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First name: Anon

Last name: Anon

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for taking steps to protect and increase old-growth forests on our national forests. I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Forest Service's proposal to conserve old-growth forests and manage them based on ecologically sound science and Indigenous Knowledge. A strong old-growth conservation policy is vital because these ecosystems are so important for wildlife and people. They provide habitat for hundreds of imperiled plant and animal species. They sequester and store carbon, which is essential for fighting climate change, and maintain clean water. They offer places to hike, birdwatch, and find solitude and spiritual connection. I urge the Forest Service to ensure its old-growth policy includes requirements to: - Conserve and increase old-growth forest ecosystems on our national forests for ecological health and integrity; - Conserve mature forests as they transition to old-growth ecosystems; - Advance the recovery and protection of threatened and endangered and other at-risk species dependent on old-growth and mature forests; - Monitor old- forests over time to make sure conservation and management action are benefiting at-risk species; and, - Limit logging of old-growth and mature forests while the policy is being developed and finalized. Thank you for considering these recommendations. Protecting America's old- growth forests is one of the most important actions the Forest Service can take to combat the extinction and climate crises simultaneously. ATTACHMENT: Old-growth_Letter_02022024.pdf - Body of Letter plus list of 9,400 petition signatures