

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/20/2024 4:00:00 AM

First name: Zack

Last name: Porter

Organization: Bulk - Standing Trees

Title: Executive Director

Comments: Dear Ms. Walker:

The undersigned individuals write to you with comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Amendments to Land Management Plans to Address Old-Growth Forests Across the National Forest System.

Mature and old-growth trees and forests protect our climate by absorbing and storing carbon, boost resilience to fire, help regulate temperatures, filter drinking water and shelter wildlife. Logging them deprives us of the benefits and beauty of our largest, oldest, and rarest trees and forests.

The US Forest Service's National Old Growth Amendment Draft Environmental Impact Statement fails to protect old-growth trees and forests. The proposal allows old-growth trees to be sent to the mill and allows agency staff to manage old-growth out of existence in pursuit of "proactive stewardship" goals. The draft also contains ambiguous language that could be used to justify continued commercial logging of old growth in Alaska's Tongass National Forest, the largest expanse of old-growth forest in federal ownership.

In the Northeast, the US Forest Service admits that less than one-half of one-percent of the White and Green Mountain National Forests is in an old-growth condition. And yet the Forest Service proposes to allow logging in what little old-growth remains, and provides no protection for mature (or future old-growth) forests.

The final record of decision should:

1. End the cutting of old-growth trees in all national forests and forest types and end the cutting of any trees in old-growth stands in moist forest types, like those across the majority of the Eastern US.
2. End any commercial exchange of old-growth trees. Even in the rare circumstances where an old-growth tree is cut (e.g. public safety), that tree should not be sent to the mill.

Cutting down old-growth trees or stands to save them from "potential threats" is a self-serving solution that benefits the timber industry, not forests.

We urge you to take this opportunity to protect our oldest trees and forests. Failure to do so undermines the objectives of the National Old Growth Amendment, contravenes the direction of EO 14072, and ignores 500,000+ public comments the agency received on last summer's advance notice of proposed rulemaking.

You can view each petition signer and any unique comments they wrote below.

Thank you,

Attachment - NOGA DEIS Comment Petition - 9-20-24.pdf is the letter text above and list of 300 petition signers with their individual comments.