

30 August, 2024
Corvallis, Oregon

Comment on National Old Growth Amendment (NOGA) draft EIS

Leave old-growth trees standing!

Dear Chief Moore,

Thank you for moving towards protection of our mature forests on federal land and for the opportunity to comment on the NOGA EIS.

Our existing mature and old-growth trees and forests are now a small remnant of what once existed, yet they provide great environmental and ecosystem benefits, as well as important recreational and soul-cleansing opportunities. Contrary to the industry-promulgated notion that young forests are superior carbon sinks and healthier forests, research by forest scientists here at Oregon State University has shown that mature and old-growth trees are more valuable in helping control atmospheric carbon dioxide levels when standing than when logged and replaced with young trees.

All my life, I have spent time in wilderness and other natural areas and regretted the loss of many pristine areas to logging. To me and many other people I know, the sight of an old-growth tree is majestic and fills me with joy and optimism.

I am concerned that the draft EIS leaves loopholes that will allow some logging of old-growth and mature trees to continue. ***It is important to me that this process end up with directives that will stop the cutting of old-growth trees and put a stop to the movement of old-growth lumber into the market.*** The expansive and relatively untouched Tongass forest of SE Alaska is a place where this objective is of utmost importance.

I believe that the best approach is to modify Alternative 2 to add explicit language to disallow discretionary or other logging of old-growth trees. Old-growth stands should be left alone, but if there are rare circumstances where some management is deemed necessary, that should only involve removal of young trees, and then only in a manner that does not negatively disturb the old-growth ecosystem. This is perhaps more applicable for mature stands that have too high a density of young trees; it makes sense to help these stands transition to our future stock of old-growth.

I look forward to better protection of old and mature growth trees and forests that your leadership will allow.

Sincerely,

Theo Dreher, Corvallis, OR