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Comments: I urge the Forest Service to strengthen protections for mature and old-growth forests to ensure habitat, water quality, and carbon storage. Further, I urge the forest service to recruit more mature and old forests to restore a functional ecosystem.

The Forest Service must reject plans and amendments that will weaken core protections of the Northwest Forest Plan. Protections should be maintained and expanded. Forest reserves are critical to preserving biodiversity, clean water, and long-term benefits to our climate, as well as local and regional economies.

Evidence shows that mature and old-growth forests, moist and dry, will support more jobs and sustainable economic activity if left unlogged. The economic benefits of increased logging, including mature and old-growth forests, will be small, and the net economic and environmental costs will be high.

The DEIS fails to provide a comprehensive assessment of the socioeconomic impacts from elements of amendments that call for increases in predictable lumber supply. It ignores whole bodies of research that show increased timber production would yield no net increase in jobs, but rather a substantial decrease in jobs resulting from the adverse impacts on other sectors of the local and regional economy.

Increased timber production will have a significant negative impact on opportunities for outdoor recreation on federal lands. Managing NWFP lands to provide recreational opportunities far exceeds the value derived from turning trees into logs and stumps.

It is time to cease the logging of mature and old growth forests. Oregon wildfires highlight the need to conserve existing mature forests as replacements for the hundreds of thousands of acres of older forest habitat that have been, and will be lost to disturbance.

Management decisions should reflect Tribal stewardship practices and engage meaningfully with Tribal communities. But pairing this with weakened environmental protections is a false choice manufactured by the agency.

The U.S. is now largely a service economy. The fastest growing regions are those that can attract talented workers, investors, and entrepreneurs across all sectors. Public lands play a pivotal role in attracting and retaining people and businesses. People move here FOR THE MATURE AND OLD-GROWTH FORESTS. They are critical to mitigating climate change. They are resilient against wildfire. They store vast amounts of carbon and provide irreplaceable habit. Logging them will worsen the climate crisis, and be a critical blow to diversity.

The mature and old-growth forests of the Pacific Northwest belong to the public, and that includes me. They can be used responsibly AND we can expand protections for our region's world-class natural amenities. The proposed amendments to the NWFP fail to do so.