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First name: Skyla

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service,

We need inclusive, detailed, and thought-out decisions about our local forests to ensure our ecosystems that we love and explore in so much are protected for generations to come. As a newcomer to the Eugene area, one of the things I admire most is the landscape I'm consistently surrounded by. The lush, diverse, and beautiful tree lines tower over my dorm room, leaving my jaw dropped every time I walk outside. Being from Arizona, I find it tough to overlook these luscious landscapes of diversity and color, and I strive to maintain these forests I hope to center my career around to ensure other students and I have a place to study in, appreciate, and have reciprocal relationships with in the future.

Though it's only my 2nd college term, I've learned of the staggering ways in which bureaus, corporations, and individuals have taken advantage of Indigenous land in the past, and as members of the Forest Service, it's imperative that you set yourselves apart from others and work with local tribes to co-manage. Tribal sovereignty and conservation is essential with the continual governmental cuts that make it harder than ever to create expansive relations that influxes communities that have been disproportionately undermined and underrepresented in the past. Though prescribed burns have their own part to play in biodiversity, cultural burns are an important type of fire inclusion that incorporates tribes into decision-making and doesn't further colonial ideologies of fire resistance. Cultural burns create ecosystem resistance to wildfires and keeps monocropping from destroying the soil that the ecosystem stands on.

On top of cultural burns, tribes can be further included into decision-making through transparency and access to more events and councils overall, instead of continuing the cycle of misinformation and exploitation. Indigenous representation must be apparent on all levels of Forest Service meetings, allowing for a more holistic approach towards the environment overall. By having indigenous tribes - not greed-filled corporations - making long-term decisions, we can foster change and biodiversity in our communities and our forests!

Viva la forest!