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Comments: [External Email]Please update the NW Forest Plan to protect our mature and old-growth forests.

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Dear Ms. Buchanan,

The Northwest Forest Plan is an unprecedented, science-based, regional ecosystem management plan to ensure the viability of fish and wildlife associated with late-successional and old-growth forest ecosystems in the Pacific Northwest and to economically support local communities. These forest ecosystems are vital to our region, providing cold, clean water and other ecosystem services for people and wildlife, mitigation against climate change, older forests that support enormous biological diversity, inspiring places for contemplation and recreation, and job opportunities. Since its establishment in 1994, it has improved watershed conditions and reduced threats to mature and old-growth forests and the plants and animals living there, including many very rare, unique species only found in the Pacific Northwest.

Impacts from climate change are increasing in intensity and frequency, magnifying natural disturbances from fire, drought and flood events. These stressors, along with increased scientific understanding and information from the NFP's monitoring actions, highlight the need for targeted NFP updates to maintain healthy, resilient forests and watersheds.

To meet these challenges and to secure healthy ecosystems into the future, the Forest Service should take a targeted, science-based approach to amend the NFP for climate resilience. Specifically, the amendment should:

Protect mature and old-growth stands in moist forests and protect mature and old-growth trees in seasonally dry forests. Older stands and trees are inordinately important for storing carbon, supporting biological diversity, and resisting stress from fire, drought, and other disturbances.

Regards,

KAREN GUZAK

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