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Title:

Comments: attached are 1,271 comments submitted via <https://protectouroldgrowth.org>

Mature and old-growth trees and forests filter drinking water for communities, are homes for wildlife, and protect our climate by absorbing and storing millions of tons of carbon every year. These trees and forests also boost ecosystem resilience to fire and help regulate forest temperatures. Not to mention they are a beautiful and safe place to access nature and support mental and spiritual well-being. Mature and old-growth forests on federal lands continue to be threatened by commercial logging. Cutting down our oldest trees deprives Americans of the benefits and wild beauty of our largest, oldest trees. These trees are worth more standing. With the proposed National Old-Growth Amendment, the Forest Service has an opportunity to protect our mature and old-growth trees, but its current draft proposal fails to do so. The policy proposals include numerous ways for the Forest Service to cut old-growth trees and send them to the mill. All of the proposed policy options allow Forest Service staff the discretion to manage old growth out of existence in pursuit of so-called "proactive stewardship" goals. They also contain ambiguous language that could be used to justify continued commercial logging of old growth in the Tongass National Forest, the biggest carbon storage powerhouse in the National Forest System. None of the options proposed would protect our oldest trees and forests. For me to support these amendments, I consider it necessary that the final amendments address these deficiencies: 1. The Forest Service must end the logging of old-growth trees across our national forests, including the Tongass. 2. The Forest Service must end the commercial exchange of old-growth trees logged on forestlands managed by the agency. No old-growth trees from our national forests should be sent to mills. 3. The Forest Service must also establish protections for mature forests and trees, which will become future old growth for our children and generations beyond.

Attachment - ProtectOurOldGrowth comments 2024-09-20.pdf is a petition with 1,271 signers with their comments. The form text of the petition is the text above.