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Organization: Blue Mtn. Audubon Society

Title: Conservation Committee Chair

Comments: Ms. Jacque Buchanan, Regional Forester:

The board of the Blue Mountain Audubon Society is providing these comments regarding the Forest Service's Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed Northwest Forest Plan (NFP) amendment.

Our organization supports maintaining and enhancing ecologically functioning mature and old growth forests, biodiversity, as well as maintaining sustainability of our northwest forests and local communities.

The draft NFP amendment shows progress for protecting old growth trees and forests, incorporating more use of fire to restore ecosystems and improve forest sustainability, and fully engaging indigenous communities in forest management.

However, we request that the proposed NFP amendment be improved by providing a modified Alternative B that includes the following:

- 1) Prioritizes ecological restoration of previously logged areas in wetter forests, especially in 80-120-year-old stands. Old plantations will benefit the most from management actions that enhance structural complexity and other late-successional characteristics.
- 2) Promotes old-growth in dry forests by retaining and promoting large trees from the older size class to restore old-growth distribution and abundance. The older and larger trees store more carbon, have very high ecological value, and are more resistant to disturbances.
- 3) Reduces road density to improve wildlife habitat connectivity and to reduce disturbance to wildlife species. Also, reduce road density to help maintain or restore buffers to streams, reduce erosion, and reduce impacts to aquatic species. These efforts would also help compensate for anticipated increased flood flows because of climate change.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the Forest Service's proposed amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan.

Sincerely,

Glen Mendel,

Conservation Committee Chair for the Blue Mountain Audubon Society