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Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service,

I write with both tremendous concern and hope that you will maintain the integrity of the NWFP: maintain and expand current protections to recover mature and old-growth forest habitat, and reject the three proposed amendments to weaken protections and expand logging on national forest lands. Furthermore, that you will not succumb to pressure from logging interests or agency officials and reject any further acres from being withdrawn from the plan (as in 2016, 2.6 million acres were withdrawn by BLM from the NWFP's protections).

I am supportive of changes that increase Tribal consultation and co-stewardship, however, these updates should not be tied to aggressive commercial logging and weakening the conservation provisions of the NWFP.

I was born in Portland and have lived, played, and benefited from the Canopy of the Titans - many of the Forest Ecosystems included in the NWFP - for the majority of my adult life. I would not be the same human I am today if it were not for these awe-inspiring ecosystems. I understand how I am indeed PART of this forest ecosystem. I have received innumerable benefits over the years from these forests, and old-growth forests: clean air, climate (clouds, rain), clean drinking water, recreation area, camping, foraging, bio-diversity, hiking, biking, rock climbing, food, and more. It is OUR responsibility to care for our forests in return.

The old-growth forests throughout the PNW, that the NWFP has safeguarded over the past 3 decades are an INTEGRAL part of our well-being now and for generations to come.

- Old-growth-dependent wildlife like the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet, along with salmon that rely on clean, cold streams, are currently still under threat. Conservation measures that prioritize habitat for these species must remain at the heart of any NWFP update.
- Our remaining old-growth forests are invaluable. Not only must we protect existing old-growth stands, but we must also allow future old-growth - mature forests - to grow in order to recover the forests we have lost to logging. Logging in older forests undermines decades of progress. A credible forest plan should prioritize long-term forest recovery and recruiting more old growth, not short-term logging interests.
- The Northwest Forest Plan encompasses lands occupied and stewarded by over 80 Tribes since time immemorial. As it considers the future management of our national forests, the Forest Service must genuinely consult with Tribes, respect their sovereignty, and provide resources to support their full participation in decision-making. The Forest Service must support co-stewardship agreements, cultural burning practices, first food harvesting, and youth education while ensuring equitable access to planning processes. Pairing these components with the Forest Service's plan for weakened environmental protections is a false choice manufactured by the agency.
- Mature and old-growth trees and forests store an incredible amount of carbon on the landscape and are essential natural climate solutions. These forests store far more carbon than younger forests. The temperate rainforest region of the Pacific Northwest, which the NWFP encompasses much of, stores more carbon per acre than the Amazon. Northwest forests are among the most powerful carbon sinks in the world. Logging mature and old-growth forests releases stored carbon, while natural forest processes lock it away for centuries. Protecting mature and old-growth forests from the threat of logging is one of the most regionally significant climate actions Oregon can take. As addressing climate change becomes ever more urgent, any update to the NWFP must prioritize carbon storage and sequestration as a cornerstone of forest management. The fight against climate change demands that we protect, not exploit, these natural climate solutions.

These changes do not improve wildfire resiliency. Science shows that mature and old-growth forests are naturally more fire-resistant than logged, plantation-style forests. Logging older forests, especially in temperate rainforests,

can increase fire risks by removing fire-resilient trees and resulting in dense, even-aged regrowth.

As a regenerative farmer, land steward, and educator - I teach thousands of people every year who come to the community farm I work at the relationship we have to the land we live on. We teach reciprocity, and that as we take, we also give in return. This week, we are teaching about the water cycle and how trees are a part of that. Deforestation has an impact on this water cycle. Old-growth Forests, alongside other ecosystems, are essential "organs" of a livable planet. Any living organism with only a percentage of its organs would not survive very long. It is short-sighted to remove protections for our forests that could double or triple logging levels.

As an Oregon resident who has had the privilege of enjoying and living amongst these forests and their gifts; as a saddened and angered community member; as a child; as an animal lover and caretaker; as a caretaker of children and with concern for future generations, I urge you!

We need a strong forest plan that addresses modern science and public values, Tribal concerns, and the needs of future generations. There is too much on the line.