



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

A photograph of a forest stream with water cascading over mossy rocks. The background is a dense forest with green foliage.

Northwest Forest Plan Amendment DEIS Background and Overview December 5, 2024

Planning Team

Presenters:

Shasta Ferranto

Special Assistant to the Regional Forester
Pacific Northwest Region

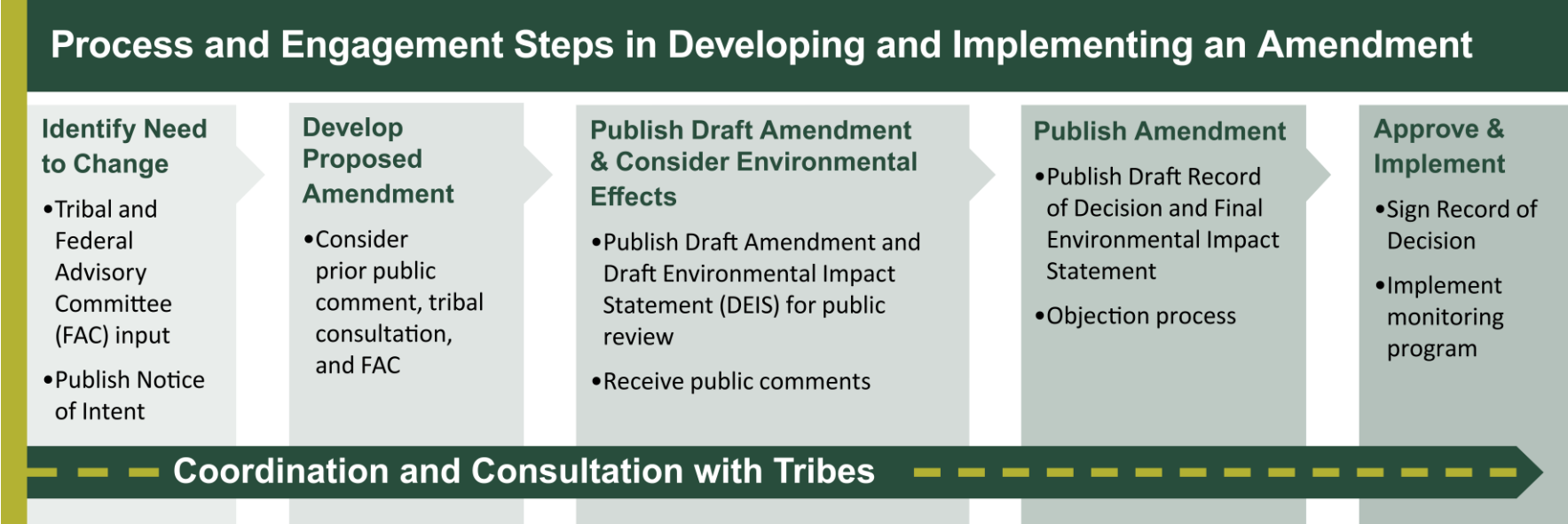
Priya Shahani

NWFP Amendment Lead
Planning Service Center

Team Member Expertise:

- Project Management
- Silviculture
- Forestry
- Economics
- Social Science
- Recreation
- Ecology
- Fire Ecology
- Fire Operations
- Air Quality
- Wildlife Biology
- Wildlife Ecology
- Aquatics
- Plant Biology
- Climate change
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Cultural Resources
- Tribal Engagement
- GIS
- NEPA
- Public Engagement
- Communications

Amendment Process



120 days following release:

Webinars and public meetings
Opportunity to review the draft and submit comments



We Are Here:
Draft EIS published Nov 15, 2024

Engagement



Federal Advisory Committee (FAC)

- Established July 2023
- Volunteer members
- Public meetings that are livestreamed



More details: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r6/nwfpfac>

Federal Advisory Committee

American Forest Resource Council
Forest Resource Association
Fire Generation Collaborative
Wildland Firefighter
Kittitas County Commissioner
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Watershed Research and Training Center
California Conservation Corps*
Retired - Bureau of Land Management
The Mountaineers
Straub Outdoors
Silvix Resources

University of Washington
University of Oregon
Oregon State University
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
Karuk Tribe
Tulalip Tribes
Snoqualmie Indian Tribe
Yakama Nation
Nez Perce Tribe
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

**Resigned due to competing demands.*

BACKGROUND

Photo: Old Fir Forest on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest.

1994 Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP)

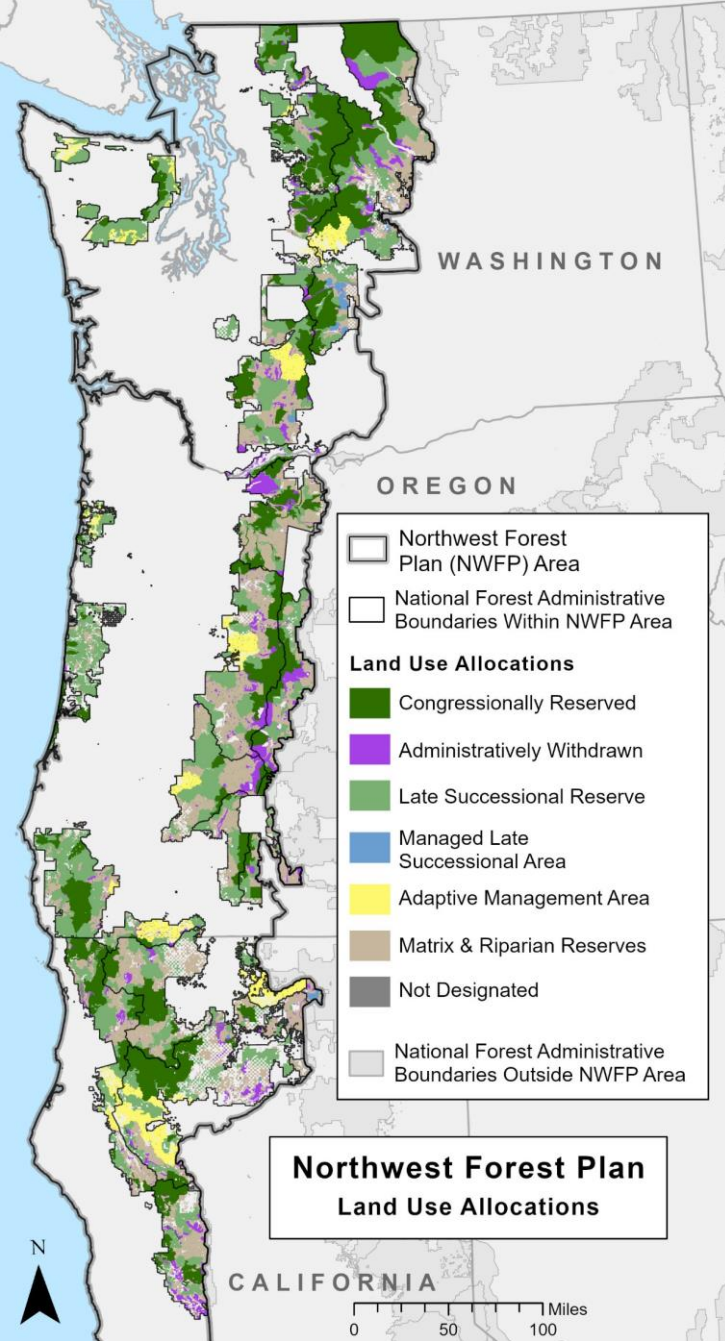


- **24 million acres** of Federally managed land
- **19 million acres** of Forest Service managed land, across 17 National Forests

The NWFP landscape is stratified by:

Land use allocations:

- Late Successional Reserves
- Matrix
- Adaptive Management Areas
- Riparian Reserves



