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First name: Penelope

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Regional Foresters Jacque Buchanan and Jennifer Eberlien:

I am writing as a concerned citizen and a member of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness who loves our mature and old-growth forests. In addition, I am an avid hiker and camper, and I hope that my four young grandchildren will be able to take their grandchildren hiking and camping in our Pacific Northwest forests just as I do today. Accordingly, I believe that we should do everything we can to protect these forests. If we do not, our land will look like most of Europe, which clear cut its beautiful forests years ago and now has little old-growth left.

The Northwest Forest Plan was a ground-breaking document when it was written thirty years ago. I applaud the Forest Service for wanting to revise that plan as a revision is much needed. In addition, I applaud the appointment of a talented Advisory Committee, with members representing diverse interests, who worked long and hard to propose a set of amendments that they felt would update the Plan. Unfortunately, all four proposed alternatives fall far short of what is needed.

Rather than continuing to protect mature and old-growth trees in the Pacific Northwest, the proposed changes would eliminate protections for unlogged mature forests (80-120 years old) in Late Successional reserves. The proposals would also increase clearcutting of mature and old-growth forests in Matrix lands as well as increase logging in dry forests. In addition, each of the four alternatives includes a mix of positive and negative aspects making it impossible to choose just one of these alternatives.

We are pleased to see that the proposed changes include important measures to expand Tribal inclusion across the Northwest Forest Plan region. These include increased attention to cultural harvesting and access, Tribal co-stewardship agreements, fire stewardship, Tribal workforce development, and Tribal youth education.

In addition to their beauty and their importance as part of the ecosystem in our Wilderness, our mature and old-growth forests play an important part in mitigating the effects of climate change. Executive Order 14072 noted that mature and old-growth forests "play an irreplaceable role in reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions" and promised to "retain and enhance carbon storage" in mature and old-growth forests. In spite of the obvious benefits of these forests,, the proposed alternatives would allow increased logging, including the sale and removal of mature and old-growth trees that are 80 to 120 years old, such that these biodiverse, carbon-rich forests would fail to be protected from logging. Increased logging will impact disproportionately many communities that will suffer severe health impacts. These communities are already subject to environmental injustices and do not deserve to suffer further negative effects.

In summary, none of the proposed alternatives improve our decades old Northwest Forest Plan. Indeed, the proposals seek to weaken protection and conservation of the mature and old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest. Please take this opportunity to reconsider the four proposed alternatives and instead, implement plans that will fully protect mature and old-growth forests

from logging as well as guarantee greater involvement of the Tribes in stewardship and protection of our Pacific Northwest Forests.

Sincerely yours,

Penelope L. Peterson Seattle, WA