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Comments: Dear Forest Service,

I extend my gratitude for considering this scoping comment on the proposed amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP). The magnificence of the NWFP region's forests is woven into the fabric of our community, serving as not only a source of cold, pristine water but also as havens for reflection and recreation, sanctuaries for rare species, climate change warriors, and providers of employment opportunities.

In contemplating the amendment to the NWFP, it is imperative that we safeguard the life-enabling ecosystem benefits bestowed by these national forests. These woodlands stand as a natural remedy to climate change, acting as custodians of carbon in their leaves, branches, trunks, and roots. Allow me to share nuanced perspectives on key considerations for the impending changes to the NWFP:

Primarily, the amendment should stand as a guardian of mature and old-growth trees in both moist and seasonally dry forests. While the NWFP of 1994 took strides to preserve older forests, the task remains incomplete, sparking contention among stakeholders. Therefore, the amendment should be a beacon ensuring the sustained existence and cultivation of these ancient forests and trees into the future, perhaps by phasing out commercial logging on National Forest lands under its purview.

Secondly, in recognizing the omnipresent impacts of climate change, the amendment should prompt a reevaluation of current wildfire management strategies. Given the escalating wildfire activity, activities such as thinning and fuels reduction should be concentrated around residential areas exclusively. Moreover, the incorporation of Indigenous cultural burning practices and Wildland Fire Use could enrich the Forest Service's arsenal of fire management tools, fostering a more resilient approach. Collaborative efforts with local Tribal Nations and the integration of Indigenous Knowledge will undoubtedly be pivotal in shaping the amended Northwest Forest Plan.

Thirdly, the conservation of the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, and native salmonids, cornerstone elements of the 1994 NFP, deserves an even more fortified protective stance in the amended plan. It should not merely uphold previous efforts but elevate them to counter the ongoing threats posed by climate change and historical management practices. For the amendment to truly champion biodiversity in the face of climate change, it must ensure the perpetuation of natural processes.

Lastly, an astute acknowledgment of shifts in our region's socioeconomic landscape since 1994 is paramount. While forest management remains integral to the Pacific Northwest economy, the surge in recreational activities demands a modernized forest workforce. By prioritizing ecological restoration in riparian and planted areas, we not only contribute to the resilience of our National Forests but also ensure the sustained enjoyment of these cherished lands by the public.

I appreciate the opportunity to share these thoughts on the Forest Service's proposed climate-smart amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan. May our collective efforts contribute to the lasting prosperity and ecological harmony of this invaluable natural treasure.

Sincerely,
John Lovell