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Comments: I oppose efforts to weaken the Northwest Forest Plan from a conservation and biodiversity perspective. Any changes to the Plan must safeguard mature and old-growth forests as biodiversity strongholds and essential natural carbon and climate solutions for future generations.

For 30 years, the Northwest Forest Plan has protected the Northwest's (and our nation's) mature and old-growth forests and the wildlife that depends on those forests for survival. It largely halted the unchecked clearcutting that threatened to destroy our forests and drive species to extinction - and that ignited the timber wars of the 1980s-1990s.

I oppose the amendment to the Plan that prioritizes and accelerates logging, and puts our forests, fish, wildlife, clean water, and climate at risk. The Northwest Forest Plan brought some accountability and stability to the management of our public National Forests. Finalizing a weakened version of the Plan will undo decades of process and return to the region to conflict and instability.

I oppose any versions of the plan that increase commercial logging volumes; shift the primary purpose of the Plan from recovering and restoring more old-growth across the landscape to protecting only the little old-growth that remains today; redefine "mature" and "old-growth" forests to weaken protections and increase logging; Log mature forests in reserves meant to protect fish, wildlife, and drinking water; and/or aggressively log mature and old-growth forests outside of reserves. These are all massive steps backwards into environmental destruction and conflict.

I support the elements of the proposed amendment that direct the Forest Service to better engage with the Tribes through consultation, co-stewardship agreements, and the integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and prescribed fire into Forest Service management practices. However, these provisions must not be tied to dramatic attacks on conservation measures within the Plan. The proposed amendment ignores its duty to ensure protections for imperiled species - including those listed as threatened and endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

It likewise fails to meaningfully address climate change, which was cited as one of the key reasons for amending the Plan in the first place. Any amendment must recognize and protect the ability of our forests to sequester and store carbon.