

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/15/2022 11:55:49 PM

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Comments: To whom it may concern:

The mature and old-growth trees in our federally managed forests are one of this country's greatest resources. These forests provide critical habitats for wildlife, prevent erosion and flooding, protect our drinking water, and are an essential climate solution. Carbon sequestered in these forests offset 12% of the United States' greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, old growth forests provide increased recreational opportunities because they are more accessible for hunting, berry picking, camping, and to access fishing spots.

I am in support of delaying all current proposed cuttings until after an inventory and cataloging has been conducted. The cost of doing otherwise is too great. For example, the Fourmile Vegetation Management Project in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest threatens to cut down old growth and mature forests. These lands are critical habitat and are vital to the local community.

Therefore, definition framework should take into account state, local, tribal goals and reflect all forest lands except those that are not identified as not being old growth or mature forest lands. I support a robust and inclusive definition of old growth and mature forests. I believe this definition framework will best motivate mature and old-growth forest conservation and will accommodate inclusive planning and adaptive management in a way that forgoes bureaucratic processes and delays necessary to obtain mature and old-forest designation.

Sincerely,

James Rasmussen