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Comments: Hello,

My name is Meredith Diskin and I am writing today on behalf of the 17 national forests stretching from western Washington and Oregon south to northwestern California. I am concerned that the Forest Service's recent proposed amendment to the NWFP weakens protections for our region's older forests, clean water, and wildlife habitat. If enacted, these changes would significantly increase logging levels across our public forests, open mature and old-growth trees to commercial logging, and sideline the protections that communities, wildlife, and ecosystems depend on. Preserving biodiversity and connected wildlife habitat across the region should be a core principle of this forest plan amendment. These forests are cherished by all Oregonians and the vital resources they provide cannot be overstated.

Furthermore, wildfires have become more prevalent and destructive, harming natural lands and cities. 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, not commercial logging. 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. The knowledge and expertise of Indigenous people and Tribes is invaluable to the management of wildfires. The Forest Service should retain all of the Tribal inclusion plan components analyzed in the DEIS. I support elements of the proposed amendment that include a beneficial fire approach and support of Indigenous cultural burning and co-stewardship agreements.

The amendment should recognize the wide variety of social and economic benefits national forests provide for local communities and the region as a whole - not just timber, but also clean water, climate stability, quality of life, and outdoor recreation opportunities.