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Comments: I am writing to comment on the Draft EIS for the 2026 Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision. These management plans will govern nearly 5 million acres for the next several decades, and I urge the agency to prioritize the long-term health of our public lands by adopting stronger protections for mature forests, wildlife connectivity, riparian systems, and roadless landscapes as these are invaluable resources.

I specifically and respectfully request that you consider the following recommendations.

Restore enforceable protections for large trees. Please reject Alternative 2's maximum flexibility and instead include mandatory standards to protect all trees over 21 inches DBH. These trees represent just 3% of our forest but store 42% of its aboveground carbon and provide essential habitat for at-risk species like the American marten.

These plans should be integrating habitat connectivity at multiple levels throughout the plan. The Blue Mountains are a connectivity corridor of continental importance, and planning for connectivity at the project level is insufficient. A specific management area should be established for habitat connectivity and include standards for connectivity across all relevant plan areas.

Reinstate open road density standards for elk. The shift to a nutrition-based approach lacks any enforceable limits on motorized access in sensitive habitats. You must restore quantitative road density standards (such as 1.5 miles per square mile) to provide the habitat security necessary to keep elk and deer on our public lands.

The agency must maintain mandatory riparian protections. Replacing the quantitative PACFISH and INFISH standards with flexible guidelines that use vague language like "when feasible" is not acceptable. The plans must include mandatory standards for aquatic and riparian habitats to protect the systems that support over 80% of forest wildlife.

Lasting, forest-level protection for all roadless areas and a harder look at potential Wilderness quality lands is a necessity. Please create a management area similar to 2A - Roadless Area in Alternative 3 that will provide permanent safeguards for our 722,000 acres of roadless lands. These plan components should mirror the 2001 Roadless Rule to ensure these landscapes are protected from logging and road building even if national regulations are rescinded.