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Comments: I do not believe you can have a universal definition of old-growth without it being too broad and vague it will be meaningless or easily distorted to what anyone decides they want it to be. I'll offer that old-growth could refer to climax tree species old for their species, perhaps some decadence. I do not think lack of anthropogenic disturbance should be part of that. When half of Federal lands are all ready off limits to management and more land is simply inoperable we should not be looking for excuses to take more of our forests out of forest production and stifle economic growth, as well as creating forests which sequester carbon at a faster rate and then store that carbon for long periods of time in harvested wood products.

Mature on the other hand is likely an easier definition; however, it can vary from land manager to land manager. Generally, the mean annual increment is slowing down.

I would describe an old-growth forest as a climax forest, decadent, often can be single species dominated (the forests in the Lake States where I work), often uneven aged, irregularly stocked, trees old in the species normal life expectancy. A mature forest in my mind has trees large enough to make a traditional forest product from.

This is one of the problems with this effort. there is so much variability even with-in a species with climate, site productivity, and geographic region to have one definition. There will be differences with the flora based on those 3 characteristics, size and age, when they start to decline will vary as well. If it is an early successional type it could be moving to the next stage of development for that community so it makes no sense to call it old-growth as it will become something else (a young mid-successional type).

It seems the definition includes or is a climax forest; otherwise, the forest composition will change.

Characteristics to exclude, lack of previous anthropogenic disturbance, early or mid-successional species.