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First name: Rebecca

Last name: Lexa

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to urge you to protect old-growth and mature forests. Old growth forests, particularly coniferous forests, can be identified through the following traits:

- Trees that are a variety of species and ages, to include old, undisturbed trees
- A high rate of biodiversity across biological kingdoms
- The presence of both snags and fallen nurse logs
- Openings in the canopy
- Complex soil microbiome being actively contributed to by decaying matter
- Pit and mound topography created by fallen trees and their root systems
- The presence of old-growth-dependent species, and/or suitable habitat for said species

You can't always put a specific age on an old growth forest; some were subjected to logging that was less intense than a clearcut in the past, so to say "this forest is old growth because it has not been disturbed in X number of years" is short-sighted. Rather, it's important to look at the overall ecology of the forest.

Unfortunately climate change means that some species are beginning to migrate out of their historic habitats; others that cannot move as easily are threatened by changing environmental factors. So the makeup of a given forest or other habitat may change over time according to these changes.

However, what IS apparent is that old growth forests are more crucial than ever. Here are some of the ways they're able to mitigate the effects of climate change:

- They are repositories of biodiversity and genetic legacy, particularly of species that can't survive in younger forests.
- Large, old trees are much more effective at both capturing and holding carbon than younger ones; while snags and nurse logs are decaying, it is at a slower rate, and a lot of the carbon is recycled into other beings.
- Species that are threatened need undamaged habitat, as well as wildlife corridors. The more habitats that are available, particularly those that are connected to each other to allow populations to mingle, the better chance local species will have to weather current and upcoming changes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rebecca Lexa, MA, OMN