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Comments: Dear Forest Service

I am writing to highlight the successes that have come as a result of the Northwest Forest Plan and its commitment to integrating cutting-edge technology into wildlife conservation, and to urge its continued support. The achievements already demonstrated represent a significant step toward improving the efficiency of monitoring programs, and applying data science and artificial intelligence to protect our forests and the species that depend on them.

The advancements in acoustic monitoring and artificial intelligence pioneered through this project have already had significant impact. By using convolutional neural networks for species identification, work done under the auspices of the Northwest Forest Plan have lead to broader improvements in standards of monitoring across both the US and globally. These have far-reaching applications in environmental compliance, monitoring endangered species and citizen science engagement.

A particular strength of the project is its ability to provide federal land managers with data at an unprecedented scale. Acoustic monitoring allows for precise tracking of seasonal shifts in species behavior, migratory patterns, and disruptions in natural soundscapes- which may be indicators of broader ecological changes. This ensures science-driven decision-making and conservation efforts can be proactive rather than reactive.

By investing in passive acoustic monitoring agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Park Service (NPS) can also significantly reduce the need for costly and labor-intensive field surveys. Strengthening collaboration between research institutions, BLM, and NPS will ensure that technological advancements directly support land stewardship and conservation goals.

The Northwest Forest Plan is a forward-thinking approach to conservation, making use of the best available technology to protect our natural resources efficiently and effectively. I urge you to continue supporting this critical initiative to ensure the long-term sustainability of our forests and wildlife.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Louis Freeland-Haynes