

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/14/2025 7:57:00 PM

First name: Barbara

Last name: Zaroff

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank-you for this opportunity to comment on the Forest Service's Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed Northwest Forest Plan (NFP) amendment. I strongly support the NFP's regional approach to ensure the viability of fish and wildlife associated with ancient forest ecosystems and to support local communities. In recognition of climate change, I support a modified Alternative B (B+) to better recruit old forests, burn dry forests, improve habitat connectivity, protect aquatic ecosystems, and restore old forests in Reserves.

Forests of the Cascades and Olympics are vital to our region, providing excellent water quality, crucial climate resilience, marvelous biological diversity, inspiring places for contemplation and recreation, and job opportunities. Since 1994, the NFP has improved watershed conditions and reduced threats to ancient forests and their inhabitants, including many very rare, unique species that occur only in the Pacific Northwest.

The proposed NFP amendment is a big step forward in protecting old-growth forests and trees, restoring fire to the landscape, and improving ecological resilience of dry fire-prone forests.

However, the proposed amendment needs improvement in five key areas. Please amend the proposed action with standards and guidelines that:

- \*Promote old-growth recovery in dry forests by recruiting enough trees from the largest and oldest size class during stewardship actions to restore old-growth distribution and abundance on the landscape. Older and larger trees are inordinately important for storing carbon, supporting biological diversity, and resisting stress from fire, drought, and other disturbances.

- \*Prioritize ecological restoration of previously logged areas in wetter forests, especially in 80-120-year-old stands. Old plantations with homogenous structure and composition will benefit the most from actions that enhance structural complexity and other late-successional characteristics.

- \*Reduce road density to improve wildlife habitat connectivity and reduce aquatic impacts from climate-induced flood events. Reduce road density to 1 mile road/mile<sup>2</sup> in key watersheds and to 2 miles of road/mile<sup>2</sup> outside key watersheds and hydrologically decouple roads from water resources in all land allocations. Maintain the habitat connectivity emphasis in the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area.

- \*Remove guideline 1(b) from FORSTW-LSR-GDL for creating young forest in Late-Successional Reserves. Natural disturbances are expected to continue to create suitable amounts of complex early successional forest habitat in Reserves and this guideline is unneeded.