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Comments: Thank you for taking the next steps to advance President Biden's Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies. I didn't know how vital old-growth forests were until this year! I thought planting trees for sustainability was equal. It is far less efficient than just keeping the old trees these great lands already have!

For the purpose of protecting these climate-critical trees and forests from logging, "mature" should be defined as 80 years and older. By setting logging limits using this definition, federal agencies will establish a safety net that assures minimum protection of the ecological and carbon benefits these older forest elements provide for future generations. Scientific research shows that logging of federal forests is a major source of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere. It is at least comparable to levels associated with wildfires. I believe our ancient ancestors throughout the world knew how important older tree canopies were, based on numerous folklore, myths, and religious texts. And as indigenous communities through the world still know. It saddens me to think of how much we've forgotten or refused to understand.

In Kentucky's Daniel Boone National Forest, there are an estimated 430,000 acres over 80 years old, comprising about 60% of the forest. About 100,000 acres of mature and old-growth forests have been cut since 1980; making up about 15% of the Daniel Boone National Forest. We must preserve what we have left!

Protecting trees in the Daniel Boone National Forest over 80 years old will benefit the many species of conservation concern that depend on the mature and old-growth forests found here, such as:

- Threatened and endangered Indiana, northern long-eared, and gray bats
- Numerous species of birds that are suffering from habitat loss such as the Cerulean Warbler, Wood Thrush, and Red-headed woodpecker
- Medicinal and culturally significant plants like ginseng and goldenseal
- The endemic Pine Mountain tigersnail, which is mostly associated with old growth

In summary, I urge the US Department of Agriculture and US Department of Interior to work together to soon initiate a rulemaking based on a definition of mature forests and trees as 80 years and older, to permanently end the avoidable loss of their critically important carbon, water, and wildlife values to logging.

Thank you for your time.