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Comments: If you look at a license plate on most cars in Oregon, you'll see an image of a Douglas Fir in the middle. Our car has one on the front and back. Yet if you drive to the coast of OR, to the Cascades, or North and South on I-5, you see wide swaths of land devoid of those iconic trees or any others. From the flanks of Mt. Saint Helen's, up and down the Cascade chain, many of the trees have been cut down, clear cut, with a habitat that resembles more the aftermath of a natural disaster than a forest. If they are replanted it's with the same species of trees, only to be cut down after decades to have the process start over again. The opportunities for recreation in these areas are degraded or non-existent. The ability of these tree farms for carbon sequestration is poor, their ability to resist wildfires is highly degraded, and their quality of habitat for animals is akin to Gaza currently for people.

My 7 and 9 year old love to camp and hike at places like Silver Falls State Park, Mt. Hood National Forest, and Olympic National Park yet right up to the boundaries of these National treasures are forests being clear cut. It's inescapable.

Without the NW Forest plan, the destruction would be even worse today. I believe weakening the plan and not making efforts to increase protection for more old-growth and mature forests is grossly short-sighted with a focus on short term profits rather than maintaining and expanding protections for these carbon-storing machines. It will also rob us of the opportunity to have trees and forests develop into future old-growth, and remove carbon-storing champions from the landscape. Logging them would worsen the biodiversity and climate crises.

Anyone who has stepped into a mature forest with their downed-logs acting as nurse-trees, lichen and moss covered trees, and ferns in the shade know how mature old-growth trees are naturally fire resistant. Removing them will make these areas more prone to wild fires more, not less.

These forests also provide essential habitat for imperiled species like the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, and coho salmon. They also filter and protect drinking water for communities across the Pacific Northwest.

Management decisions should reflect Tribal stewardship practices, uphold sovereignty, and ensure meaningful consultation and engagement with Tribal communities. Too long have these voices been ignored in land that they called home before the arrival of settlers.

The Forest Service should strengthen or expand protections for forest reserves under the Northwest Forest Plan to recruit more habitat, protect streams, and enhance carbon storage-not reduce them or open them to logging for the benefit of all today and into the future not just the profits of logging and timber industries now.