

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/26/2024 9:40:19 PM

First name: Dana

Last name: Manners

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Northwest Forest Plan, is a vital safeguard for mature and old-growth forests, Northern Spotted Owls, Marbled Murrelets, and other imperiled fish and wildlife on federal lands throughout the Pacific Northwest. Despite climate change and wildfire concerns, the current Plan amendment overlooks crucial ecosystem services like carbon sequestration, clean water, and air quality. Rushing through the amendment may weaken the plan's conservation goals. Any changes must prioritize biodiversity and habitat connectivity, strengthening protections for imperiled species. President Biden's Executive Order emphasizes conserving mature forests as a natural climate solution, urging recognition of their carbon sequestration capabilities. Amendments should ensure protection for all mature and old-growth trees, addressing the previous oversight that left a million acres open for logging. Additionally, the Forest Service must acknowledge the social and economic benefits forests provide to local communities, emphasizing clean water, climate resilience, and recreation. Given the escalating wildfires, management strategies need reassessment, with consideration for Indigenous cultural burning practices through inclusive consultation with Tribes. Your support is crucial in ensuring the Northwest Forest Plan continues to be a model for effective, science-based ecosystem management in the face of evolving challenges.