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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Flora, and I am writing to voice my strong support for increased tribal co-stewardship in national forest management and the protection of old-growth forests.

In my family, we have a saying: trees are good. I grew up with a *Thuja plicata* in my backyard, swinging beneath its branches and running my hands along its bark with awe. Today, I see these trees in the streambanks and woodlands where I do restoration work, stabilizing soil and shading salmon-bearing waters.

Indigenous peoples have stewarded Pacific Northwest forests since time immemorial, yet the original national forest management plans failed to consult federally recognized tribes. As amendments are now being considered, it is critical to prioritize tribal leadership in land management decisions.

I support policies that increase Indigenous co-stewardship and leadership in forest management, require the Forest Service to provide consistent access to culturally significant resources, such as huckleberry harvesting areas, and take action against commercial overharvesting, expand the use of Native led cultural burns as a restoration tool, strengthen protections for old-growth forests, advocate for restoration of oak savannah ecosystems in the Willamette valley, and address the ongoing impacts of climate change and habitat loss.

Alternative B provides stronger tribal inclusion and should be prioritized in the amendment process. Ensuring meaningful tribal consultation and leadership will result in more effective, equitable, and ecologically sound forest management.

Thank you for your time and consideration.