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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 job opportunities.

In modernizing the NFP, it is crucial that we ensure that these ecosystem services and wood products as the NFS was originally designated for 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.

With regard to dry ponderosa pine dominated forests of the interior west and in some cases dry site colder Douglas-fir forests of the interior west, fire exclusion and suppression has caused extensive growth of saplings and the overall understory that was not part of the historical stand structure as a result are part of the cause of the extensive wildfire in recent years. Forest plans must provide for fuel reduction and thinning to return these dry site forests to the historical stand condition prior to removal of fire in the ecosystem. Additionally, the USFS must provide for working with adjacent private landowners in fuels reduction/thinning as much of this dry site forest borders private ownership including subdivisions. Perhaps some kind of grant funding should be provided for adjacent private land treatments to protect NFS lands. Also some grant funding or low interest loans should be considered for establishment or retooling existing industry infrastructure to process small diameter logs. Maybe such things as wood pellets, pulp and co-generation plants.

Second, the amendment must recognize and address the effects of climate change and Forest stand conditions, 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. However, prescribed fire alone will not return the forests to historic conditions and this must be recognized and provided for.

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 you must provide for continued forest management including harvest. It is true 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.

Please ensure that timber management is part of the mix and that there is a calculation of sustainable harvest to support industry infrastructure including milling and other processing facilities and to allow for processing wood products from thinning and other forest restoration projects. Without this industry capacity efforts in forest restoration will be severely hampered.

With regard to climate change, of course the climate is changing and warming, however it has been warming since the last ice age. Please don't buy into the increase in CO2 as the root cause, there is no peer reviewed research documenting this as the cause of global warming/climate change. In fact CO2 levels in the USA have dropped since the year 2000.

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

Sincerely,  
Tim Hancock

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