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Comments: While the following is verbiage from Portland Audubon I wholeheartedly agree. I spent a good deal of time in our forest looking at birds, which I have been doing for over 40 years. Clear cutting is one of the practices that I detest. It fractures the forest into pieces that ruins habitat for birds and other animals that need tracts of more intact forest. The use of herbicides is horrendous and the results of downstream pollution is well known. I can't drink tap water at a friend's home in Rockaway because the groundwater is too polluted.

Migrating shorebirds used to use the coastal estuaries extensively during migration. A grad student I used to work with did her master's thesis looking at Bay Ocean, Newport and Bandon marshes. My husband used to bird Bayocean in the 1970s when there used to be 10s of thousands of shorebirds. No more. My friend's study showed there was very little food available at either of the two northerly locations. I suspect logging has caused both siltation and all the chemicals that have washed downstream have played apart.

As for breeding habitat once a forest has been logged it will never return to the same rich environment it once was. Some species benefit that prefer second growth but those that need that mosaic of growth, ground cover, and larger tracts are screwed. We cannot continue to harvest like we have.

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Any Northwest Forest Plan amendment must prioritize preserving biodiversity and habitat connectivity. This includes strengthening protections for Northern Spotted Owl, Marbled Murrelet, and the many other at-risk fish and wildlife species impacted by habitat fragmentation and loss. Preserving biodiversity in the face of climate change also means ensuring habitat resilience from the impacts of wildfire, drought, disease, and insects.

Through Executive Order 14072, President Biden gave the Forest Service clear guidance to conserve and restore mature and old-growth forests as a natural climate solution. The Northwest Forest Plan covers 24.5 million acres of federally managed lands in western Oregon and Washington, and northwestern California. Any amendment to the Plan must recognize and protect the ability of these forests to sequester and store vast amounts of carbon.

The plan amendment should protect and replenish all mature and old-growth trees and forests. Although the Plan protected many older forests, it did not protect them all. The Plan left a million acres of mature and old-growth forest open for logging.

In considering amendments to address sustainable communities, the Forest Service must recognize the multitude of social and economic benefits that forests provide to local communities - including clean water and air, climate resilience, and recreation.

The size and severity of wildfires has increased in recent years, requiring the Forest Service to reassess current management strategies. In doing so - and as part of broader and better consultation with Tribes - the Forest Service should consider incorporating Indigenous cultural burning practices.

Thank you for speaking up for Oregon's old-growth forests and endangered wildlife!