



Proposed Action and Alternatives

Northwest Forest Plan Amendment

Overview

The Northwest Forest Plan Amendment proposes new strategies to balance ecological, economic, and social needs while addressing the most pressing challenges facing our forests today. Three action alternatives—**Alternative B (Proposed Action)**, **Alternative C**, and **Alternative D**—offer distinct approaches for forest management, with an additional **no-action Alternative A** serving as a baseline for comparison. In our planning terminology, “no action” means continuing with current management direction without making changes.

These alternatives focus on enhancing **Fire Resilience**, increasing **Economic Opportunities**, and ensuring **Forest Stewardship**, while aligning with current scientific understanding and management needs. All three action alternatives improve relationships and co-stewardship with Tribes.

Proposed Alternatives

Alternative A (No Action)

Serves as a baseline, reflecting management practices under the 1994 NWFP. There are several gaps in the current direction that we’re seeking to address:

- **Fire Resilience:** Limited treatment to reduce wildfire risk; guidance is provided for more fire-prone forests but with little detail, and risks to communities are not addressed.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Timber supply predictability has been a challenge for local communities, and restoration opportunities require training and skills that are not always available locally.
- **Forest Stewardship:** Lacks updated guidance for conserving old-growth across the landscape or addressing diverse fire regimes.

Alternative B (Proposed Action)

Designed to balance active management with conservation:

- **Fire Resilience:** Expands fuels management, prescribed burning, and restoration efforts to reduce wildfire risks in both moist and dry forests.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Aligns timber harvest with restoration needs, providing a predictable supply of forest products and creating local jobs.
- **Forest Stewardship:** Focuses on retaining old-growth across all land-use allocations while using ecological forestry to restore forest health.

Alternative C

Builds up on Alternative B, taking a more conservative approach to hazardous fuels management, relying on natural processes:

- **Fire Resilience:** Reduces reliance on prescribed burns and mechanical treatments, focusing instead on fire management through natural processes.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Limits timber harvest but maintains restoration activities for community sustainability.
- **Forest Stewardship:** Emphasizes minimal intervention to maintain ecological integrity.

Alternative D

Builds upon Alternative B, providing the greatest flexibility for restoration and hazardous fuels management:

- **Fire Resilience:** Encourages a broader use of mechanical treatment and wildland fire for restoration and ecological balance, creating zones that emphasize different approaches based on distance from communities and vegetation type.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Supports increased forest restoration, workforce development, and sustainable timber production.
- **Forest Stewardship:** Promotes active fuel treatments in moist forests while retaining old growth.

How These Alternatives Address Key Themes

Themes	Alternative B (Proposed Action)	Alternative C	Alternative D
Fire Resilience	Proactive fire management with increased use of prescribed burns and fuels management.	Minimal intervention, relying more on natural fire processes and less on prescribed burns.	Broad use of mechanical treatment and wildland fire for restoration and ecosystem balance.
Economic Opportunities	Moderate job and timber growth through sustainable restoration activities.	Limited economic expansion, with reduced timber harvests and focused restoration work.	Strong emphasis on workforce development, restoration jobs, and timber production.
Forest Stewardship	Balanced conservation and active management to restore forest health.	Preservation-focused approach emphasizing minimal human intervention.	High flexibility in restoration, promoting active treatments while retaining old growth.

Why This Matters

- **Fire Resilience:** Protects communities and infrastructure while restoring fire-adapted ecosystems.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Promotes predictable timber production and community-based job growth.
- **Forest Stewardship:** Retains old-growth forests while promoting ecological and economic health.

Next Steps and Engagement

The Forest Service values public input in shaping these alternatives. Attend webinars, participate in public comment periods, and learn more by visiting: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r6/nwfp