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Comments: I'm a lifelong Oregonian and I care deeply about protecting mature and old-growth forests. Old-growth forests, like wetlands, estuaries, or coral reefs, are irreplaceable ecosystems vital to the planet. Losing any more native forest--commercial logging of old-growth forest--is unacceptable and wrong. I'm very concerned about climate chaos and the biodiversity crisis. The natural world is suffering on many levels and the planet is at code red. Forest plans need to be managed for clean water, natural ecosystems, wildlife habitat and connectivity, climate stability, and fire resilience. The focus of fire risk reduction should be on community preparedness, not logging in our forests. I support elements of the proposed amendment that include a beneficial fire approach and support of Indigenous cultural burning and co-stewardship agreements.

I am concerned that the Forest Service's proposed amendment to the NWFP weakens protections for our region's older forests, clean water, and wildlife habitat. If enacted, these changes would significantly increase logging levels across our public forests, open mature and old-growth trees to commercial logging, and sideline the protections that communities, wildlife, and ecosystems depend on. Preserving biodiversity and connected wildlife habitat across the region should be a core principle of this forest plan amendment.

Fire resistance and resilience can be bolstered by preserving and restoring mature and old-growth forests. Fuels and fire management should focus on the home ignition zone and on non-commercial treatments and beneficial fire use, not commercial logging. Indigenous cultural burning and wild-land fire use should be prioritized. Commercial logging for fuel reduction can negatively impact wildlife habitat, remove large fire-resistant trees, introduce invasive species, and create hazardous fire conditions. Standards must ensure that fuel reduction is both needed and effective before logging is allowed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.