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Organization:

Title:

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Dear Regional Forester Jacque Buchanan and Regional Forester Jennifer Eberlien,

My name is Emily Stebbins, and I live in Portland, Oregon. I have lived in the Northwest since before I was two years old, and I am writing to you now as a parent, educator, and climate justice activist. I would not be who I am without Northwest forests - the urban forests near me, and the rich and diverse forests of the Columbia Gorge, Mt. Hood, and the Oregon Coast. I go to the forest for food, for exercise, for healing, and for connection.

Climate change is a huge concern for forests. It is critical that the NWFP reflect current data, and advance ecological protections in response to the real world conditions we are experiencing. This means not only maintaining, but also expanding mature and old growth forest habitats. Logging is counter-productive to protecting communities from wildfire, as healthy forests are the most resilient in the face of these increasingly intense wildfire regimes, which are driven by wind and heat. Our national forests must not be clear-cut or thinned for short-term commercial gain, but thoughtfully stewarded to encourage moisture retention and biological diversity, sustaining their health, diversity and productivity for future generations.

The Forest Service must collaborate with the Tribes that have maintained Northwest forests for thousands of years, to create a plan that fosters biological diversity and sustains culturally important and endangered species. There must be a plan to collaboratively identify the desired conditions that indicate forest health, and to then engage in stewardship practices to promote those conditions. The NWFP must prioritize Tribal access to first foods, accommodate cultural burning practices, and support youth and workforce education.

Any amendment to the NWFP that fails to protect and expand our forests through the inclusion of Tribes and environmental justice, should not be allowed to go forward.

Thank you,  
Emily Stebbins