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Comments: Thank you for accepting this comment regarding the Forest Service's proposed amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan. The Forest Service should take advantage of this opportunity to improve the management of our federal lands to support our communities, wildlife, environment and economy.

I have seen first-hand how the management of the National Forest destroys rural communities. Skamania County is heavy comprised of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest which leaves our tax base very small. Due to the decrease in timber harvest our schools have suffered immensely by the loss of timber dollars brought back to the county through timber harvest. SRS funds closed the gap some, but they are not a guaranteed source of funds to plan with. Increased harvest can help provide money to schools in our community to assist with the education of our children and help maintain our schools.

The USFS should use this opportunity to increase the management on our National Forest and maximize employment opportunities through timber harvest and associated work. We cannot be Portland's playground. It has been shown that recreation related employment, although welcomed does not produce the wages that employment in the timber industry does. Recreation, good wildlife habitat, clean water, and clean air can all co-exist with timber management and can even thrive. Roads are better maintained for access; managed forests sequester more carbon, reduce the risk of wildfire/wildfire severity, and be used to enhance wildlife habitat. Wildfires release more carbon and destroy more old growth than logging at the current harvest levels will ever do. Harvest levels and further restrictions on harvesting should not take place. A majority of the lands are already off limits to timber harvest due to the land use allocations and only about 16% are available for routine timber harvest (Matrix)

The Forest Service should promote the development of forests of all age classes, especially younger forests that sequester carbon at high rates. Through responsible timber harvest, carbon can also be stored in long-lived wood products that are made right here in the region.

Finally, the Northwest Forest Plan promised to include the "human and economic dimensions in management." Yet the plan has failed to deliver adequate timber supplies that many rural communities depend on for jobs, economic opportunity and revenues to support public services.

The Forest Service should honor the promise of the Northwest Forest Plan by providing reliable and predictable timber supply to support our region's forest sector, which also helps federal agencies achieve their conservation goals through wildfire mitigation, wildlife habitat enhancement and other benefits.