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Comments: To the US Forest Service,

I would like to comment on the draft EIS for the proposed Northwest Forest Plan amendment. I hold mature and old-growth forests close to my heart, ever since I attended Humboldt State University in 1977. I have explored these incredible forests over many decades within all 3 northwestern states. The proposed amendment has strengths but also has concerning aspects that I believe weakens protections for mature forests, clean water, and wildlife habitat.

The amendment redefines what mature and old growth forests are which would eliminate protections for unlogged mature forests. Alternative B opens logging in over 800,000 acres of previously protected forests and creates loopholes to allow logging of trees that remain protected. The age of trees that can be logged should not be changed. It also increases clearcutting of mature and old-growth forests managed for timber production and increases logging in dry forests. The fuels reduction allowed in Alternative D would allow the removal of even older, fire resilient trees, cause harm to watersheds and biodiversity. These trees are the most fire resistant in a forest and more likely to survive wildfire. These mature forests are vital for storing carbon, keeping water clean and providing habitat, and should continue to be protected, not logged.

The rare species survey requirements needed before logging in certain areas would be eliminated. This important requirement needs to continue for any logging project.

One of the strengths of the proposed amendment is the tribal involvement provisions. Expanded cultural harvesting and access, co-stewardship agreements, fire stewardship, workforce development and youth education are all important aspects that should be included all the alternatives, but it is missing in Alternate C.

The Forest Service should prioritize protecting mature forests from logging for their carbon sequestering/storing, biodiversity, healthier watersheds, increased fire resistance.

Thanks you for this opportunity to comment on this important Plan.

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