

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/26/2024 10:33:19 PM

First name: Dianne

Last name: Ensign

Organization:

Title:

Comments: RE: Comments on the Revision of the Northwest Forest Plan

To: Jacqueline Buchanan, US Forest Service, Regional Forester for the Pacific Northwest Region

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the revision of the Northwest Forest Plan, NWFP, which was initiated some 30 years ago in response to the threats faced by many endangered species. I am a lifelong environmentalist and Oregon native who cares deeply about protecting our remaining old growth forests and the many essential and irreplaceable benefits they provide. I'm a senior citizen currently living in my own home. The extreme weather events that Portland and Oregon are experiencing have made my life here much more difficult: more frequent and more extreme heat waves, frequent high winds, frequent heavy rains, smoke and stress from stronger and more frequent wildfires, more ice storms and extreme winter weather. All have made my remaining in my home more problematic as I age. I am also deeply concerned about the effects on other species as their habitats continue to shrink. The crisis of climate chaos we are facing requires the USFS to act in ways that will help mitigate climate chaos and thus improve biodiversity, water resources and wildfire resilience.

I ask that the USFS practice climate smart forestry throughout the Pacific Northwest region, which we define as forestry that optimizes carbon sequestration, storage and resiliency, protects all mature and old growth trees, and maintains a diversity of species, ages, and structures. We know that by far the most important natural climate solution is to simply grow trees longer. Our science now tells us that our older northwest forests hold more carbon on a per acre basis than any other forests in the world. Unfortunately, due to unsustainable levels of logging prior to the NWFP very little old growth is left.

The USFS needs to create the conditions to enable mature forests to become old growth forests over time. We can greatly increase the amount of carbon stored on the landscape by simply letting trees grow longer so that rather than only 10% of Oregon's forest in old growth we will have the extent of old growth prior to major commercial logging - 75% or greater.

I want to comment on another major threat that has changed significantly over the past 30 years: wildfires. We will not be able to address the problem through commercial logging. Wildfires are a natural part of our ecology here in the northwest. As a result of climate chaos our forests are drier in the summers, we have reduced snow-packs, longer fire seasons and more human-caused fires. Different management approaches are needed on the drier east side forests, e.g. non-commercial thinning, leaving the largest trees, more prescribed burns, than on west side forests, which mostly need to be left alone.

I urge the USFS to dedicate a much greater extent of our forests as carbon reserves. In that way we will be doing our part to help mitigate the climate crisis while also achieving other important goals including promoting biodiversity, ensuring safe drinking water, and providing expansive recreation opportunities.

Sincerely,

Dianne Ensign  
11600 SW Lancaster Rd  
Portland, OR 97219