I would like to see that harvesting of Old Growth, even after a wildfire, should be banned across Region 6.

Incorporate Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK)

The Northwest Forest Plan does not include the traditional ecological knowledge held within the varied and diverse tribes that are indigenous to the region - something the original authors of the plan openly regret. The ancestors of these tribes shaped and stewarded the landscapes and ecosystems now managed by the Forest Service and the Northwest Forest Plan. Incorporating Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and goals into the proposed amendment is essential - especially (but not limited to) the beneficial use of fire.

Climate Change

Climate change caused by a reliance on fossil fuels is projected to bring about a wide range of impacts to northwest forests and our understanding of the natural processes which shape these ecosystems. Amendments must recognize the incredible carbon capture and storage potential of northwest forests - especially forests of the western cascade and coastal ranges of Washington and Oregon.

Communities

There are countless communities scattered across our region whose identities, cultures, and economies are

linked to the forests managed under the Northwest Forest Plan. Amendments to the plan must recognize the social and economic changes that have occurred in the 30 years since the plan's creation and strive to build a workforce based on restoration and reciprocity.

The communities surrounding Region 6's National Forests are economically diverse and should be treated as such. While the Forest Service land is a working forest for timber harvest, it should also be managed in a way that benefits the recreational economy of the surrounding rural communities. There have been many recent studies showing that recreation in our public lands creates many more jobs and brings in more to rural economies than timber harvest does alone. Clear cutting our forests destroys the regions recreational benefits and stunts the growth of these businesses. In order to provide our communities with well-rounded options for economic growth, please consider banning all forms of clear-cut logging, or variable retention harvest, from all areas of Region 6.

This place is my home and home to many others throughout the Pacific Northwest. Please consider the voices of many instead of the wealth to be gained by the few when considering updates to the NWFP. Thank you for your time.