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Comments: I have the following comments on the Northwest Forest Plan amendment #64745. I own private forest land and use forests for recreation. I am concerned about protecting old growth and late-successional forests in the Pacific Northwest.

One very important function of our old growth is carbon storage and sequestration. Old trees do this to a much greater degree. The language of the Plan needs to emphasize this, and the effects beyond our own borders of keeping old trees alive, wherever they are. The plan amendment should protect all mature and old-growth trees and forests.

Please consider the following points:

The Northwest Forest Plan governs the largest natural carbon reserves found anywhere in North America, and an amendment must recognize and safeguard the vast amount of carbon that can be sequestered and stored in these forests.

Preserving biodiversity and connected wildlife habitat across the region should be a core principle of any forest plan revision. This includes not only threatened species, but all species so that they do not fall to unsustainable levels.

Amendments should recognize the wide variety of social and economic benefits National Forests provide for local communities and the region as a whole, not just timber, but also clean water, climate stability, quality of life, and outdoor recreation.

Any amendment to the plan should enhance protected, connected, and redundant reserves by including all mature and old-growth forests and core wildlife areas without roads (1000 acres or larger). The reserve network, including riparian reserves, should have clear and enforceable limits on logging and road impacts. Stream buffers should be enlarged if possible, and preserved as they are if not.

Fuels and fire management should focus on the home ignition zone and on non-commercial treatments and beneficial fire use, not commercial logging. Commercial logging for fuel reduction can negatively impact wildlife habitat, remove large fire-resistant trees, and create hazardous fire conditions. Standards must ensure that fuel reduction is both needed and effective before logging is allowed. MANY species depend on burned areas (woodpeckers, for instance) and they evolved with burned landscapes. Forests recover naturally from fire and the process is complex and necessary.

In short, we need a strong forest plan that addresses modern science and public values, tribal concerns, and the needs of future generations.