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First name: Steve

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: January 12, 2024

RE: Comments of Swanson Group on Amending the Northwest Forest Plan

My name is Steve Swanson and I am the President of Swanson Group, Inc. ("Swanson"). Swanson is an Oregon, family forest product's company. Founded in 1951, we operate 3 state of the art manufacturing facilities in Western Oregon. Swanson and the jobs of our 800+ employees are highly dependent on logs produced from National Forests in Western Oregon. While we rely on small and medium sized second growth logs to run our manufacturing facilities and supply renewable long lasting wood products for the American consumer we also rely on our national forests to provide clean water, clean air and recreational opportunities. I am writing today to submit comments on amending the Northwest Forest Plan.

The Northwest Forest Plan has failed our communities, our forests and the wildlife it was intended to protect. The plan was premised on the idea of setting aside large swathes of land to help recover old-growth dependent species. The reserve network of late successional and riparian reserves, together with the wholly unmanaged adaptive management areas comprise over 70% of the total federal acres. In addition, 1/3 of the LSR acres are comprised of old growth stands which have gone completely unmanaged due to controversy and litigation. The result of non-management of so many acres, has been a disaster for small communities throughout the Northwest. Not only has the plan failed to deliver in terms of timber outputs and wildlife, but our communities have been continuously inundated with wildfire smoke as large components of the late successional reserve have been destroyed by wildfire. Furthermore, after the fires are put out the plan has almost eliminated any opportunity to restore our forests through responsible salvage and replanting.

Put plainly, the Northwest Forest Plan hasn't been adhered to or followed. It's as if our National Forests are being managed without a plan at all. In order to evaluate and amend the Northwest Forest Plan the Forest Service needs to start with a blank map and allow input from all stakeholders with an eye toward true multiple use management. I fear that the Forest Service's current process won't take this big look approach, but instead will only do window dressing. More management is needed across the landscape. In wet forests some acres need to be regenerated and older stands need some level of management to fire proof and ensure their longevity. After catastrophic fires, more needs to be done to ensure we have forests for future generations.

In closing, The Northwest Forest Plan is almost 30-years old and it's a failure. It's time for the Forest Service to scrap the plan and use 30 years of lessons to inform a new plan.

Sincerely,

Steven D. Swanson

President, Swanson Group, Inc.