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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Subject: Comment on NW Forest Plan Amendment - Support for Alternative D

Dear U.S. Forest Service Planning Team,

I am writing to submit my formal comment on the proposed Northwest Forest Plan Amendment, specifically in support of Alternative D. As an advocate for responsible forest management, economic growth, and maintaining access to public lands, I believe Alternative D provides the best path forward to balance ecological stewardship with the needs of local communities, recreationists, and industry professionals.

Support for Increased Forest Management

Alternative D prioritizes active forest management, which is essential for reducing wildfire risks, improving forest health, and ensuring sustainable use of our natural resources. The current passive management approach has led to overgrown forests, increased fuel loads, and more devastating wildfires that threaten both the environment and surrounding communities. By implementing a proactive strategy that includes thinning, controlled burns, and responsible timber harvesting, Alternative D will help create more resilient forests while providing valuable economic opportunities.

Economic Benefits & Job Creation

One of the most compelling reasons to support Alternative D is its potential to create and sustain jobs in rural communities. Increased timber production under this alternative is projected to **boost annual harvest levels by at least 33%, providing stable employment for loggers, mill workers, and forestry professionals. Additionally, active management strategies will support local businesses, contractors, and service providers that depend on a thriving forestry sector.

Recreational Access, Local Economies & Community Livelihoods

Beyond timber and forestry jobs, forest access is critical to the survival of many rural communities that were economically devastated when the original Northwest Forest Plan was implemented. Towns that once thrived on logging, forest work, and related industries have been reduced to near ghost towns, with businesses shuttering due to a lack of economic activity.

Outdoor recreation-such as off-roading, camping, hiking, hunting, and fishing-brings millions of dollars into these struggling local economies. Restaurants, gas stations, outfitters, lodging, and repair shops all rely on consistent access to forest lands to survive. However, ongoing road and trail closures have severely limited opportunities for these communities to rebound. Alternative D ensures that roads and trails remain open, allowing visitors to continue enjoying the forests while supporting businesses that depend on their presence.

Balanced Conservation Approach

While Alternative D promotes increased management, it does not come at the expense of environmental conservation. This plan still includes protections for old-growth forests, critical wildlife habitats, and watersheds while ensuring that public lands remain productive and accessible. A healthy forest is a managed forest, and this alternative acknowledges the importance of striking a balance between conservation and sustainable use.

Conclusion

The Northwest Forest Plan Amendment presents a critical opportunity to shape the future of our public lands. Alternative D is the best choice for forest health, economic stability, wildfire prevention, and recreational access. I strongly urge the U.S. Forest Service to adopt this approach and prioritize active management, job creation, and

maintaining access to our forests for multiple uses.

Thank you for considering my comments. I appreciate your efforts in ensuring a sustainable and practical future for our forests.

Sincerely,
Traci Atherton