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Comments: I regularly drive through forested land, a lot of it managed for timber. As I pass through hills either covered in trees suspiciously similar in age or recently clear cut, I am depressed by how worthless that land is as habitat for the myriad life that forests typically support. When I finally enter a national forest, I am reminded of what a healthy forest can be- something with inherent beauty and value not to be exploited. As we face unprecedented threats to our ecosystems as a result of climate change and habitat degradation, the ability of land to sequester carbon, filter water, clean the air, and regulate temperature is being pushed to the limit. Limiting or eliminating the ability of federal forests to perform these essential tasks will harm the health of communities living in proximity to federal land as well as communities far away, as the functionality of forests in the Pacific Northwest determine the well-being of the entire world.

I am an avid hiker and I often walk along roads that either are currently or were previously used as logging roads, as well as through habitat that was subject to commercial timber harvesting. In the boundary vegetation along roads or on land that was previously logged is invariably extensive invasive species populations. I've removed hundreds of pounds of ivy, scotch broom, and Himalayan blackberry, all of which grow best in the canopy openings and disturbed habitat created by logging roads and timber harvesting. Maintaining the canopy cover of dense forests like coastal temperate rain forests is critical to the ecosystems they are apart of, which commercial timber practices disregard. Permitting commercial logging creates wildfire risks, impacts protected endangered species, and creates openings for invasive species to spread.

Allowing forests to heal from past commercial logging practices is paramount, and we have to allow forests to continue to grow older. This plan does not adequately protect forests, is not in-line with environmental best practices, and will make the PNW a less beautiful and less resilient place to live. Policy needs to better protect old growth and mature forests, not weaken protections. Carbon sequestration, including allowing trees to grow old, die, and become a part of the landscape, should be the utmost priority for federal land. I applaud the Forest Service for consulting with tribal partners and appreciate that step in the right direction. I also endorse the Coast Range Association's (CRA) comments on the DEIS. Please fully consider the CRA's comments.