

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/25/2025 2:20:07 PM

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Comments: The Northwest Forest Plan, adopted in 1994, was born out of a need to balance the cry of voices competing for the forest's resources. We can agree that this plan has served well in the past 30 years to both protect habitat and allow for necessary resources to be harvest for human consumption. However, in this time of rapidly changing climate, and acknowledging that not all voices were adequately heard in crafting the original plan, it's time to reflect and revisit this important agreement.

Any amendment to the original plan must, at a minimum, retain the current network of forest reserves and preferably expand this forest network. Please do not exploit the fear of fire felt by people in many of our communities to justify an increase in logging. The answer is not to cut more trees but to use both our science-based and traditional ecological knowledge to guide decision-making related to forest management. Listen to the experts.

I am not indigenous to North America, but please allow those who are to have a clear voice in the protection of our forests, recognizing that Native peoples have long cared for the forest habitats and know how to keep them healthy. I am not a Douglas fir, a Pacific marten, a Coho salmon, or a Marbled murrelet. I am not a Pacific Giant salamander, a ground beetle, a mining bee, or an Apricot jelly mushroom. But all these creatures and over 1,000 more species make their home in our Pacific Northwest forests and work together to make a healthy environment for all life on Earth. Without them we face a bleak future. Allow their voices at this decision-making table.

The proposed amendments to the NW forest plan would be a huge setback for the wishes of most of the voices coming to this stakeholders table. Increased timber harvest, particularly of the mature and old-growth trees, would not only destroy the critical habitat of forest creatures, but remove one of Earth's most effective and efficient carbon removal systems available to us. The older the tree is, the more effective it is in removing carbon. We must respect these elders.

Protect the Late Successional Reserve, those trees older than 80 years. Younger stands can be thinned provided that in doing so it maintains allowance for the continued creation of old-growth forest conditions.

Minimize building of new roads into our forests for logging purposes. These roads fragment critical habitat, contributing to the demise of many forest creatures. They also contribute to the release of soils into waterways, harming the habitat of the riparian species.

I'm counting on you to re-think the current amendment proposal and keep my comments in mind while you craft a final plan that will protect our one and only temperate rainforest of the Pacific Northwest for another 30 years, and far into the future.