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Comments: The Northwest Forest Plan needs to be strengthened by INCREASING the protections it provides for mature and old-growth forests. The Northwest Forest Plan is an effective policy that is necessary in this critical period of climate change and species extinctions. It is especially needed to provide additional habitat needed to recover the threatened Northern Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet.

Please strengthen the Northwest Forest Plan, by prioritizing enhanced protections for the Pacific Northwest and northern California region's mature and old-growth forests. This will benefit endangered birds, as well as the global climate.

This can be accomplished by adopting a modified version of Alternative C that provides added protection for mature forests essential to restore sufficient habitat. Increased buffers for forest management activities around Marbled Murrelet nests are also crucial to reducing nest predation, a key factor preventing population recovery.

Language in all of the other alternatives promote increased logging of mature forests. Therefore the alternative plans other than C are NOT acceptable. These mature forests are essential for increasing the amount of old growth habitat and must not be sacrificed.

This plan also fails to address the extinction risk facing the Northern Spotted Owl, which is suffering from a severe and rapid population decline, as well as the slower decline of the Marbled Murrelet population. It is essential the existing habitat protections of the Northwest Forest Plan be maintained and built upon, not weakened or watered down.

Thank you for considering these critical issues. Please protect mature and old-growth forests to preserve biodiversity, fight climate change, and ensure the recovery of vulnerable bird species.