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Comments: Trinity County is comprised of approximately 70 percent federal lands by area. Locally, the implications of the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) have negatively impacted our forest ecosystems. Forests in what is now Trinity County have been managed by humans for thousands of years. Forest management is necessary to develop old growth stand conditions because it prevents overstocked forests that increase nutrient competition, water uptake, tree mortality, and the risk of high-severity fire. The primary goal of the NWFP is to protect and enhance habitat for late-successional and old-growth forest related species. We must protect and enhance our old-growth forests through a combination of mechanical thinning and broadcast burns.

The NWFP has given special interest groups more ability to litigate projects on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest to prevent forest management from occurring. The litigant organizations are almost always based in other parts of the state and may not fully realize the detrimental effects that no management is having on both our forests and our rural economy. According to census data, Trinity County poverty levels have increased by nearly 20 percent since the implementation of the NWFP. The sale of commercial forest products from mechanical thinning can support our local economy while also fostering old-growth conditions.

I support amendments to the NWFP that mandate forest management in Trinity County to increase our ability to protect and enhance old-growth forests. I also support amendments that give communities the ability to legally force our local national forest managers to implement forest health and fuels reduction treatments by providing specific standards at which forest conditions must be maintained. I believe amendments of this nature will prove to be beneficial to the success of the NWFP.