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First name: Steve

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision

Dear Blue Mountains Revision Team,

Adopt Alternative 2 and increase active forest management to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire and improve forest conditions.

Move beyond the Eastside Screens and the 21-inch diameter limit so professional land managers can make decisions based on current science, actual forest conditions, and the needs of individual projects.

Manage for the full range of forest conditions by recognizing the importance of young forests and early seral habitat along with older forests.

Support eastern Oregon's remaining forest products infrastructure with a predictable federal timber supply that helps sustain local mills, logging contractors, and the skilled workforce needed to accomplish forest management.

Provide greater flexibility to manage Roadless areas where wildfire, insects, disease, and other forest conditions need to be addressed.

Allow active management near streams and waterways when treatments can reduce wildfire risks, improve forest conditions, and help protect watersheds.

Eastern Oregon's national forests face serious threats from severe wildfire, insects, and disease. We are already losing too many forest acres to these threats, and we need to do more active management to improve forest conditions and reduce wildfire risks before more forests are lost.

The Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision is an important opportunity to change that direction. The new plans should give professional land managers the flexibility to manage the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa Whitman National Forests based on current science and actual conditions on the ground.

I support Alternative 2 because it provides the best path toward more active management. According to the Forest Service, it would reduce the risk of high severity wildfire more than the other alternatives and improve forest conditions at the fastest rate and greatest scale.

I also support removing the Eastside Screens and the 21 inch diameter limit. Professional land managers should be able to decide which trees should be retained or removed based on forest conditions and the needs of individual projects. The plans should also manage for a full range of forest conditions, including young forests and early seral habitat as well as older forests.

Eastern Oregon also needs the mills, logging contractors, and skilled workers who make active forest management possible. We continue to lose this infrastructure, and without enough timber from federal forests, it will become even harder and more expensive to get needed work done.

The final plans should also provide greater flexibility to manage Roadless areas and forests near streams and waterways. These lands face wildfire, insect, and disease threats too, and managers should be able to reduce

hazardous fuels and improve forest conditions when treatments are needed.

Please adopt Alternative 2 and approve forest plans that allow more active management across the Blue Mountains. This is an important opportunity to improve the health of our national forests while supporting the communities and forest products infrastructure needed to care for them.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Steve Akehurst