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

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Dear Forest Service:

I've seen so many pictures of what Washington used to look like. The change that we've put upon this last even just in the last 200 years is beyond drastic. We once had amazing giant very old growth trees. Ones as big as the redwoods of California. Have you ever been there? There aren't words that fit to describe the beauty of those trees. What I would give to have them back. For centuries humans lived along side nature. And it has always provided. Because look at where we are now. Preserving wildlife and the forests and old growth trees are more important now than it has ever been. I'd like to see Washington set the standard, even though the rest of the world is tearing up trees and natural habitats day by day. Who better to show the world what it SHOULD look like than Washington. Such a beautiful place. A place that makes people think of green and fresh air and clean water and deer and salmon and many many other wildlife. That is the very soul and lungs of this state...of the world. And we are so eager to decimate that beauty. We owe it to this planet to protect what is left. And to give back so much of what we've taken. There are things that live in those forests that need to be protected and conserved. Theodore Roosevelt knew this when he himself set out to protect these creatures and the natural land, and he did much towards doing so. It is of the utmost importance that we adapt and find solutions to current problems, as well induce positive change towards our natural lands and wildlife. Thank you for hearing me out.

--Johanna Hendricks :)

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, climate change mitigation, and job opportunities.

In modernizing the NFP, it is crucial that we ensure that these ecosystem services continue to flow from our national forests and that they are able to adapt to a changing climate. Here are key considerations for the changes to the NFP:

First, the amendment must protect and conserve mature and old growth trees and forests in both moist and seasonally dry forests. While the NFP reserved many older forests in 1994, it did not protect them all, which has led to controversy among stakeholders. Thus, the NFP amendment must sustain and replenish older trees and forests into the future.

Second, the amendment must recognize and address the effects of climate change, particularly 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, and an amendment should only maintain and enhance protections for at-risk fish and wildlife. The NFP amendment should bolster efforts to recover wildlife, recognizing the ongoing threat of climate change and past management practices. To protect biodiversity in the era of climate change, the amendment must ensure habitat resilience from disturbances such as wildfire, drought, disease, and insects.

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.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the Forest Service's proposed climate-smart amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan.

Sincerely,  
Johanna Hendricks

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