Science and Engagement Foundation

Monitoring – Focused on regional-scale questions

Public Listening Sessions 2015 – on NWFP and associated Forest Plans

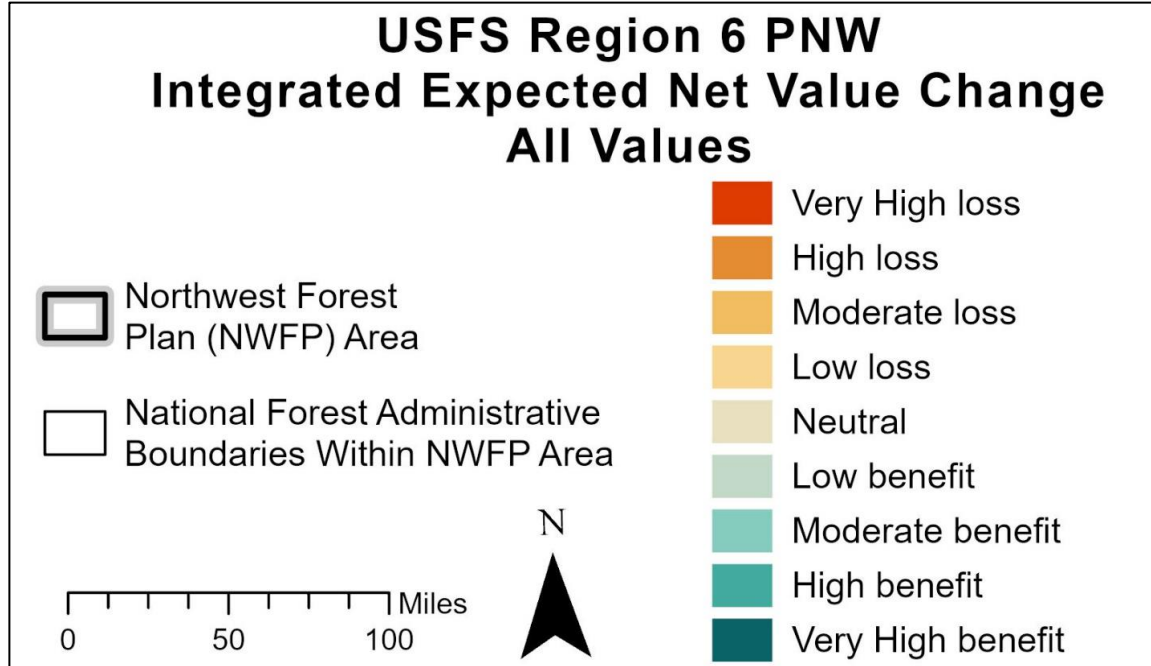
Stakeholder Interviews 2015

Science Synthesis 2018 – from Pacific NW and Pacific SW Research Stations; focus on NWFP forests

Bioregional Assessment 2020 - Assessed current conditions and trends across broad landscape



Wildfire Risk in the Pacific Northwest Region



Challenges



Fire Resilience

**Economic
Benefits**

Habitat

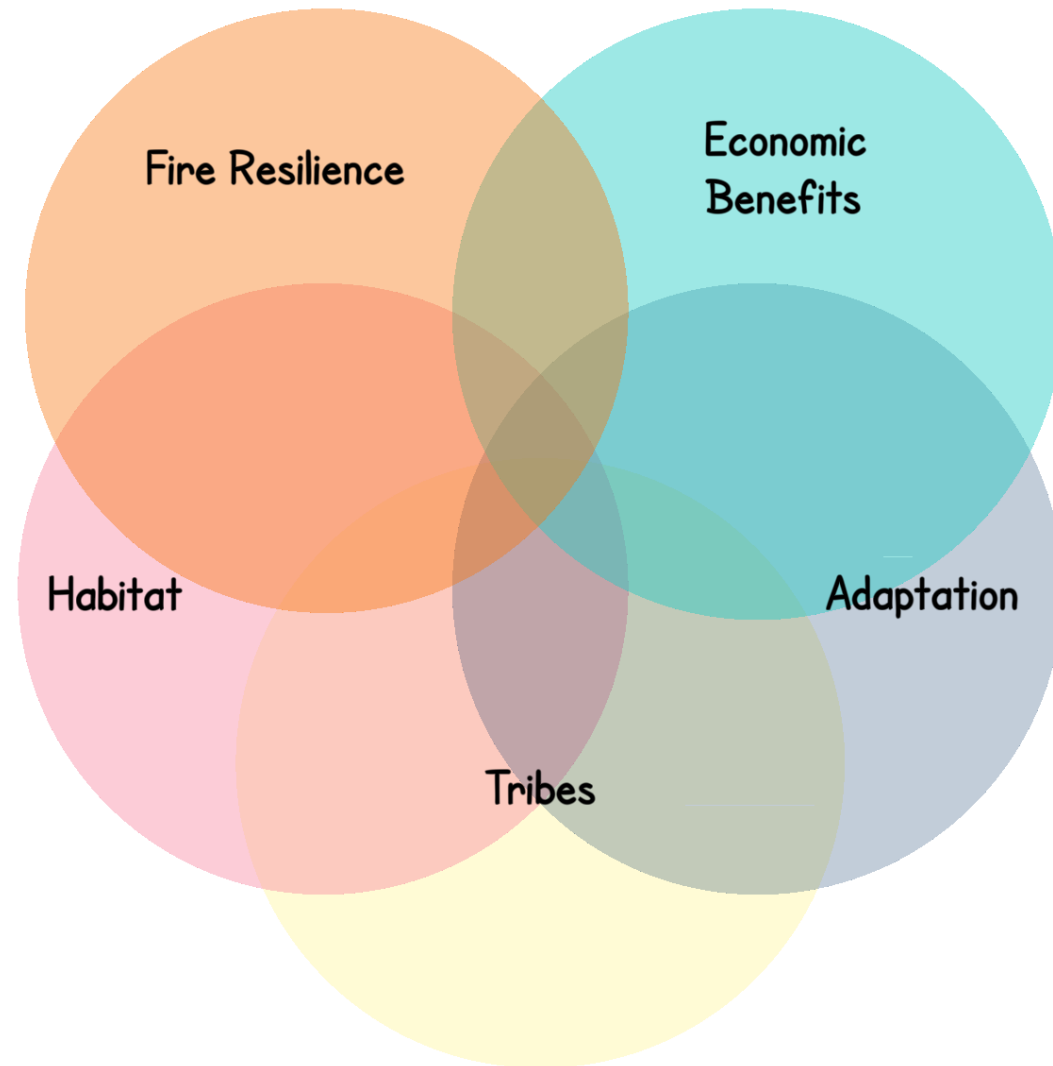
Tribes

Adaptation

Key issues framed in Notice of Intent

1. Improve **fire resistance** and **resilience**
2. Provide a predictable supply of **timber and non-timber products**, and other **economic opportunities** to support the long-term sustainability of communities
3. Restore and conserve **habitat** for at-risk species
4. Meet the agency's general **trust responsibilities** and incorporate **Tribal** governments, representatives, and communities into planning and implementation.
5. Strengthen capacity to **adapt to a changing climate**

Key Issues Framed in Notice of Intent



Draft EIS

- Translates input into **plan content** by section
- Analyzes **environmental effects** of four alternatives
- Gather feedback what to include in the **final plan amendment**

Photo: Photo: Eagle Creek Trail on the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

Key Issues

Fire Resilience

Economic Benefits

Habitat

Tribes

Adaptation

DEIS Sections

Fire Resilience

Economic Opportunities & Sustainable Communities

Forest Stewardship

Tribal Inclusion

Climate, Ecosystem Integrity & Carbon

Key Issues

Fire Resilience

Economic
Benefits

Habitat

Tribes

Adaptation

DEIS Sections

Fire Resilience

Economic Opportunities &
Sustainable Communities

Forest Stewardship

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Climate, Ecosystem
Integrity & Carbon

