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First name: MARY BETH

Last name: HICKS

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear US Forest Service:

I am writing to express my support for the renewal and strengthening of the Northwest Forest Plan that is up for review after 30 years of safeguarding our old growth forests. I am an Oregon resident, living near the Siuslaw National Forest, where I have spent many hours roaming with my son. I also worked when I was young as a biological field technician in the Olympic National Forest on a project geared toward analyzing the impact of clear cutting and forest fragmentation on the nesting success of marbled murrelets who rely on old growth trees, but also intact, non-fragmented forests, for their nesting habitat. Too much forest "edge," we found, enabled predators to access nests and compromise eggs. Protecting the forest also protects our drinking water, and provides habitat for the coastal coho salmon, a species of iconic importance to our local fishing community and with cultural significance for our Indigenous community.

The protections for old growth in the Northwest Forest Plan must only be strengthened. I am concerned that in the current erosion of valuable USFS staff being carried out by the current administration, long-term knowledge and commitment to these forests might be lost or compromised, and I want to submit my encouragement for those left in place, now with too much on their hands to do, that we believe in your important work in protecting our irreplaceable old growth forests.

Thank you for your public service to our country and thank you for considering my comment on the revision of this crucial plan.

Yours,

Mary Beth Rew Hicks