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Comments: As life-long Californian's, avid hikers, naturalists and environmentalists, we oppose the weakening of the Northwest Forest Plan, and urge the following:

- * Prohibit any new leasing of public lands for extractive purposes, and include explicit expiration clauses and conditions of lease renewal in existing extraction leases.

- * Mandate immediate adoption of emerging science in the assessment of any fuel-reduction or logging proposal. Forestry experts now agree that logging and fuel reduction increase flammability by dehumidifying, raising ambient temperatures, increasing wind exposure and introducing invasives of higher flammability. Stop disguising logging as "fuel reduction" or "wildfire prevention".

- * Prohibit removal of trees over 80 years. AND, prohibit incursion of any form into old growth stands (those comprised of more than 30% trees older than 50 years). Prohibit logging and fuel reduction in any area where indirect impacts will affect these stands.

- * Ban clearcutting: mandate retention of 50% of the biomass in any logging site.

- * Clearly define and differentiate "moist" and "dry" forest climates, and prescribe specific management objectives and policies for each of these forest types.

- * Clearly define "cumulative impacts" and require an accurate accounting and quantification of both site-specific cumulative impacts as well as regional cumulative impacts.

- * Clearly define carbon cost calculations to properly value loss of sequestration, and to include secondary costs of carbon releases from associated industrial and transit activities all the way to the end market consumption. Include the sequestration timeline in carbon cost calculations.

- * Mandate uniform management policies and practices across all public lands (regardless of managing entity). This includes prohibition of impacts that cross boundaries (i.e. impacts to watersheds, migratory paths, wildlife corridors, local micro-climates). Interpretation of vague guidelines cannot be left to individual rangers or bureaus, or local agencies with a parochial perspective or conflict of interest.

Forests are essential to the broader ecosystem and planet-wide climate and are thus essential for human survival. Those seeking extraction for private profit will destroy not just a forest but the eco-balance of our entire planet. We expect our Forest Service agencies to protect "us the people" and future generations, not sell our public resources for private profits.

Frank and Kristin Mercer

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