

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/25/2022 9:21:31 PM

First name: Daniel

Last name: Harm

Organization:

Title:

Comments: If we continue to log and convert our older native forests into industrial tree farms, we are damning the future of our biosphere and the future of our children.

Nearly all ancient native pacific northwest forests have been logged and converted into industrial plantations. Tree plantations are not forests, they are artificial tree farms, herbicide soaked landscapes designed to maximize short term revenue. These lands are not even managed to maximize wood production or jobs. We are left with matchstick monoculture wastelands supplying landfill fodder. Despite many steps forward, most timber operations are ecological travesties. The bar has been set far too low. But some operations are better than others. Ecological forest management is one next step forward in this long journey we have ahead.

We need to do two things:

1. We need change the management of our industrial tree farms from short-term revenue rotation to long-rotations AND we need to manage for structural complexity. We need to turn our industrial farms into ecologically sustainable operations that mimics native forest ecological.
2. We need to permanently conserve ALL older mature forests, this includes any and old older native forests, including legacy forests.

A legacy forest is a mature native forest that naturally regenerated after being logged by early European settlers. Legacy forests are nothing like the monocrop tree plantations that blanket most of the Puget Sound lowlands. Instead, these forests are made up of a wide variety of tree and understory species. Legacy forests are also unique for their "structural diversity" - meaning they have lots of big trees, small trees, shrubs, and groundcovers. Legacy forests are the old growth forests of our future!

Legacy forests are ecological lifeboats of biodiversity and resilience. Scientists have found that mature native forests are more resilient to climate impacts like wildfire and pest outbreaks. Climate change is already increasing floods during wet months and water shortages during dry months.

Protecting these forests enhances the health and resilience of our watersheds by slowing water down and gradually releasing cold, clean water throughout the summer. These forests also sequester and store immense amounts of carbon, helping drawdown carbon levels in the atmosphere.