Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/21/2025 1:04:42 AM
First name: Dan
Last name: Matthews
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear Regional Forester Eberlien and Regional Forester Buchanan:

The DEIS is off to a good start in the effort to update the NWFP of 1994 to address climate change, decades of habitat loss, and impacts to Tribes. While we appreciate the effort so far, we urge you to strengthen the protections for old-growth and mature trees in the Forest Service's preferred alternative in the final version of the NWFP Amendment (NWFPA).

As you know, protecting the largest and oldest remaining trees in California's Northwest National Forests, and working to grow more mature and old-growth trees over time, is essential to promoting fire resilience for both people and wildlife. While we support proposals in the DEIS to protect trees of 150+ years of age, we urge you to develop and select an alternative in the final version of the NWFPA that:

Protects the best remaining mature trees (those of 80+ years) that will become the next generations of ancient forest.
Prioritizes Tribal inclusion and access in the decision making process around any changes to the Northwest Forest Plan. This would include opportunities for cultural harvesting and access, co-stewardship agreements, fire stewardship, workforce development, and youth education.
Preserves and strives to restore biodiversity and connected wildlife habitat across the region. This includes protecting more old forest habitat (such as trees 80+ years of age) to support impacted northern spotted owls, Pacific fisher, goshawk, and the many imperiled fish populations that depend on our public lands to survive.
I also encourage the Forest Service to retain the following elements from the DEIS in the final NWFP:

Promoting the restoration of old-growth forest ecosystems where ecologically appropriate in young forests.
The goal of conducting restoration and fire resilience enhancements on between 790,000 to 964,000 acres of CA's dry forests in the first 15 years after the NWFP Amendment is approved, including increasing the pace and scale of managed fire use.
Moving beyond mere consultation with Tribes in this urgently needed restoration campaign by including specific, actionable strategies to incorporate indigenous knowledge in decision making and providing opportunities to expand co-stewardship with Tribes. Tribes were helping to maintain the health of what are now NW CA's NFs for millennia and their knowledge and assistance is essential to our collective restoration efforts today.
Thank you for considering my comments on the NWFP DEIS. I look forward to a Final EIS that is more protective of ancient and mature trees, especially in the dry forests that have suffered so much from the catastrophic impacts of decades of old-growth logging, fire-suppression, and climate change, coupled with the genocide and displacement of Tribes.