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Comments:

The forest plan needs to prioritize the protection of old growth forests and incorporate modern science, tribal consultation and the needs of future generations. Logging should be allowed only where thinning is deemed necessary.

Logging should not be the primary way fires are prevented. Fire resistance and resilience can be bolstered by preserving and restoring mature and old-growth forests. Fuels and fire management should focus on the home ignition zone and on non-commercial treatments and beneficial fire use. Indigenous cultural burning and wildland fire use should be prioritized. Commercial logging for fuel reduction can negatively impact wildlife habitat, remove large fire-resistant trees, introduce invasive species, and create hazardous fire conditions. Standards must ensure that fuel reduction is both needed and effective before logging is allowed.

I urge you to make the protection of forests the main priority of the Northwest Forest Plan by:

Strengthening protections for mature and old-growth forests to ensure habitat, water quality, and carbon storage, and recruit more mature and old forests to restore a functional ecosystem.

Maintaining or expanding protections for the network of forest reserves to allow natural processes to flourish, ensure connectivity for wildlife, and support the recovery of imperiled species. Any reduction in forest reserve protections would increase harmful impacts such as habitat destruction, sediment in streams, and carbon loss, further endangering sensitive ecosystems.

Genuinely consult with Tribes, respect their sovereignty, and provide resources to support their full participation in decision-making. The Forest Service must support co-stewardship agreements, cultural burning practices, first food harvesting, and youth education while ensuring equitable access to planning processes.

Addressing environmental justice by analyzing impacts on air, water, and communities and ensuring fair, sustainable working conditions.

Shifting wildfire strategies to prioritize community safety and proven prevention measures over logging.

Thank you