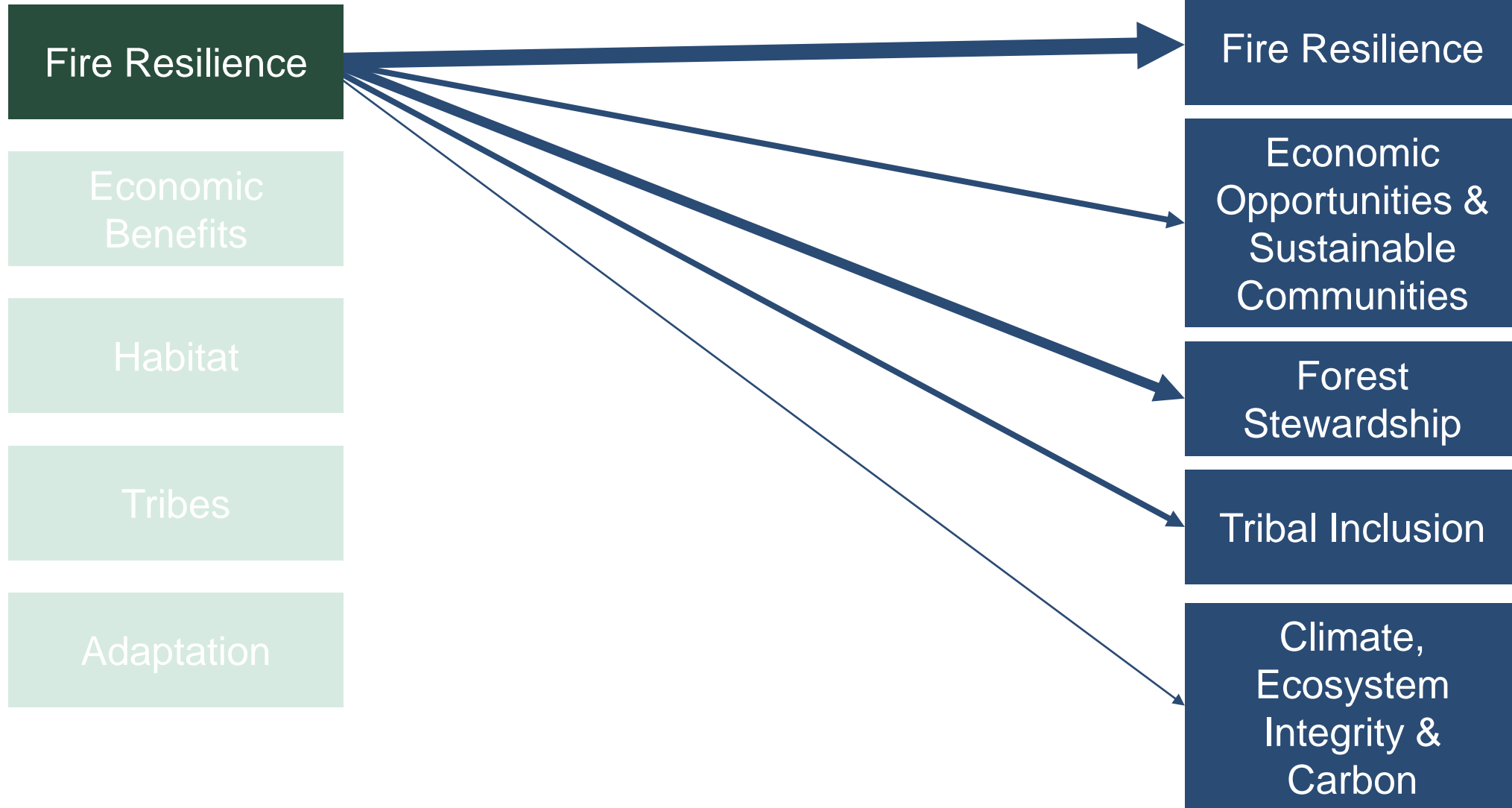
Improve **fire resistance** and **resilience**



Photo: Goat Rocks Fire, Gifford Pinchot NF

Key Issues

DEIS Sections



Hazardous Fuel Reduction

- Timber Harvest
- Mechanical Thinning
- Pile Burning
- Prescribed Fire



Photo: Winter Pile Burning on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.



Fire Adapted Communities

Community Protection Areas

- **Reducing hazardous fuels** prioritized over other management direction
- Boundaries determined through **coordination** with communities
- Otherwise, apply **within 1 mile** of a community

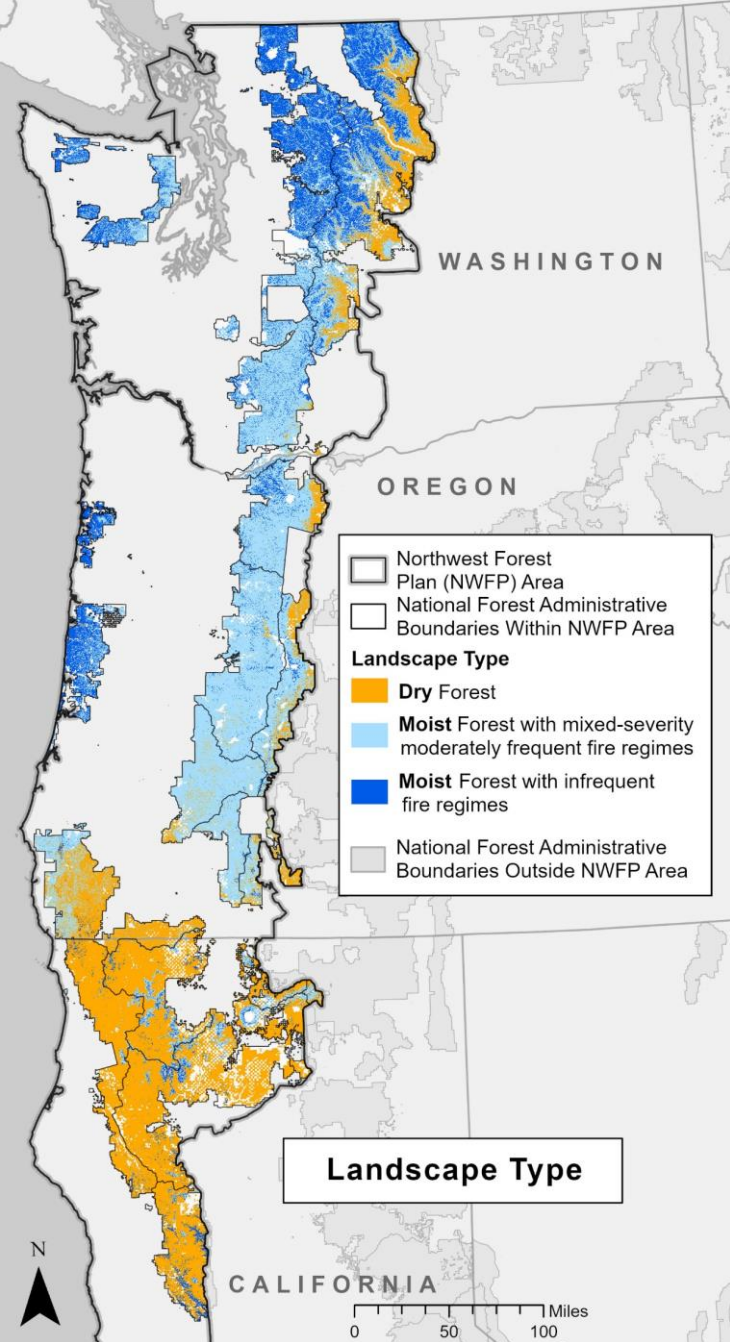
Photo: Pile burning near a structure.

