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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Regional Foresters Jacqueline Buchanan and Jennifer Eberlien,

We are submitting our comments as part of the scoping period for the proposed Northwest Forest Plan amendment.

We have owned and managed our 79-acre forested property in east Multnomah County, Oregon, since 1984. Our management goal is to steward this forest on its way to becoming a mature, multi-species, multi-storied forest--providing enhanced wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and carbon sequestration. We have enrolled the forest in a carbon storage contract with Forest Carbon Works, in which we have agreed to forego harvesting for 125 years in exchange for selling carbon credits on the voluntary market. We believe strongly in the highest value of our forest being a natural climate solution to the climate crisis the earth is facing.

With regard to the five topic areas of the NOI, here are our comments:

1. Sustainability of Mature and Old-Growth Ecosystems: Since not all of the remaining old-growth was protected by the NW Forest Plan, it is imperative that 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. These mature and old-growth forests are the immune system of the planet. They have a right independently of human interests to mature and live out their life spans.

2. Fire Resistance and Resilience: 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.

3. Incorporate Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK): The ancestors of indigenous 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. It is important that the Northwest tribes become more integrally involved in National Forest management.

4. Climate Change: The earth is at the 11th hour of time remaining to begin applying the breaks to climate change before various tipping points are crossed that can lead to a runaway "hothouse earth." The revisions to the Northwest Forest Plan should address both the help our forests are already needing to adapt to climate change as species begin their migration to more northern latitudes and higher altitudes. The important role of these forests as natural climate solutions in their ability to sequester carbon must be acknowledged and emphasized by the plan. The mature and old growth forests of the Pacific Northwest are among the largest carbon sinks globally, with the potential to store more carbon than the Amazon rainforest.

5. Communities: Amendments to the plan must recognize the social and economic changes--especially to communities built around resource extraction of timber--that have occurred in the 30 years since the plan's creation and strive to build a workforce based on restoration and reciprocity.

Since we cannot continue to harvest timber at its historic levels, there needs to be a sizable public investment in retraining the workforce of these communities to address reforestation, afforestation, wildlife habitat

enhancement, and stream protection.

Sincerely,  
John & Julie Christensen  
Pilgrims' Pause