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First name: Janet

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Department of Forest Service

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

The Forest Service is designed to be stewards of Federal lands and to take care of the forest. This is a huge job and I appreciate the complex work that goes into maintaining healthy forests. That said I believe those who are making the decisions about our forest must be open and willing to develop plans with future generations in mind, must be willing to work with Indigenous nations who have a unique and healthy perspective of maintaining forests, must understand the critical situation we are in with climate change with the need to capture and store carbon. It seems too often that the traditional science-based state-controlled model for managing forests discredits or ignores how a mature forest, the presence of old growth trees supports the health and well being of humanity. I appreciate those in the department of forestry who are making informed decisions based on science but also shaped by community values. These are the people who should develop forest policy. While talking to other friends about these issues I am often told that the Forest Service does not really care what we think. You can change that bad reputation by implementing practices that value the diversity of practices that maintain a healthy ecosystem now and into the future.

Who are the ones who do not value the complex nature that an old growth forest offers? What is their reasoning to cut an old growth tree or forest only to send it to the coal factory or pulp mill? Why is the unique habitat that the mature forest offers not protected? Why do we allow the encroachment of human activity with shortsightedness to make decisions? We need individuals to make decisions about our forests who see the needs of today and into the future, those that hold diversity, and a healthy ecosystem a priority!

You know the pitfalls of logging practices. Why isn't there greater oversight in the planning of Federally designated areas to be clear cut, a plan that takes into account private land owners who are also cutting in close proximity? Working together will ensure that over harvesting does not happen. Why are steep hill sides that need a helicopter to lift logs out not given other thoughts about different clearing techniques, strategies that do not erode the precarious soils? Landowners downhill know the effects from these practices, from contaminated spring water, polluted rivers, streams, and flooding due to blocked waterways and ditches. You know this but why is it still a practice today? Again, I ask who is making these decisions and why is it allowed? I would imagine there are examples of other methods and practices that take into consideration these issues while maintaining the least amount of impact on the forest floor from logging equipment.

Forest farms have their place but do not replace the need to maintain our mature forests in healthy ways. Logging is needed but with sensitivity to the complex issues often neglected. Again, with future generations in mind, we need individuals who understand and will act to maintain mature forests. Who understand that clear cutting mature forest creates a huge loss for the health of our environment and the health and wellbeing of humanity. I hope you will include into the forest plans these issues, and to promote logging practices that use informed choices based on maintaining biodiversity, healthy ecosystems, and the longevity of our natural mature forests.

Thank you, Jan Sitarz

Jan Sitarz

ATTACHMENT: Dear Department of Forest Service 3.docx - this is the same content that is coded in text box; it was also included as an attachment