

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/15/2022 10:23:54 PM

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Comments: I sat in on one of the employee meetings and it became clear to me that we need to be careful about how we talk about the definition(s) we decide on. When talking about old-growth, I often find myself saying or thinking "it depends".

We should differentiate old growth as an ecological concept and old growth as a social construct. Old growth is a very emotional issue for some, we shouldn't downplay that, but we should not mix and match the social and ecological values.

We need to be careful about defining old growth appropriately within its historical disturbance regime. Some concepts about "old growth" are not within the NRV and can only be achieved by maintaining unnatural and often (unhealthful) conditions.

When we think about the roles old growth serves, we should recognize that non-old growth conditions may be able to fill some of those roles. i.e., regardless of old growth, the conversation may be better served by a broader conversation about carbon storage, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, refugia, etc.

Is there a such thing as old-growth aspen? It can have the elements of old growth: large diameter trees, decadence, down wood, etc., but there is some debate about whether as a pioneering species in another forest type it is both an early developmental state and an old state.

If anyone suggests we map old growth as part of this effort, please push back. The data are not that accurate and have wildly differing conditions, old growth is dynamic, and there are many that may try to "protect it" in a way that will make it difficult to manage it. Take a lesson from many western forests where the constraints on management of old growth have left it vulnerable to high intensity uncharacteristic fire and disease.

I know that my comments raise more questions than they answer, but I think it highlights that this is a messy and wicked question. We should recognize and embrace that complexity. If we try to force it into boxes, we will undoubtedly fail.