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Dear Strategy Team:

April 5, 2016

Thank you for all the hard work and thoughtful process which has led to the present Proposal for more forest "resiliency" in the Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla, and Ochoco National Forests in Oregon. Please include our comments, below, in full into the Record of public comments on this proposal.

Background: personally and professionally, my own involvement and engagement with the three above-named Forests goes way back, almost fifty years now... back to the time when I was just beginning as Northwest Representative for the Sierra Club and the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, summer 1967.

My personal files as well as the professional files of the Sierra Club and the FWOOC since that time have literally "bulged" with a steady stream of correspondence, commentary and -- sometimes-- formal appeals of various decisions made by the various leaders of the Forests in those years. I remember with particular fondness a long relationship with Mr John Rogers, Supervisor of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in the 1970s... a most dedicated dedicated federal employee indeed.

Time, and the press of deadlines does not now permit a detailed commentary on the various elements of the Proposal. But after my reading of same, the following observations must be made:

1. GOOD IDEA! It is now clear to any of us, and to most impartial observers, that worldwide climate change is occurring all over the world. In eastern Oregon so far, that means increasing drought and dry spells, which can and do lead to the risk of increased wildfire and a general drying out of the forest environment we once knew. Thus some comprehensive program to address ways and means to enhance forest resiliency in view of these new conditions seems in order.

2.. But the Scope of this Proposal is way too large! This is because we do not yet know enough about all the intricacies of forest-drying, or its longer-term effect on the many various habitats, to be able yet to prescribe anything approaching a "one size fits all" remedial methodology. We strongly urge instead, several "pilot projects," much smaller in scope, in order to determine much more completely than present knowledge now allows, what will work and what will not, to allow greater forest resiliency far into the future.

3. Do NOT apply any "Resiliency treatments" to any now-existing Roadless Areas. What we know most about these special areas now, is that they constitute the best of the natural forest still remaining, in its natural, unmodified state. At the very least then, this means that these still-natural places can serve also as natural settings (Comparison Zones), against which to evaluate the efficacy of the various "resiliency treatments" proposed for other places across the Forests.

The Roadless, therefore by definition, Natural, Areas are increasingly rare and impossible to replicate; therefore it is much in the public interest to retain them in their existing state rather than modify by the additional logging and roadbuilding proposed by the Resiliency Proposal.

4. Leave the Old Growth alone! I have seen too many proposals in the past which attempt to disguise the REAL PURPOSE -- which is to cut down ("harvest") as many grand old Ponderosas or mid-elevation ancient

Spruces and Firs as the local timber mills want -- to make me wonder if that 'Purpose'--to cut more big trees --is really the final purpose here.

We will be watching the implementation of the Resiliency Proposals, if any, most carefully, to see for ourselves if a major purpose is, indeed, just some new verbiage to "get those big logs out" or not. We sincerely hope not!

5. Roads. The Resiliency proposal is shocking to us, in that it seems to call for so many more miles of new "temporary" roads, in order to 'get those logs -- and brush, etc., out.' The problem is that roads -- especially roads built to handle heavy log-trucks -- are NOT, in fact, "Temporary." They cannot avoid the heavy impacts of soil compaction, sedimentation, or destruction of native habitats. Any Resiliency Program as finally implemented, MUST find a better way to remove the fire-prone materials.

Thank you again for all the hard work and dedicated efforts which led to this Proposal... and thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely, Brock Evans, President
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Summary: our National Forests everywhere