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First name: Lisa

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Comments: Dear Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Haaland,

Older forests store the most carbon, both in the trees and in the soil, and that harvesting releases much of this carbon. Thus, our federally-owned and privately-owned forests are globally important.

Comments on the definition of "mature" and "old-growth"

Old growth is relative. It's the biggest trees, the ones that have been there longest. Not all that complicated.

I live in an old-growth forest in Massachusetts (last harvest, hurricane of 1938, downed trees). I have observed the following first hand (which are also backed-up by science):

-Trees grow in community. When one tree falls or is cut, the other trees around it become weaker, because they've grown their strengths in response to how they were sheltered by their neighbors. This is why all the tree cutting around electric wires is wrong. Taking down a 100 year old maple because it may drop a branch makes all the trees behind it more likely to fall on the wires.

-An old forest is a more stable forest, but forests are dynamic. Forests are always moving and changing. Branches fall, trees fall, new plants grow up. There is nothing stable about the world. But old growth forests are more stable, more still, more dependable, less likely to spread wildfires and disease than younger ones.

Managing federal mature and old-growth forests (2c)

Our national forests' most important job is to store carbon. Stop using them for decks and deck furniture.

I believe much more about forests. I am an Animist (a religion); I believe they have rights beyond what they are useful for in our eyes. But even if you keep to that narrow view that forests should be preserved because they are "working" you should preserve these forests. They are hard workers, and are helping us more than any other kind of forest.

Thank you for reading,

Lis

Lisa McLoughlin, PhD

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