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Comments: The Blue Mountains are nationally recognized for their importance to hunters and anglers, and many rural communities are economically tied to the resources they provide. I ask the U.S. Forest Service to include in the Draft Plan a balanced management approach to sustain quality fish and wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing opportunities, and local economies that depend on these public lands.

To achieve this, please consider analyzing and including a management alternative that includes the following:

Elk habitat and security goals for each watershed to ensure elk remain on public lands during the hunting season and beyond.

Active management projects to improve fish and wildlife habitat. These projects can include timber harvest, thinning, prescribed fire, invasive weed management, and riparian restoration so long as they provide ecological benefits.

Desired conditions and guidelines that provide for improved elk habitat security while ensuring continued adequate road access for hunters, anglers, landowners, private companies, and agency staff. This balance will ensure active management and needed access for firefighting activities while improving elk security based on the best available science to maintain quality hiding cover that is at least ½ mile from open roads during key periods of the year.

A draft plan that analyzes and incorporates elk security, increases active management, and thoughtfully manages the needs of access will sustain hunting opportunities, reduce private-land conflicts, and help this landscape continue to deliver for Oregon's sportsmen, Tribes, and rural communities. The need is clear to revise this forest plan that is over 30 years old to better address changes in economic, social, and ecological conditions. Thank you for taking steps forward to revise the plan.