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Title:

Comments: *The following is a form letter submitted by The Wilderness Society on behalf of consenting, participating members. A complete list of individual names and addresses is attached as an Excel file, along with the complete signed letters as a PDF.*

Thank you for taking action to conserve our old-growth forests with the first ever nationwide forest plan amendment. This is a swift, decisive and much needed action that will help stem the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change, while conserving forests for future generations.

I'm pleased that your proposed reforms would consistently safeguard our remaining old-growth in national forests across the country, curb economically driven logging of old-growth forests and strive to grow more old-growth to bolster what little we have left. It is imperative that the proposed amendment include strong, explicit direction that results in identifying areas across our national forests that will be a priority for recruiting future old-growth. We appreciate the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge, Tribal co-stewardship and Tribal sovereignty in the proposed policy. We encourage you to strengthen this aspect of the policy, including recognition of Tribal treaty rights.

I also believe that while a national plan amendment is a good first step, regulation offers more durability. The Forest Service should consider opportunities to develop new or revise existing regulations to provide this durability. The remaining population of old-growth forest is very small; just 13% of the national forest estate is old-growth. However, careful stewardship of plentiful mature forests can help restore old-growth for future generations.

A healthy, sustainable future is dependent on the actions we take now to secure our forests. Thank you for listening to public voices in this process.

ATTACHMENT: Old-Growth Direction_TWS Members_Full Comment Letters - Form letters submitted in pdf form that are the same as comments submitted in CARA text box; coded/completed.

ATTACHMENT: Old-Growth Direction_TWS Members - List of TWS members and mailing addresses. No need to code.