

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/5/2025 7:43:10 PM

First name: Carrie

Last name: Walker

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to express my concern about aspects of the proposed Blue Mountain Forest Plan that appear to prioritize logging and development over the long-term ecological health of these lands. As a Central Oregon resident who regularly recreates in the Blue Mountains, I strongly urge the Forest Service to adopt a plan that places ecological integrity, climate resilience, and sustainable recreation at its core.

When I visit the area, I spend money at local businesses on lodging, food, gear, and other service, which directly supports the economic welfare of communities in the region. A thriving recreation economy depends on healthy, intact forests. This is a long-term, renewable source of economic stability that contrasts sharply with the short-term gains of industrial logging.

Large-scale logging and new road construction threaten critical wildlife habitat, degrade watersheds, and fragment ecosystems that take decades or centuries to recover. Old and mature forests are not obstacles to wildfire resilience, they are among our best defenses against it. With their thick bark, deep roots, and closed canopies, older trees are more fire-resistant than young plantations and help regulate microclimates by retaining moisture and shading forest floors. Removing these ecological anchors increases vulnerability to high-intensity fires rather than reducing it.

Old-growth forests also play a critical role in carbon storage and climate regulation. They provide essential habitat for sensitive species and protect cold-water fisheries that depend on intact riparian environments. Logging these forests undermines their natural resilience and the stability of the entire landscape.

Recreation should support, not damage, these ecological values. I strongly support low-impact, non-motorized recreation, particularly travel on foot. The Blue Mountains are special because of their quiet, undeveloped character. Expanding road networks or allowing e-bikes would increase erosion, disturb wildlife, and erode the sense of solitude and wildness that make this region unique.

I urge the Forest Service to adopt a management plan that 1) Protects old-growth and mature forests as critical climate, wildfire, and biodiversity reserves. 2) Reduces or eliminates new road construction, focusing instead on maintaining existing necessary infrastructure. 3) Prohibits motorized recreation, including e-bikes, in areas managed for ecological integrity and non-motorized use and 4) Emphasizes restoration, ecological stewardship.

Thank you for considering my comment.