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Organization:

Title:

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Dear Forest Service,

I grew up on a farm in New Mexico, I fell in love with the Pacific Northwest the first time I visited at age 21, and I immediately moved to Portland, Oregon, after finishing my undergraduate degrees. I've lived here now for 17 years-it's my chosen home-and I've spent countless time hiking and camping throughout Oregon and Washington. These trees and forests are irreplaceable and immeasurably valuable-recreationally, ecologically, and spiritually, and I want to see mature and old growth (over 80 years old) protected in your amendment to the NW Forest Plan.

In researching the proposed amendments to the Northwest Forest Plan, I learned the NFP was intended to be a 100-year plan to preserve and protect our magnificent forests. But your amendments put mature trees on the chopping block and create new loopholes that were in place to protect wildlife, animals, and drinking water. These amendments are deeply flawed, and if allowed to proceed, the damage will have global consequences. I want to see any tree older than 80 years protected-the idea of moving this protection to 120 years is incredibly short-sighted. I would like to see the Forest Service strengthen or expand protections for our majestic forests under the Northwest Forest Plan to protect habitat and water, and to mitigate climate crises.

We need these trees! Mature and old-growth forests are resilient against forest fire and a natural climate solution-42% of forest carbon is stored in the biggest 3% of trees. And even dead trees allowed to fall naturally continue to hold that carbon in the soil. On the other hand, 65% of the carbon of logged trees is released back into the atmosphere, making logging the largest source of carbon emissions.

Further, mature and old-growth forests create vital habitat structure and complexity for imperiled species like northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, and coho salmon. They also reduce flood risk, and filter and protect drinking water for people all over the NW. Portland, where I live, gets 90% of public water from NW forests.

In this amendment, I want to see the incorporation of Traditional Ecological knowledge, Tribal involvement, and environmental justice concerns. The inclusion of tribes and environmental justice in forest management is critical, while at the same time preserving and advancing ecological protections in our national forests.

I appreciate you hearing me out, and I hope that you will make the right decision. Cutting these trees is a giant mistake, and history has its eyes on you. Thank you.