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Title:

Comments: [External Email]Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

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Dear Forest Service:

Thank you for accepting this scoping comment in support of the Forest Service's proposed amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP). The forests of the NFP region are vital to our region, providing cold, clean water for people and wildlife, inspiring places for contemplation and recreation, older forests home to rare species, and the restoration and creation forestry related job opportunities.

Here are key considerations for the changes to the NFP:

First, the amendment must balance the protections for mature and old growth trees, while allowing for sustainable harvests, and removal of dying trees. While the NFP reserved many older forests in 1994, it hasn't allowed for any kind of forest management to reduce the effects of fire. Thus, the NFP amendment must sustain and replenish older trees and forests into the future, while allowing for some forest management practices.

Second, the amendment must recognize and address the increase in very large and severe wildfires. While the NFP considers the essential role that wildfire plays in our forests, the size and severity of wildfires has far exceeded expectations. The amendment should reassess the conservation strategies for both moist and seasonally dry forests, considering the evolving role of wildfire and incorporating Indigenous and cultural burning practices. Consulting with regional Tribes is crucial.

Third, conservation of the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, and native salmonids was a cornerstone of the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan. The past federal overreach has effectively destroyed timber communities throughout Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, and Montana. This has resulted in loss of local school funding sources, hundreds of thousands of jobs, and has had no significant gain for the species it was supposedly saving. The NFP amendment should bolster efforts to restore proper forest management practices. I know it's a weird concept, but using the stored carbon as marketable wood products, is a much better option than letting it rot and burn.

Finally, the amendment should recognize shifts in our region's socioeconomic landscape since 1994. While forest management will always be a part of the Pacific Northwest economy, recreation and other pursuits now draw more people to our region than ever before. Building a modern forest restoration workforce will contribute to ecological resilience of our National Forests and ensure continued public enjoyment of these lands we all value. Think of the long term benefits of a properly managed forest ecosystem, rather than millions of acres of burned and rotting wasteland.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the Forest Service's proposed amendment to the

Northwest Forest Plan.

Sincerely,  
Mike Huffman

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