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Comments: I have personal, emotional attachments to nature, particularly forests, after growing up on 5 rural acres in Washington state and camping all over the West with my family each summer. I feel reverence when surrounded by towering and fern covered trunks of the ancient trees, feeling a quiet peace and solace that is incomparable yet restorative. The birds and wildlife that thrived in that environment provided such joy and learning about interdependence of species.

It's imperative that we retain our older forests for all Americans to enjoy. Trees don't have a chance to reach 100 years old or more if we don't stop harvesting those 80 years old or more. We need to find ways to harvest only the younger forests and managing and planting working forests.

While I appreciate the work that went into preparing for this major revision of the NW Forest Plan, the following comments are my major concerns.

The Forest Service should retain all of the Tribal inclusion plan components analyzed in the DEIS. 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 wildland 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.

In our local Stillaguamish watershed, I'm very concerned that some of the recent parcel sales, like Stilly Revisited, are on such steep slopes above the river, on the same ridge as the infamous Oso landslide which killed over 40 people and disabled transportation in the area for months, that the hunger for profits and wood products is not taking account of these threats and liabilities.

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 opportunities.

I appreciate this opportunity for the public to weigh in on preserving our precious Northwest forests!