

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/16/2025 12:20:35 AM

First name: Sidney

Last name: Baum

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Northwest Forest Plan Amendment Team,

In creating amendments to the Northwest Forest Plan, the most important consideration should be to end commercial logging in old growth forests and mature forests that need to be preserved as our future old growth forests. At the very least, logging in these forests needs to be drastically reduced. These valuable forests are needed now and in the future for many reasons. Cutting any of the remaining old growth trees and the next generation, the now "mature" trees, is a grave mistake that can't be repaired. Forests are not truly a "renewable resource," as claimed. Once cut, they are gone, and even under perfect soil and climate conditions, which don't exist, it takes 100 years to grow a 100-year-old tree. Though this fact is obvious, the implications aren't. What will clean the air and water the trees once filtered for us? We don't have 100 years to regrow these trees so they can repair our climate. They are our best defense now against an increasingly hotter, dryer climate.

One of the stated purposes for logging our federal forests is to provide economic opportunity for rural communities. I have lived in rural Western Oregon in the foothills of the coast range for 35 years. It used to be home to plentiful logging and mill jobs. There is still one mill in our community and logging does continue, but with very few jobs for the local community. Logging as economic opportunity for rural communities is now a myth. Mechanization eliminated most of the timber-related jobs decades ago. People now do other work in other industries. Logging more mature and old growth stands of trees on federal lands won't bring back those old jobs that are mostly done by machines. It will only bring more profits to the timber companies.

Wildfires have also become an excuse for "thinning" our federal forests, but many of the "thinned" stands are actually clearcuts and large trees are often cut, not just the densely planted smaller trees. Clearcuts, we now know, are an ideal setting to spread wildfires. Big old trees are more resilient and resistant to fire than younger stands of trees. Home hardening is a more effective strategy to protect communities and buildings than cutting forests.

We need to protect as many acres of our Northwest federal and state forests from being cut as possible and use our private lands for timber to fulfill the needs for lumber products, of which there is a plentiful supply. As well as sequestering carbon, cooling the air, filtering water, providing habitat for many species of plants and animals, and creating micro-climates that bring rainfall, our oldest forests are the statuesque, quiet, natural cathedrals of great beauty and awe that make our region beloved by those of us who live here. Holding them precious and valuable as they are, rather than as an "expendable commodity," or a "renewable resource" is the best path forward for our forests, the animals who inhabit them, our climate resilience, the safety of our communities, and the preservation of the unequaled and stunning beauty of our region. Including the native tribes and the traditional ecological knowledge of tribal communities in forest management is important as well, and as a matter of environmental justice.

Thank you for your consideration and your work as stewards of our Northwest forests.

Sid Baum

Eugene, Oregon (Crow-Lorane Valley)