Resilient Landscapes

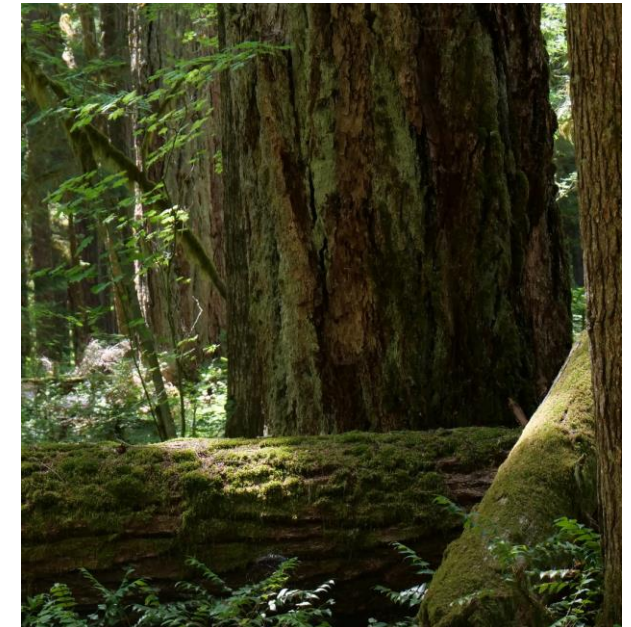


Photo: Treated area on the Deschutes National Forest

Landscape Type



Moist Forest

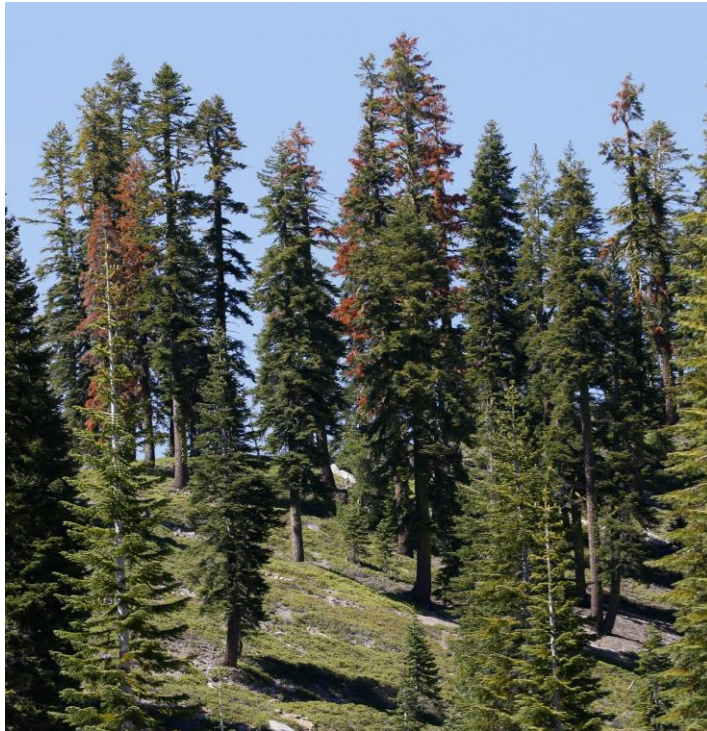


Dry Forest

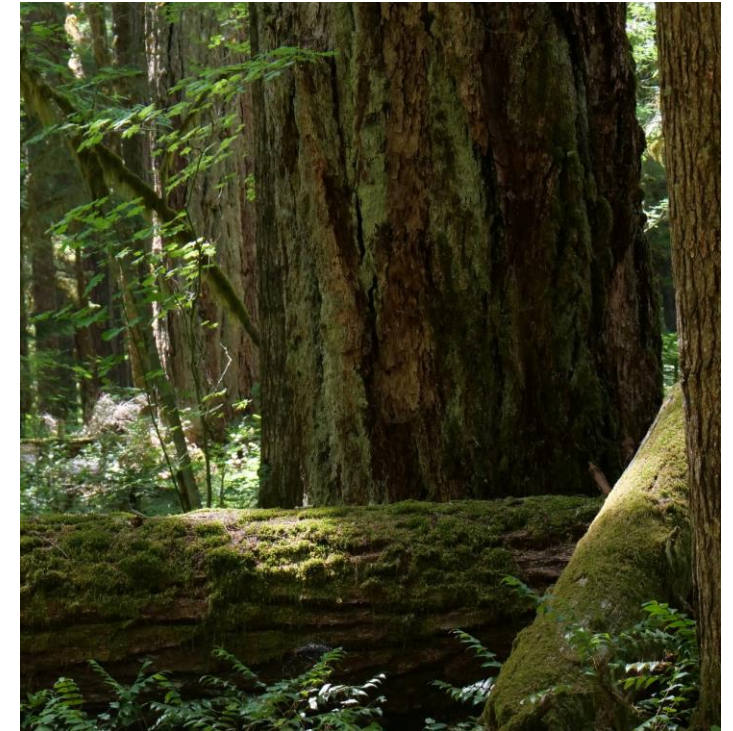


Dry Forest

Moist Forest



Frequent, low severity
(and some moderate severity)



Infrequent, high severity
(and some mixed severity)

Dry Forest

- Natural role of **frequent, low-severity fire** on the landscape
- **Patchy** forest conditions with **lower stand densities** and scattered large, old trees.

Moist Forest

- **Patchy wildland fire**, which creates gaps via stand replacement fire, thins some forest stands, and leaves some patches less affected.
- **Multiple age cohorts** including old-growth forest stands.

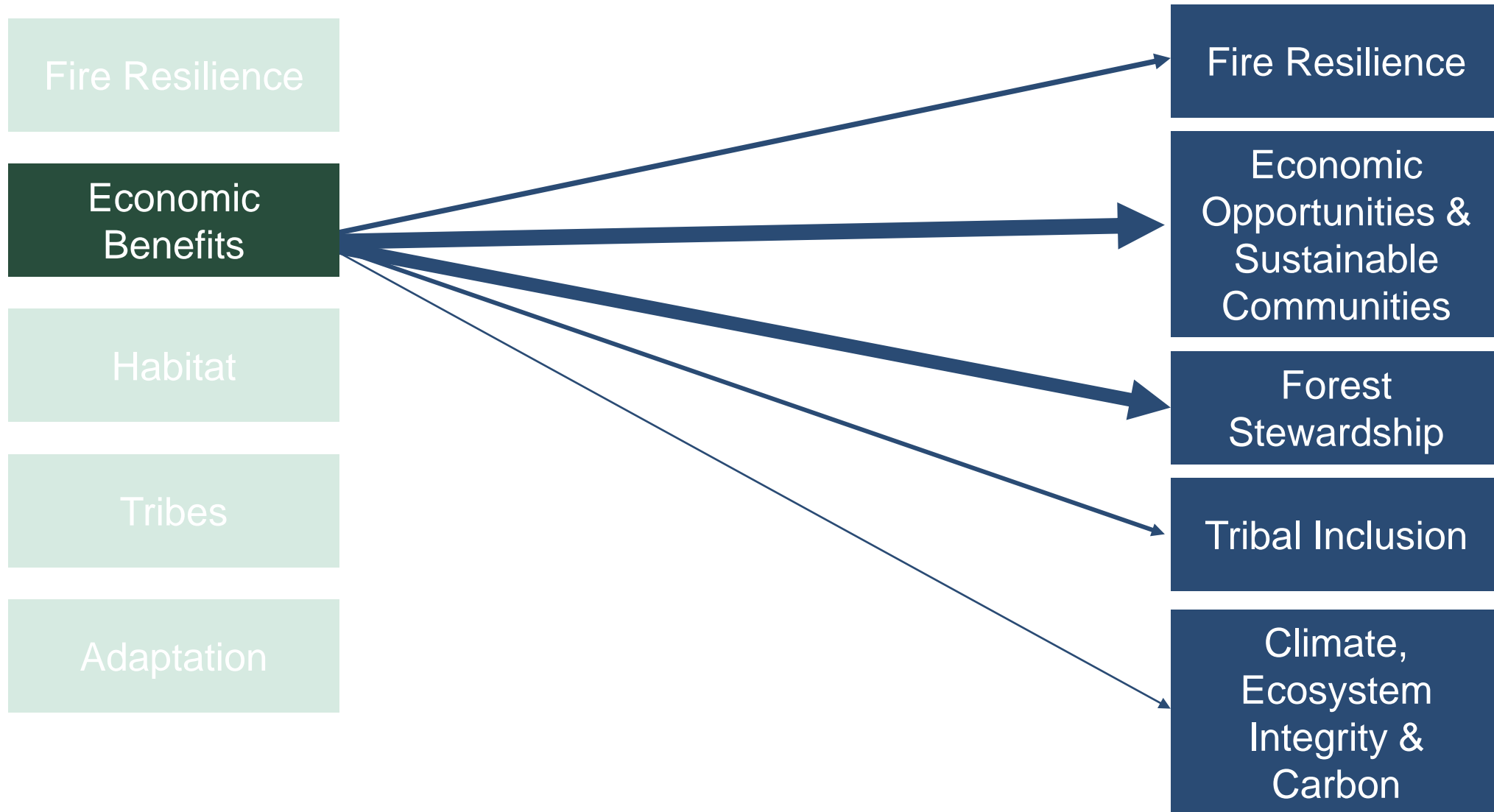


Provide a predictable supply of **timber and non-timber products**, and other **economic opportunities** to support the long-term sustainability of communities

Photo: Mt. Adams on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Key Issues

DEIS Sections



Sustainable Communities

- Reduced wildfire risk
- Supply of timber & non-timber products
- Local workforce
- Youth engagement & training



Photo: City street in Stevenson, WA

Supply of Timber

Contribute to economic sustainability through restoration treatment of 660,000 to 810,000 acres per decade (5,900 to 13,500 MMBF sold), with additional salvage treatments expected to contribute 33,000 acres and 223 MMBF per decade in dry and moist forest Matrix, AMA, LSR and Riparian Reserve lands across the Northwest Forest Plan area, by using ecological forestry methods while also conserving and retaining older trees and achieving other desired conditions.



Photo: Ponderosa pine trees after a prescribed fire on the Deschutes National Forest

Forest Stewardship

	DRY		MOIST	
	Matrix	LSR	Matrix	LSR
Timber Harvest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorized • Retain trees older than 150 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorized to achieve restoration objectives • Retain trees older than 150 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorized in stands established after 1905 • Authorized to achieve ecological objectives in stands established between 1825 – 1905 • Retain stands established before 1825 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorized to achieve ecological objectives in stands younger than 120 years • No harvest in stands over 120 years old
Salvage Harvest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorized • Retain all live trees, as well as the largest, oldest dead trees as snags. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorized to achieve fuel management when beneficial to ecological goals, fire resilience, wildlife needs, and local communities. • Retain all live trees, as well as a high number of large snags. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorized • Retain all live trees, as well as the largest, oldest dead trees as snags. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Authorized

Local Workforce, Youth Engagement & Training



Photo: Two people doing trail work on the Columbia River Gorge.

