

## **Intro**

Dear Regional Foresters Jacqueline Buchanan and Jennifer Eberlien,

Please accept this comment as part of the scoping period for the proposed Northwest Forest Plan amendment.

- Things to consider: Why are you submitting a comment? Why do you care? Talk about the ways you enjoy Mt Hood and what you value about the forest and other forests in our region!
  - Some of Bark's values: Clean air and water, biodiversity, recreation, source of food and medicine, and cultural and spiritual connections

## **Sustainability of Mature and Old-Growth Ecosystems**

The Northwest Forest Plan was instrumental in protecting much of the remaining old-growth forests in our region, ensuring that these places can continue to function as habitat for endangered species and other plants and animals associated with these forests. But not all of the remaining old-growth was protected. Amendments to the plan must protect the remaining old-growth forests and trees outside of reserves and work to grow, expand, and connect these vital ecosystems.

- Things to consider: How do you feel about old-growth and mature forests? Do you have ideas for what the Forest Service should (or should not) do to protect these ecosystems?

## **Fire “Resistance and Resilience”**

Since time immemorial, fire has had a critical role across the northwest and will continue to shape these landscapes and ecosystems into the future. Amendments to the plan need to recognize the important role of fire and work to shift policy away from full suppression of all fires. Amendments should prioritize protecting communities, while also recognizing that during extreme weather events, the effectiveness of “fuels treatments” is dramatically reduced.

Amendments should bolster efforts to reintroduce beneficial fire to dry forest ecosystems while prohibiting “fuels treatments” that aren't grounded in the current and growing understanding of fire and its role in the variety of forest types across the Northwest Forest Plan area.

- Things to consider: Fire can be a difficult and emotional topic to discuss. How do you feel about fire? What are some things you would like to see change?

## **Incorporate Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK)**

The Northwest Forest Plan does not include the traditional ecological knowledge held within the varied and diverse tribes that are indigenous to the region – something the original authors of the plan openly regret. The ancestors of these tribes shaped and stewarded the landscapes and ecosystems now managed by the Forest Service and the Northwest Forest Plan. Incorporating Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and goals into the proposed amendment is essential – especially (but not limited to) the beneficial use of fire.

## **Climate Change**

Climate change caused by a reliance on fossil fuels is projected to bring about a wide range of impacts to northwest forests and our understanding of the natural processes which shape these ecosystems. Amendments must recognize the incredible carbon capture and storage potential of northwest forests – especially forests of the western cascade and coastal ranges of Washington and Oregon.

- Things to consider: How else can Mt. Hood and other forests in our region mitigate impacts from climate change?
  - Some of Bark's ideas: Climate refugia for sensitive plant and animal species, water capture and storage, flood mitigation

## **Communities**

There are countless communities scattered across our region whose identities, cultures, and economies are linked to the forests managed under the Northwest Forest Plan. Amendments to the plan must recognize the social and economic changes that have occurred in the 30 years since the plan's creation and strive to build a workforce based on restoration and reciprocity.

- Things to consider: If you're reading this, you probably live in one of these communities! Do you feel tied to Mt Hood (or another forest) in some way? How do you think these communities should fit into Forest Service management goals?

## **Final thoughts**

- How do you feel? What are you worried about? What concerns do you have about any potential amendments?