

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/11/2025 4:04:53 AM

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Comments: To Regional Foresters Jacque Buchanan and Jennifer Eberlien:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Northwest Forest Plan amendment.

I have visited and enjoyed the National Forests managed under the Northwest Forest Plan, which define the unique character of the Pacific Northwest and serve as an invaluable resource for all who experience them.

The original Northwest Forest Plan was designed to endure for 100 years. To honor that vision, we must address its shortcomings and prevent further degradation. Unfortunately, none of the alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) adequately uphold that legacy.

The Forest Service should retain all Tribal inclusion plan components from Alternative B, but separate them from the forest management components that permit logging of older trees and forests.

Preserving biodiversity and connected wildlife habitats across the region must be a core principle of this forest plan amendment. This commitment should extend beyond threatened species to include those affected by habitat loss and fragmentation, as well as species awaiting state or federal Endangered Species Act listing decisions.

Furthermore, the amendment should recognize the broad array of social and economic benefits National Forests provide to local communities and the region, including clean water, climate stability, quality of life, and outdoor recreation - not just timber.

The DEIS mistakenly identifies fire as the primary threat to the remaining late-successional reserves, when in fact logging poses a greater danger.

Enhancing fire resistance and resilience requires preserving and restoring mature and old-growth forests. Effective fire management should focus on the home ignition zone, non-commercial treatments, and beneficial fire use, rather than commercial logging. Indigenous cultural burning and wildland fire use should be prioritized, as commercial logging for fuel reduction often harms wildlife habitat, removes large fire-resistant trees, introduces invasive species, and creates hazardous fire conditions. Clear standards must be established to ensure that fuel reduction efforts are genuinely necessary and effective before logging is permitted.

The Forest Service must reject proposals that would weaken the core protections of the Northwest Forest Plan and instead take the following actions:

Strengthen Protections for Mature and Old-Growth Forests: Ensure habitat preservation, water quality, and carbon storage while promoting the growth of mature and old forests to restore functional ecosystems.

Maintain or Expand Forest Reserve Protections: Allow natural processes to thrive, ensure wildlife connectivity, and support the recovery of imperiled species. Weakening forest reserve protections would increase harmful impacts such as habitat destruction, sedimentation in streams, and carbon loss, further endangering sensitive ecosystems.

Engage in Genuine Tribal Consultation: Respect Tribal sovereignty and provide resources to support their full participation in decision-making. The Forest Service must actively support co-stewardship agreements, cultural

burning practices, first food harvesting, and youth education while ensuring equitable access to planning processes. Pairing these components with weakened environmental protections is a false choice manufactured by the agency.

Address Environmental Justice: Thoroughly analyze impacts on air, water, and communities while ensuring fair, sustainable working conditions.

Refocus Wildfire Strategies: Prioritize community safety and proven prevention measures over commercial logging.

The Federal Advisory Committee process that shaped the DEIS was rushed, excluded scientific expertise, and adopted findings in a biased manner. Rather than opening the door to logging under the guise of preservation, the amendment should enhance the Northwest Forest Plan by expanding its network of reserves.

A strong, future-ready forest plan must incorporate modern science, reflect public values, ensure meaningful Tribal consultation, and consider the well-being of future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.