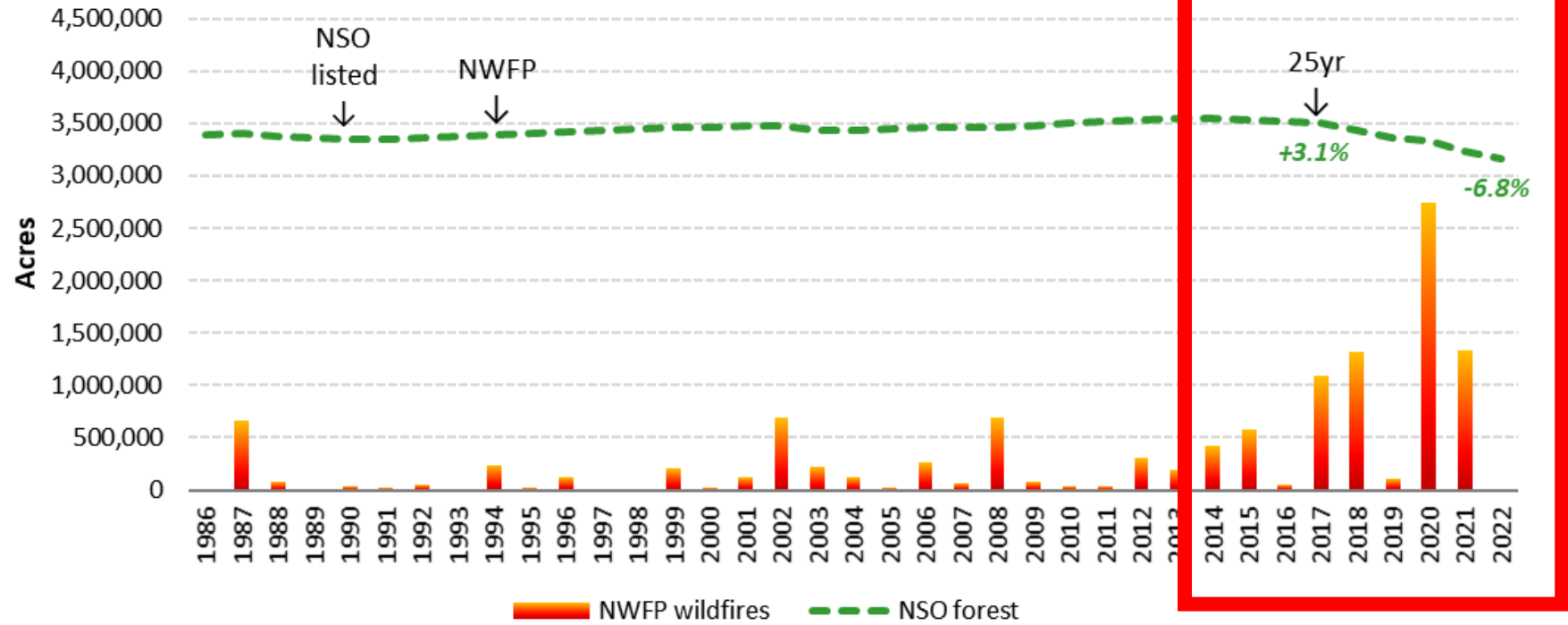
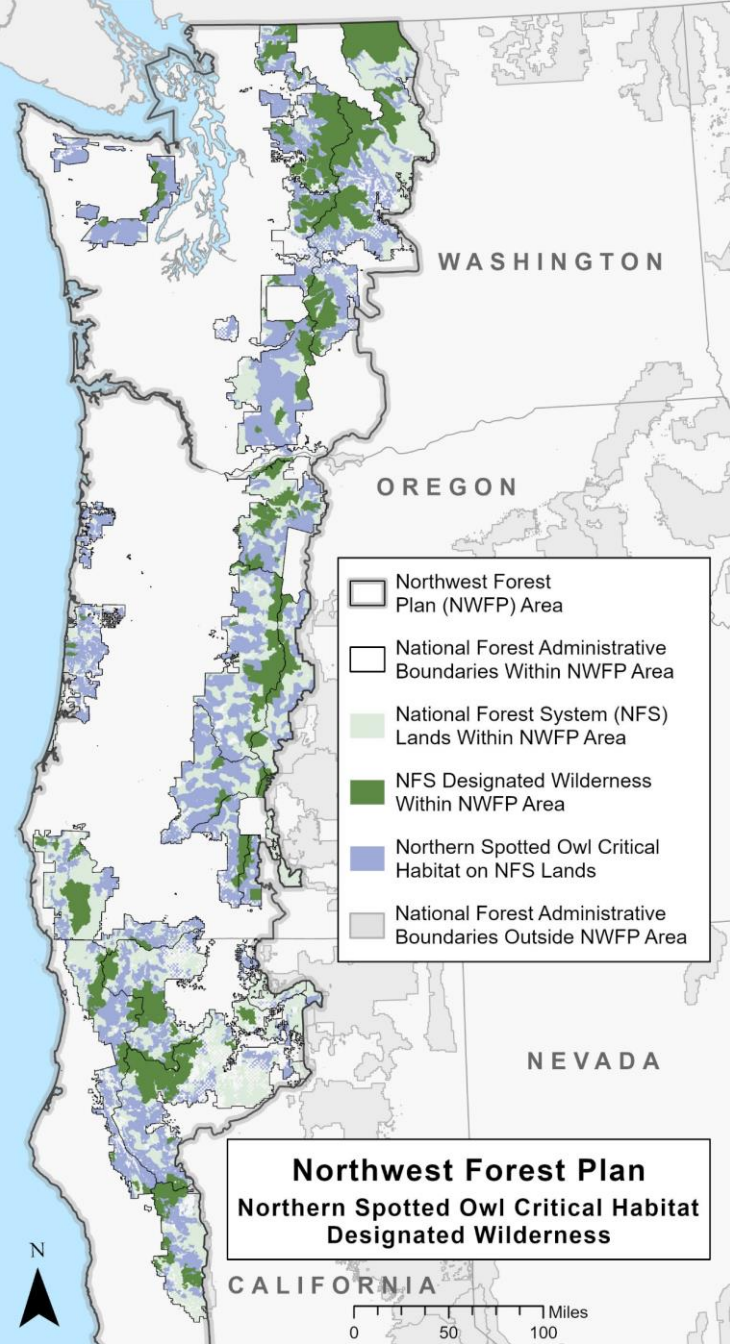
- Supports **1,380 to 8,890 additional jobs** in forest products employment through increased timber harvest
- **Contracts and partnerships** with local governments, businesses, tribes, and organizations
- **Youth engagement programs** to cultivate the next generation of natural resource professionals

A photograph of a dense forest with large trees and a moss-covered log. The scene is filled with green foliage and sunlight filtering through the canopy. A large, moss-covered log lies horizontally across the middle ground. The background shows tall, slender trees reaching towards the sky.

Restore and conserve **habitat** for at-risk species

Photo: Wind River Experimental Forest on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Decline in Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) Habitat



Davis, et al. 2022. Northwest Forest Plan—the first 25 years (1994–2018): status and trends of northern spotted owl habitats. Gen. Tech. Rep. PNW-GTR-1003. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. 38 p. <https://doi.org/10.2737/PNW-GTR-1003>.

