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Comments: The Alternative 2 draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Blue Mountains Forest Plan does not protect old-growth trees and mature (trees over 21inch DBH) forests in the Blue Mountain range.

Eastern Oregon's wet mountainous areas have great potential for growing huge (carbon storing) fire resistant trees. These mature forests provide watershed which local communities rely on for their water source. They cool the air and temper extreme weather and store carbon in their leaves, branches, trunks and roots. Diverse mature forests are much needed habitat for wildlife. And for the public they are places for fishing, birdwatching, hunting and hiking.

Logging old-growth forests doesn't stop fires. As trees grow wider and taller, their bark thickens, giving them a natural resistance to wildfires, fortifying the overall resilience of the forest. Old-growth stands are often cooler, holding moisture that can moderate wildfire behavior, and help wildlife find refuge from extreme heat during the height of summer.

Bulldozing new roads and increased logging creates conditions that increase fire risk as profit-focused companies remove high-value trees. One could think that increasing logging could decrease the chance of wildfires. The opposite would occur. Increasing logging and bulldozing roads opens sun penetration and creates dryer conditions and higher wind speeds that increase wildfire risk.

In recent years, Oregon's timber industry has accounted for the largest portion of the state's climate emissions. Oregon's roads are currently replete with logging trucks hauling tens of thousands of pounds of tree boles. Trees that were previously actively sequestering atmospheric carbon dioxide and providing refuge.

The mature trees are worth more to humanity standing!

Please keep Alternative 1 or alter Alternative 3 to keep the 2001 Roadless Rule protections and keep mature intact diverse forests growing.

Thank you for your consideration.