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Comments: I support the revision of the 21 inch rule because the current standard can be improved to better protect old-growth trees rather than just large trees, and it should evolve to reflect current research. Because tree diameter does not necessarily define the age of a tree-there exist a fair number of large, young trees and small, older trees that are still very important to the ecological systems-the standard should take into account conditions more similar to those of the Tribal Forest Plan, which takes these inconsistencies into account. Research in the decades since the original standard was put in place has shown that young, particularly shade-prone trees that qualified for protection under the 21 inch rule could potentially be harmful to old-growth trees, by acting as fuel ladders and providing competition for nutrients and resources, and therefore management of such forests may require the removal of some of these trees. Using tree diameter to measure worth rather than a tree's age is not holding up properly under this new research. While it is still a useful measurement, it should not be the only condition for the standard. It is important to look at the tree's age, species, resistance to both fire and insects, and ecological benefits as well before deciding to either protect or remove it. It is important for forest restoration to preserve large, early-seral trees because of the services they provide to the forest, such as constant seed and forest regeneration and wildlife habitats, and the resilience that they bring to the forests against insects and fire. They also are important to the spatial diversity and biodiversity within forests. Some of these young trees that have a diameter of over 21 inches are also more fire-prone than other trees, and for their cost do not provide the same ecological, aesthetic, or cultural benefits to the environment as old-growth trees. Because fire suppression has caused an increase in shade-prone trees, it has both caused more competition for water for trees like the Ponderosa pine or the Douglas fir, and created more dense forests that are more prone to hazardous wildfires. This higher fuel availability along with the changing climate is moving us towards more disastrous wildfires in the near future.