Key Issues

DEIS Sections

Fire Resilience

Economic Benefits

Habitat

Tribes

Adaptation

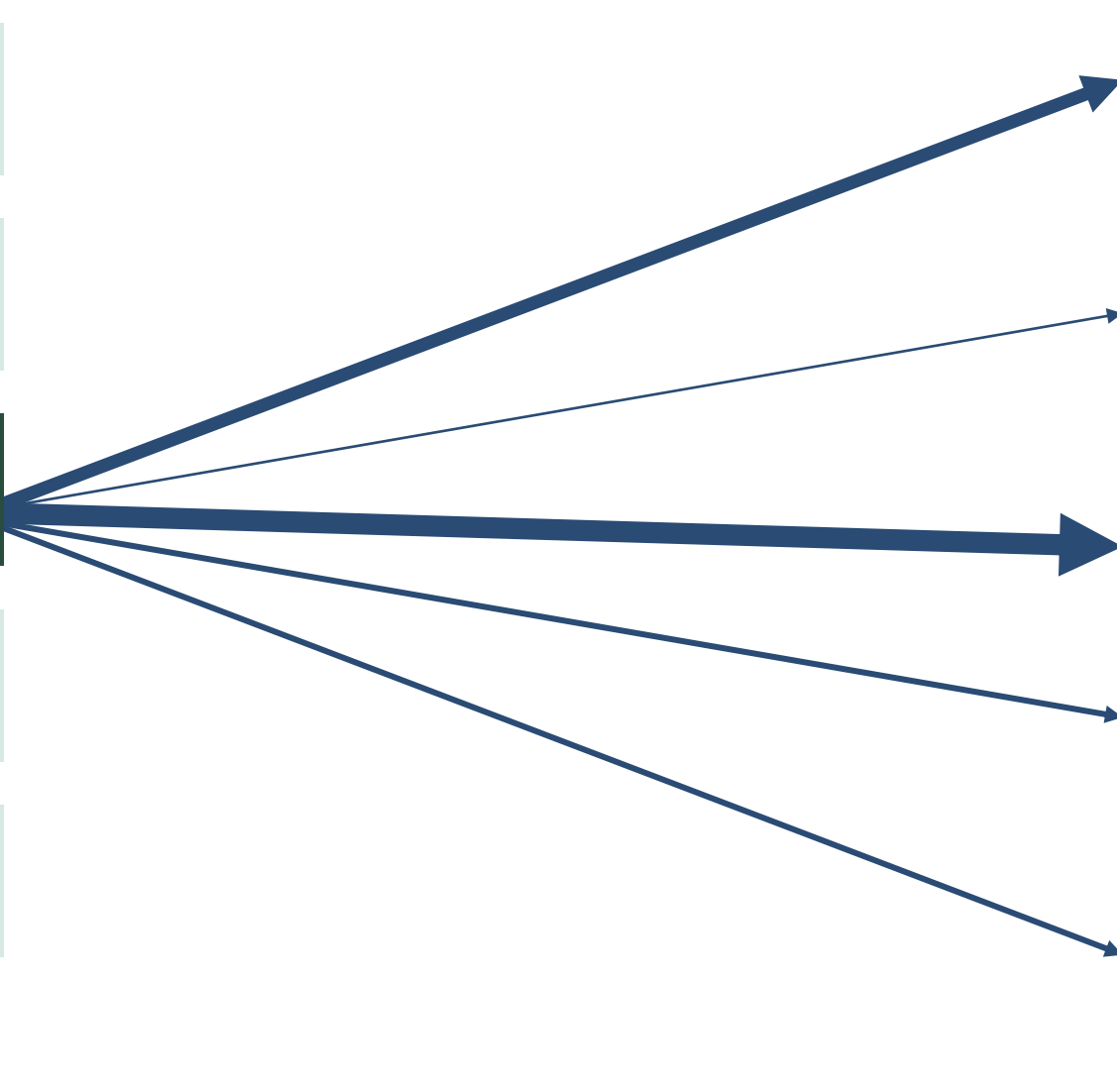
Fire Resilience

Economic Opportunities & Sustainable Communities

Forest Stewardship

Tribal Inclusion

Climate, Ecosystem Integrity & Carbon



Habitat Conservation

- Reduced wildfire risk
- Retention of old growth forest conditions
- Dry vs. moist forest distinction



Photo: Northern Spotted Owl Fledgling, Mt Hood National Forest

Dry Forest

- Emphasis on **restoration**
- **Retention of old trees**
(>150 years)

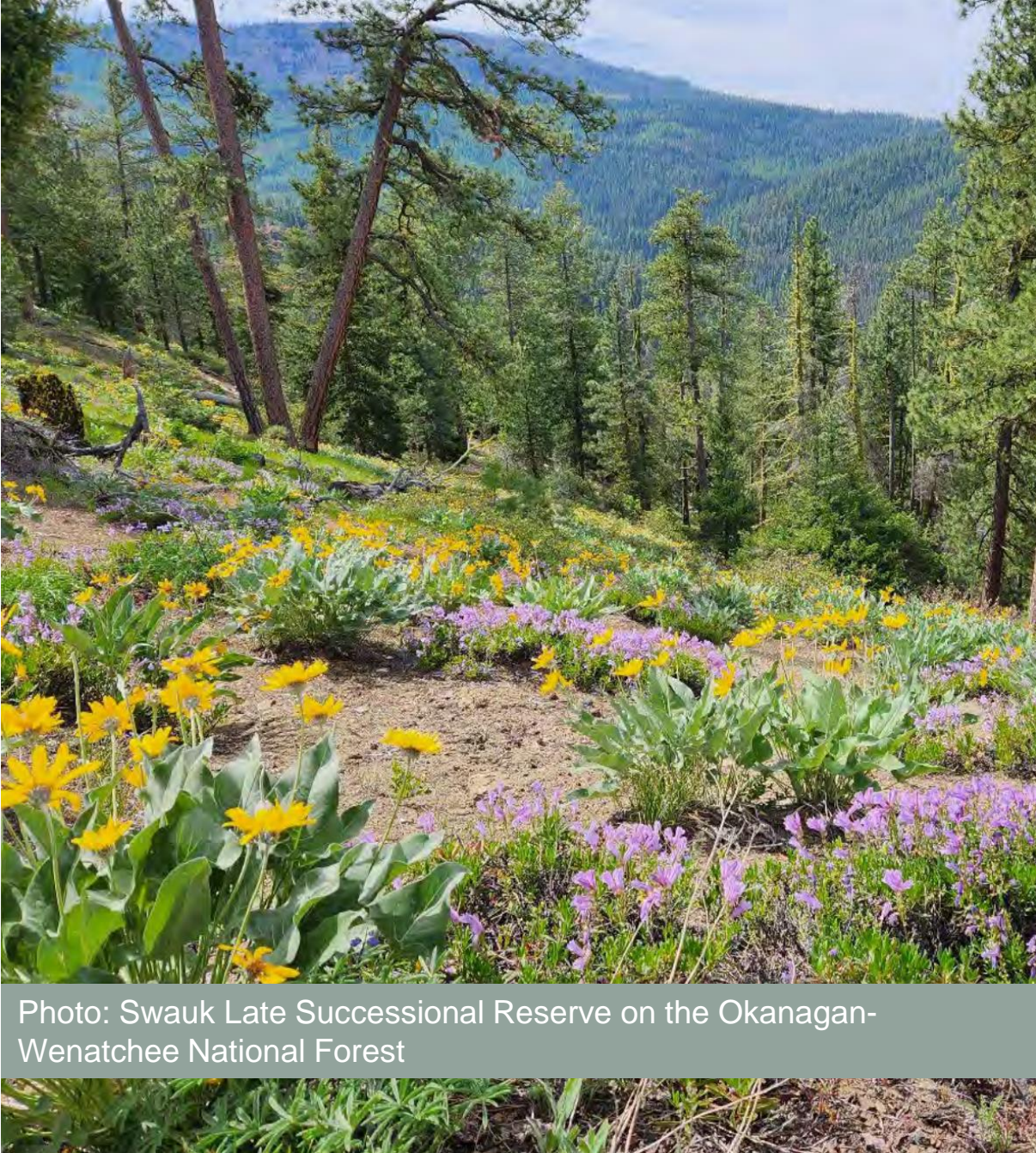


Photo: Swauk Late Successional Reserve on the Okanagan-Wenatchee National Forest

Moist Forest

Matrix	Late Successional Reserves
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage for ecological objectives in stands established between 1825 – 1905• Retain stands established before 1825	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No harvest in stands over 120 years old• Treatments in stands under 120 years designed to promote old-growth conditions



Photo: Wind River Experimental Forest on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Aquatic Conservation Strategy

