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Comments: Hello, My name is Isaac, I'm speaking to you today as a member of gen Z and a resident of the Willamette Valley and the PNW. I am currently studying the environment and policy at the University of Oregon, and have been curious about our forests for as long as I can remember. I grew up backpacking in Oregon and Washington, and I fondly remember weekend outings and planning trips with friends and family. As I grew older my interests expanded and I learned that the wonderful old growth forests that helped raise me are much more than meets the eye, they are regulators of our environment, supporting biodiversity, sequestering and storing carbon, improving our water and nutrient cycles, stabilizing the ground and supporting our fisheries. I also learned how with the growth of America came changing land practices, impacting us today in ways that can be hard to fully appreciate. One such change was the role of people and fire in these ecosystems. Although the science today supports prescribed and cultural burning, the understanding was different when forest management for western US first came about, and the legacy of this mistake is still with us, as a lack of proper preventative burning has increased the risk of massive fires, further accelerated by global warming and decreased fire adaptive species, decreasing biodiversity and forest resilience to more than just fire in the process.

Our old growth is finite and much depleted in comparison to its height, and it is crucial to preserving what we think of when we think of the PNW, from clean water in our cities and good fishing in our rivers and on our coast, to native pollinators that support our Orchards and fruit, we rely on healthy old growth, and when it flourishes we flourish too.

Today we stand at a crossroads with the new forest management plan, and so I'd like to put in my two cents as to how we can help Old growth survive and flourish looking forward.

Perhaps surprisingly the point I would like to stress is coordination with Tribal entities and indigenous communities at large. As the stewards of the land for time in memorium indigenous communities offer input that is needed in today's world. For this reason I support Alternative B, and feel that the Forest Service should keep all tribal inclusion plan components in it, and include tiering the authorization of beneficial fire use from Indigenous cultural burning, prescribed fire, and managed wildlife to the to the Federal Wildland Fire Policy of 1995-2001 and the growing body literature on Indigenous fire use. Furthermore the Forest Service ought to incorporate the Good Fire II Report's Recommendations #3 and #35 to identify barriers to cultural burning and prescribed fire, make clear to agency members that these rights are welcome and encouraged, and remove bureaucratic barriers to beneficial fire inclusion, and managed wildfire during certain conditions. In addition it is important to remember that fire management is not just a tool for large fire suppression, so the Forest Service should provide spatial fire management information on locations of Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) and fire management zones where wildfires could be managed for resource benefits, and require that fuels reduction include a fire use component (e.g. pile burning and /or broadcast understory burns), with the objective to prepare sites for managing future fire for resource benefit, rather than for fire suppression. Additionally, given its benefits both physically and in regards to continuing Indigenous practices, recreation, and character, Old Growth should be able to grow in the face of climate change and growing population, with this in mind we should not allow the definition of old growth and mature growth to be limited.

I hope you consider these recommendations, and help protect my future and the future of the American West.