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Title:

Comments: My name is Marian Blue and I live in the northwest on Whidbey Island. Please accept this comment on the draft EIS for the proposed Northwest Forest Plan amendment.

Any amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan should recognize the historic, social, economic, and quality of life benefits National Forests provide for local individuals, communities and the region as a whole. Many people moved (or continued to live here) for jobs and homes where they could raise families and live their lives with clean water, climate stability, outdoor recreation, and a promising future.

Fire resistance and resilience can be maintained and restored by protecting and renewing mature and old-growth forests. These forests managed to provide environments where trees live/lived for hundreds of years.

Commercial logging strips away that protective aspect and opens up opportunities for wild fires and flooding.

Damage and danger increase dramatically. Native wildlife suffers. Invasive plant and animal life move in. Logging needs to be regulated to prevent irreversible damage to our lands.

The Forest Service must reject plans to weaken core protections of the Northwest Forest Plan, and do the following:

- *Strengthen 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.

- *Maintain or expand 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. Pairing these components with the Forest Service's plan for weakened environmental protections is a false choice manufactured by the agency.

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

- *Shift wildfire strategies to prioritize community safety and proven prevention measures over logging.

- *Work with local environmental and educational organizations to ensure local needs are met, not just outside corporate interests.

I believe we need a strong forest plan that incorporates modern science and public values, honest tribal consultation, and the needs of future generations. The environment did well for hundreds of years when humans weren't over-harvesting and interfering; we need to be stewards. I hope that my great-great grandchildren will find a good and healthy quality of life here possible.