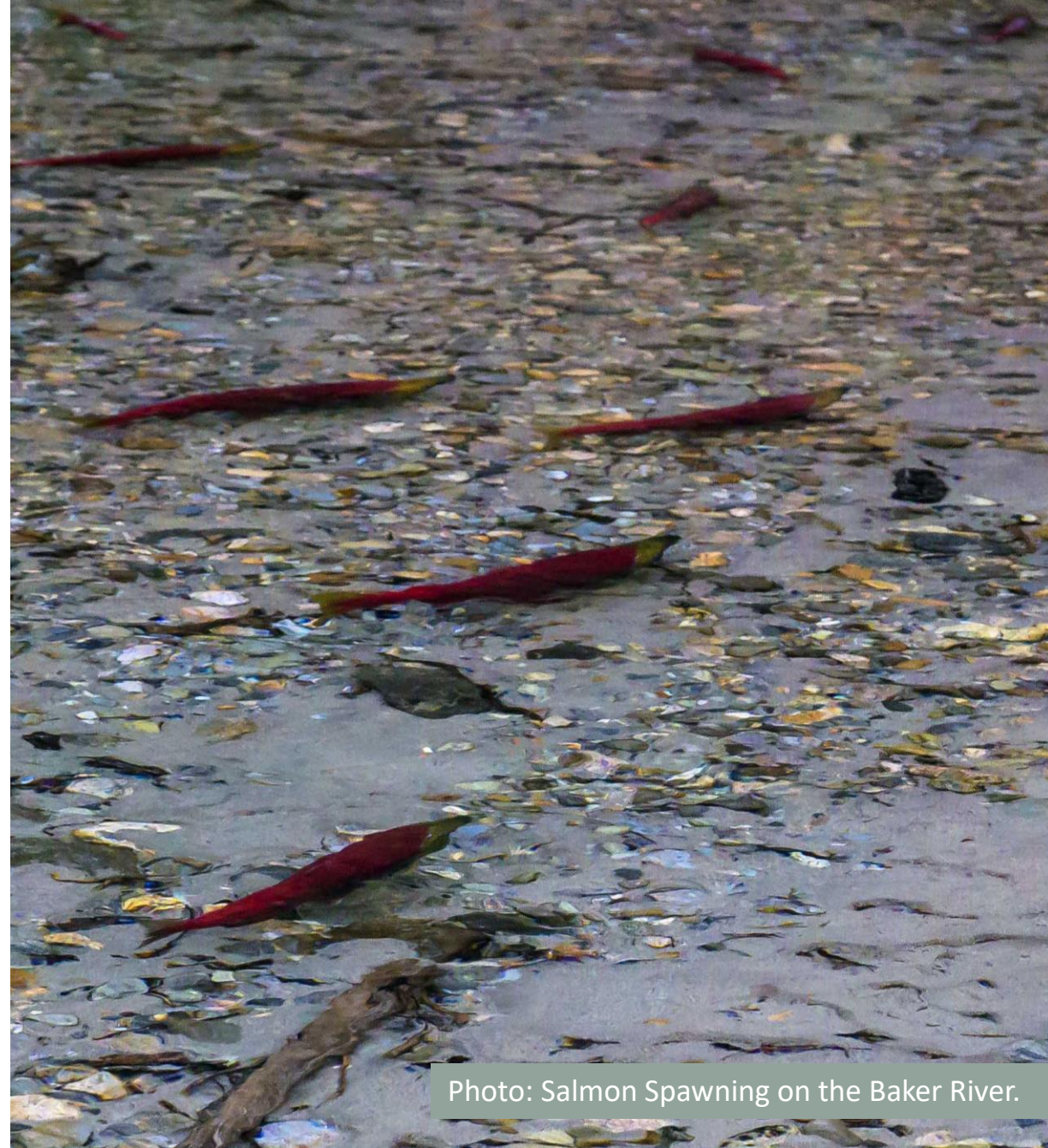


Photo: Salmon Spawning on the Baker River.

Meet the agency's general **trust responsibilities** and incorporate **Tribal governments**, representatives, and communities into planning and implementation.



Photo: Trout Lake, Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Key Issues

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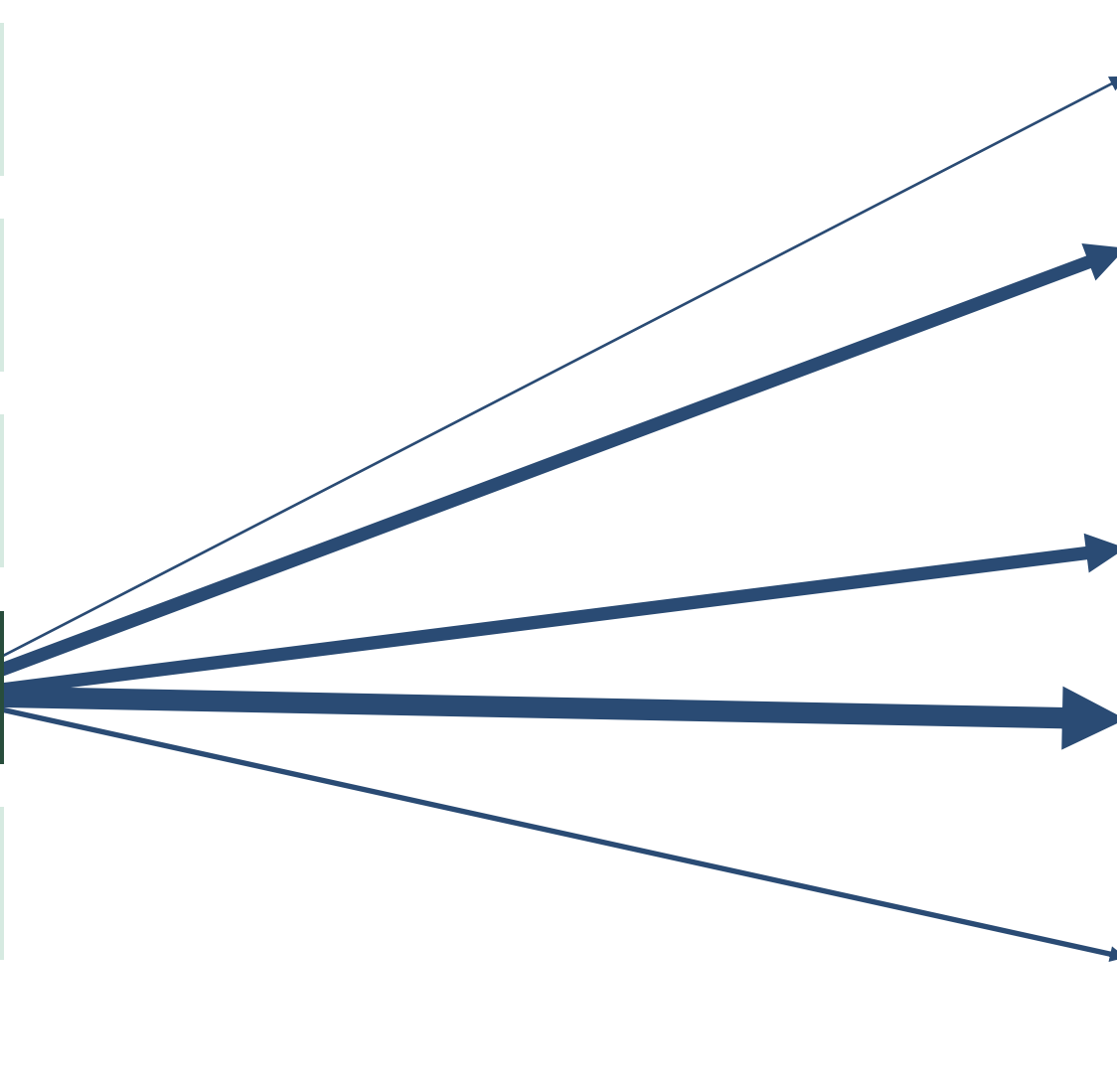
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Framework for Tribal Content

- Access and gathering
- Biodiversity
- Co-stewardship
- Forest Stewardship
- Indigenous Knowledge
- Treaty & Protected Tribal Rights
- Awareness and Coordination
- Workforce

Photo: Huckleberry bushes on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Treaty and Other Protected Tribal Rights

“Forest Service staff have **proficient understanding** of treaty and tribal rights, federal trust responsibilities ... as well as **cultural competency** to work respectfully with unit-associated Tribes.”

