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Comments: To: Regional Foresters Jacque Buchanan and Jennifer Eberlien

I am a volunteer with the Nature Conservancy in three preserves in various parts of Oregon for 5 years and a volunteer with several other nature conservation and restoration organizations. I am a mother, a practicing Physical Therapist, a hiker, camper and angler and profoundly concerned about the rapid decline of species and increasing impacts of climate change.

Intact mature and old-growth forests provide clean water; habitat for fish and wildlife; protection to fight climate change; respite, renewal and recreation for us humans.

Originally, the NorthWest Forest Plan was intended, as well as significant, to protect and restore old-growth forests damage by irresponsible past logging and road building; protecting and restoring healthy stream habitat for commercially valuable salmon; protecting habitat for threatened and endangered species; ensuring that our National Forests provided their natural solution to climate change for a liveable planet; all while still allowing sustainable commercial logging.

The proposed NorthWest Forest Plan Amendment has only 2 positive improvements that I can see. The first improvement is to include Indigenous Tribes and peoples voices and recommendations in the plans and care of our national forests. The second improvement is to increase and authorize Indigenous cultural burning, prescribed burns and managed wildfire to restore ecological integrity of our forests. I support the above proposals.

Fire resistance and resilience can be bolstered by preserving and restoring mature and old-growth forests. I have hiked through many mature and older growth forests and I have personally witnessed the fire resilience there in surviving fire scarred large diameter trees and rebounded undergrowth. Fuels and fire management should focus on the home ignition zones and on non-commercial treatments and beneficial fire use, not commercial logging. Indigenous cultural burning and wildland fire use should be prioritized. Commercial logging for fuel reduction often negatively impacts wildlife habitat, removing large fire-resistant trees, introducing invasive species and creating increased hazardous fire conditions. Standards must ensure that fuel reduction is both needed and effective before logging is allowed.

I cannot, and we must not, support the remaining proposals of the NorthWest Forest Plan Amendment. The remaining proposals of the NorthWest Forest Plan Amendment will significantly increase logging mature and old-growth trees and previously protected forests, the very trees and forests that are required for keeping drinking

water safe; providing habitat for threatened and endangered species such as the Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl and our commercially valuable salmon; and sequestering the largest amounts of carbon to fight Climate Change. The science supports protecting and increasing our mature and old-growth forests for these stated reasons. In addition, the U.S. exports huge amounts of logged trees to other countries. I see them at the ports because I live and travel in the Pacific Northwest. I see them on trucks and trains headed to the ports. Stating we 'need' to harvest more trees for housing, is B.S., plain and simple, when we are exploring huge amounts of timber to other countries. These proposals for increased logging and increased logging of mature and old-growth trees and forests should be dropped from the NWFP Amendment and new proposals should be added to increase protections to our mature and old-growth trees and forests.

Preserving biodiversity and connected wildlife habitat across the region should be a core principle of this forest plan amendment. This includes not only threatened species, but others that have been impacted by the loss and fragmentation of their habitat, and those awaiting state and/or federal Endangered Species Act listing decisions.

The amendment should recognize the wide variety of social and economic benefits National Forests provide for local communities and the region as a whole - not just timber, but also clean water, climate stability, quality of life, and outdoor recreation.

The Forest Service must reject plans to weaken core protections of the Northwest Forest Plan, and do the following:

Strengthen protections for mature and old-growth forests to ensure habitat, water quality, and carbon storage, and recruit more mature and old forests to restore a functional ecosystem.

Maintain or expand protections for the network of forest reserves to allow natural processes to flourish, ensure connectivity for wildlife, and support the recovery of imperiled species. Any reduction in forest reserve protections would increase harmful impacts such as habitat destruction, sediment in streams, and carbon loss, further endangering sensitive ecosystems.

Genuinely consult with Tribes, respect their sovereignty, and provide resources to support their full participation in decision-making. The Forest Service must support co-stewardship agreements, cultural burning practices, first food harvesting, and youth education while ensuring equitable access to planning processes. Pairing these components with the Forest Service's plan for weakened environmental protections is a false choice manufactured by the agency.

Address environmental justice by analyzing impacts on air, water, and communities and ensuring fair, sustainable working conditions.

Shift wildfire strategies to prioritize community safety and proven prevention measures over logging.

I believe we need a strong forest plan that incorporates modern science and public values, robust and honest tribal consultation, and the needs of future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.