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First name: Sharon

Last name: Furlong

Organization: Bucks Environmental Action

Title: Spokesperson

Comments: Our forests have always been important, but as we lose more and more of them to disease, continued rampant logging, wildfire and conversion to other uses, it becomes even more imperative that we identify and solidify our protection of forests of all stages, but especially old growth. When folks think of forests they often think of towering pine trees, but forests are also found in drier, hotter parts of our nation and consist of trees like juniper and pinyon and mesquite. These trees are just as important for their area and it's inhabitants, just as vital for our overall habitat health, and therefore also need to be an integral part of this process.

Our group is located outside of Philadelphia and Trenton and we have watched with sadness and dismay as Emerald Ash Borer has ravaged almost all of our native ash trees in a few short years. That, on top of the fungus that attacks and kills hemlocks,(our state tree) the blight that is attacking sugar maples, and the onset of spotted lantern fly, that inches it's way through trees along with cultivated grapes vines....all have placed enormous pressure to act and act definitively right now.

And finally, recent research indicates that mature and old growth first is a carbon storer of impressive magnitude and can play a significant role in mitigating climate change. No trees of any height, age and weight, and no carbon sink. It would be foolish to disregard or dismiss this research as the effects of a snowballing climate emergency are clear to even former deniers of it. We have lost precious years, center decades because of industries dependent on making a Buck out of fossil fuel production, and those same deniers who have blocked true , concerted efforts at stopping this runaway train. Therefore, protect forests of mixed age, and ALL old growth forests, what few dust intact, all over our nation, everywhere. Thank you.