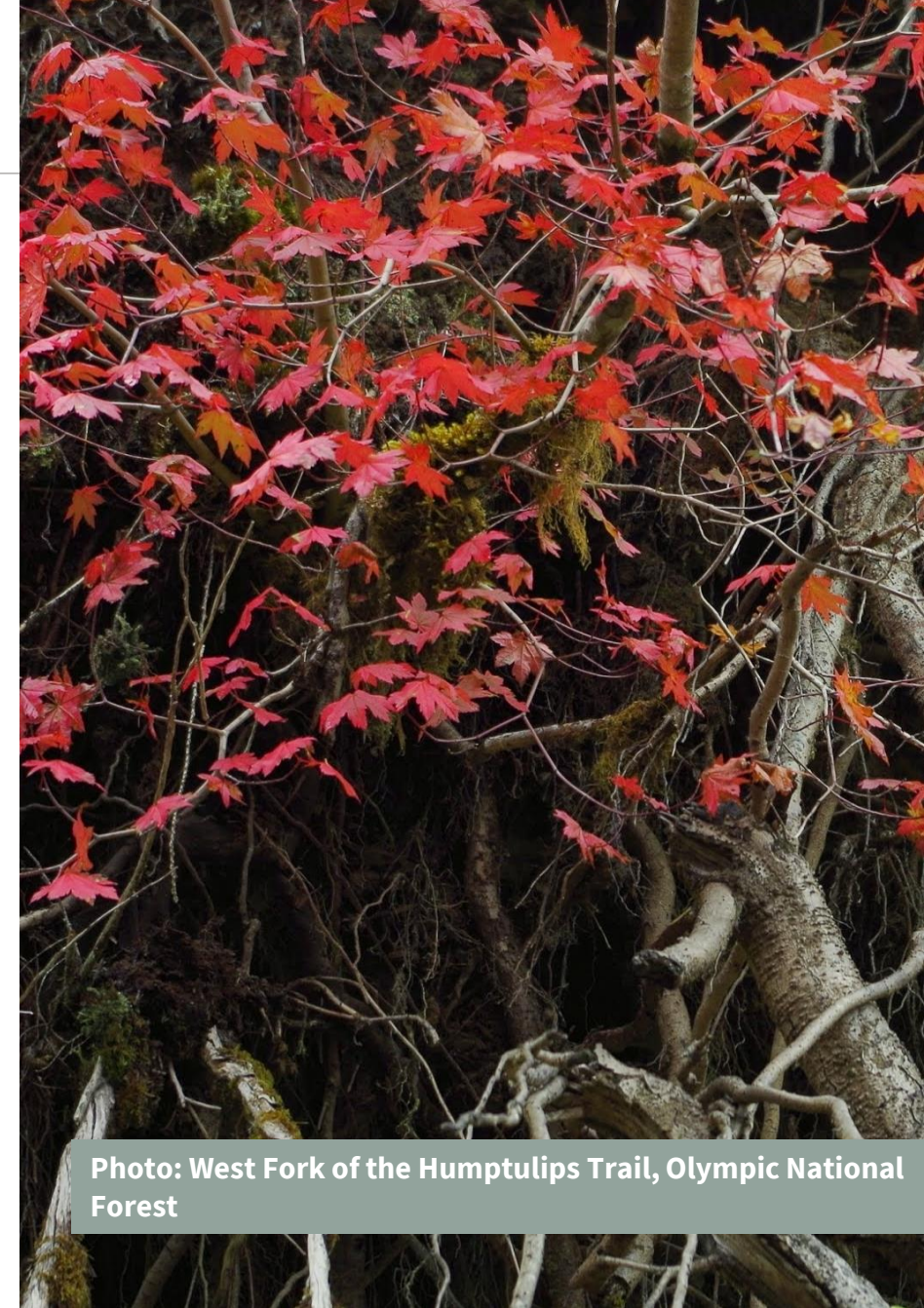


Photo: West Fork of the Humptulips Trail, Olympic National Forest



Access and Gathering

“National forests in the Northwest Forest Plan area shall prioritize projects and work with Tribes to **restore and maintain habitat conditions** conducive to local **traditional native gathering ...**”

Photo: Wild berries

Co-Stewardship

“National forests ... work with tribes to establish a co-leadership role in the context of a **co-stewardship agreement** to restore, promote, and enhance traditional cultural use species.”



Photo: Firefighters conduct a prescribed fire.



Cultural Burning

“Cultural burning is recognized as a **traditional tribal practice** that has existed for millennia and is rooted in Indigenous Knowledge, practice, and belief systems...

National forests... seek to accommodate and create **conditions conducive to cultural burning** and coordinates, consults, and collaborates with tribes...”

Photo: A firefighter observing a prescribed fire.



Strengthen capacity to **adapt** to a changing climate

Photo: Stand of trees on the Siuslaw National Forest

Key Issues

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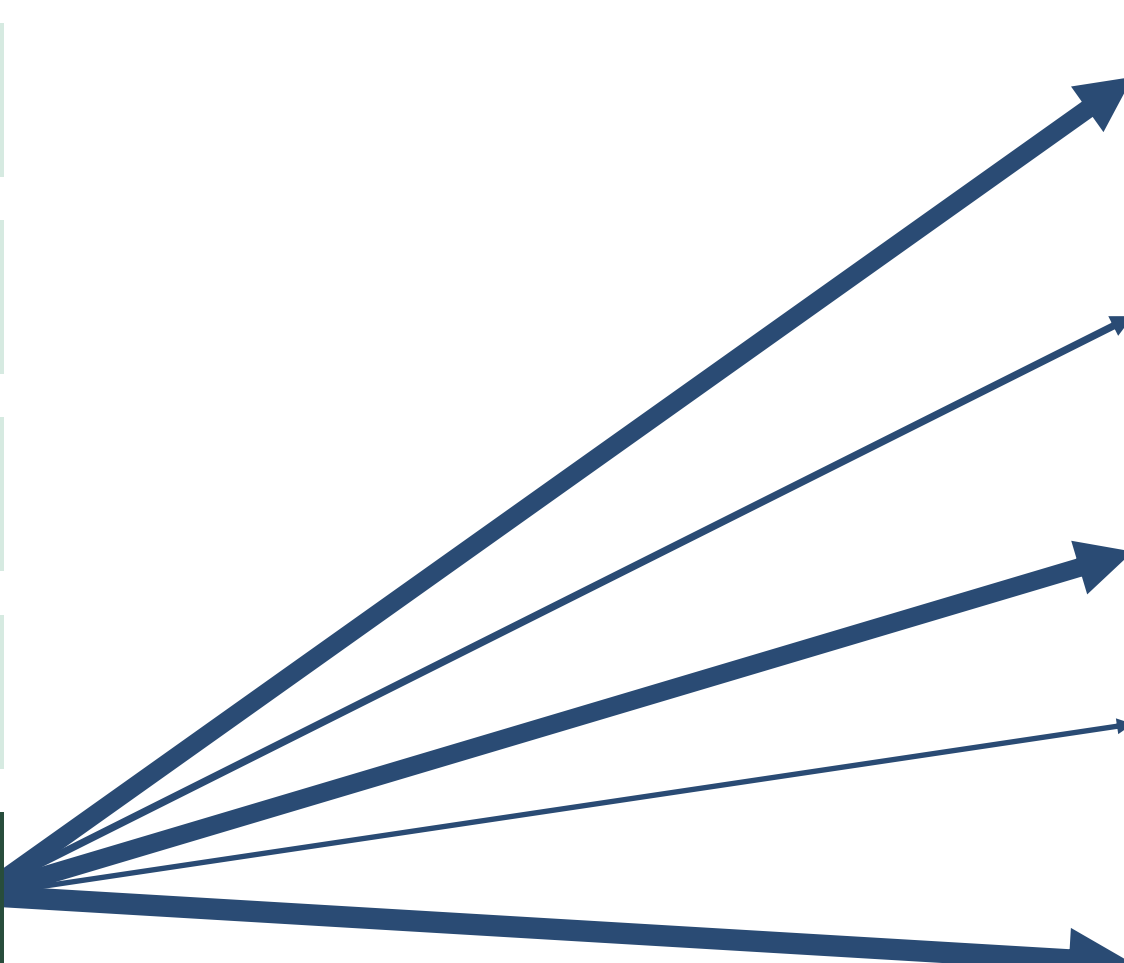
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Infrastructure Resilience to Disturbance

- Transportation network
- Outdoor recreation sites



Photo: Bike bridge on the Umpqua National Forest



Ecosystem Resilience to Disturbance

Forest and non-forest habitats are actively and adaptively managed to provide **landscape diversity** and **ecological resilience** to a changing climate and other stressors, such as altered fire regimes, drought, insects, pathogens, and severe weather events.

Photo: Tree with a burn scar in the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area

A photograph of a forest stream. The water is dark and flows over a mossy log. The surrounding forest is dense with green ferns and moss-covered trees. The scene is captured in a soft, natural light.

Range of Alternatives

Photo: Rock Creek Wilderness on the Siuslaw National Forest.

Alternative Framework

Alternative A: No Action	Alternative B: Proposed Action	Alternative C	Alternative D
<p>Baseline –Land Management Plans within the Northwest Forest Plan area, as implemented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects recommendations provided by a multi-interest Federal Advisory Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to Alternative B Additional emphasis on use of natural processes to reach desired conditions for landscape resiliency Less mechanical treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to Alternative B emphasizes wildfire risk reduction to communities through the use of hazardous fuel reduction treatments More mechanical treatment in high-risk areas Survey & manage exemption around communities

Alternative D: Survey & Manage Exemption

“...adjacent to communities, areas of tribal importance, and infrastructure, treatments to reduce hazardous fuels within a **0.25-mile buffer** of these areas **are exempted from pre-disturbance surveys...**”



Photo: The town of Cle Elum in Washington State.

Amendment Process

Process and Engagement Steps in Developing and Implementing an Amendment

Identify Need to Change

- Tribal and Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) input
- Publish Notice of Intent

Develop Proposed Amendment

- Consider prior public comment, tribal consultation, and FAC

Publish Draft Amendment & Consider Environmental Effects

- Publish Draft Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for public review
- Receive public comments

Publish Amendment

- Publish Draft Record of Decision and Final Environmental Impact Statement
- Objection process

Approve & Implement

- Sign Record of Decision
- Implement monitoring program

Coordination and Consultation with Tribes



We Are Here:

Draft EIS published Nov 15, 2024

120 days following release:

Webinars and public meetings

Opportunity to review the draft and submit comments

Next Steps

Virtual Events

- Nov 20: Public Webinar (5pm)
- Dec 5: Public Webinar (12pm)
- TBD: 2nd County Commissioners & Supervisors Webinar

In Person Events

- Forest-level Meetings (Dates TBD)




Photo: Balsamroot in full bloom on the Columbia River Gorge.

How to Comment

Helpful Tips

- Be specific and clear
- Indicate page numbers
- Summarize your concerns
 - Stay in scope
 - Support with facts
 - Remain respectful

- If possible, electronic comment submissions are preferred.
- Hard copy comments will be accepted also.
- Submit written comments by March 17th

Thanks for joining today!

Questions?

Learn more:

www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r6/nwfp



Public sign-up for updates:

tinyurl.com/59snznyn



Photo: Wind River Experimental Forest on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.