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First name: Regan

Last name: Fisher

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for taking the time to re-evaluate the Northwest Forest Plan.

In the 30 years since the current plan was implemented, our northwest forests have enjoyed significant benefits. The plan slowed habitat loss, forests are regrowing faster than they are being lost, the impacts of roads on habitat loss are being addressed, water quality in our rivers and streams and salmon habitat have improved, and public forests have switched from being a source of carbon pollution via logging to becoming a carbon sink because large trees are being allowed to grow.

However, northwest forests are still at risk. Not all remaining mature and old-growth forests are protected from logging under the Northwest Forest Plan. Road building in these forests is still being allowed. These have a significant impact on habitat loss, watershed pollution, and fire risk. And expectations for timber production in these forests are still too high.

Old-growth and mature forests safeguard wildlife; trees create vital habitat endangered and threatened species. These large trees filter water and protect our watersheds, providing clean drinking water for communities, and keep streams and rivers running cool, which is essential for fish habitat. Large and mature trees are also more resistant to fire. Now that it has become clear that climate change has made larger, more devastating wildfires a part of our current lives and future, it is essential to do what we can to foster forests that are resilient to withstanding the effects of these fires-the science is clear that large trees are more fire-resistant due to their thicker bark, more robust root systems, and higher canopies. Finally, large trees sequester and store vast amounts of carbon, making them a vital tool in our fight against climate change.

I would like you to encourage to move forward with the plans to update the Northwest Forest Plan, but to also implement stronger protections for old-growth and mature trees. I request stronger measures to protect all remaining mature and old-growth forests. Focus on ecological restoration of dense young forests, crumbling and unused roads, and degraded streams. Please also manage weeds and non-native plants so that we are encouraging native species to thrive. This is essential for the health of the forests themselves, and also in creating habitat for the native wildlife (providing food and shelter). Implement Native and Indigenous strategies for fire management. For communities concerned about the financial impact of reduced logging, create economic opportunities for local residents via forest and watershed restoration. Enhance riparian protections, and protect and enhance early seral forests by prohibiting salvage logging. Note also that because of competition from barred owls, northern spotted owls need even more habitat protected to ensure their survival.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my input.