Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/1/2026 7:00:00 AM
First name: Emily
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision Team,

I am writing in opposition of the management changes being proposed in the 2026 Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision DEIS, especially the proposed drastic increases in logging old growth forests and eliminating the 21" Rule. These proposed revisions

do not steward the natural resources of the Blue Mountains or safeguard those wild areas for future generations. Mature, old growth forests are not high-yield, high-turnover crop fields that can be resown frequently. We can do so much damage, even irrevocable

damage, to these forests and the ecosystems they support in far less time than it will take to heal and regrow them. Compared to secondary forests and newer trees, old growth trees are more fire resistant, sequester more carbon, and provide necessary habitat

for a multitude of species. These are valuable benefits at all times, and especially now in the face of increasingly intense wildfire seasons and rising CO2 levels. Now is the time to support and strengthen these vital wild areas, not degrade them.

In his essay "A Native Hill," the recently deceased Wendell Berry writes of the centuries-long degradation of the forests and farmlands of his home, degradation that came about by ignoring what the land was good for (and what was good for the land)

and instead forcing it to yield unsuitable profits in unsuitable quantities by unsuitable methods. "My understanding of what is best for [the land] is the tragic understanding of hindsight, the awareness that I have been taught what was here to be lost by

the loss of it. We have lived by the assumption that what was good for us would be good for the world. And this has bred the even flimsier assumption that we could know with any certainty what was good even for us. We have fulfilled the danger of this by making

our personal pride and greed the standard of our behavior toward the world -- to the incalculable disadvantage of the world and every living thing in it." We have the painful gift of hindsight thanks to what we have already lost. We have the choice now to

stop this destructive trend and instead steward our wild places with an eye toward its longevity and wholeness, far beyond this year or decade.

I urge you to analyze and adopt an alternative which:

Protects mature trees and forest stands, leaving in place the "21 inch rule".

Prioritizes ecosystem health over commercial logging. Pointedly, this does not mean using wildfire to justify commercial harvest. Wildfire treatments should only be undertaken when and where absolutely necessary, should prioritize prescribed

and cultural burning, and should be guided by the best available science.

Prioritizes habitat connectivity across the management area.

Includes explicit protections for Inventoried Roadless Areas as they currently exist, and expands wilderness protections.

Includes management plans for species of conservation concern.

Includes a plan to manage the landscape for greatest carbon sequestration benefit.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Emily Blackwell