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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I was born and raised in northern New Mexico near Carson National Forest. I grew up surrounded by pinon-juniper forests. Growing up there inspired me to later pursue a master's degree in biology with a focus in plant ecology. As a child, I remember how shocked I was when I saw huge swaths of pinon juniper woodland being chained and destroyed. The environmental devastation that I witnessed years ago has stayed with me. It is my hope that finally the ecological importance of these dry-land forests will be recognized and these mature and old growth forests will be given the protection they deserve. There needs to be a comprehensive inventory of mature and old-growth pinon-juniper forests across the Southwestern United States. Protection of these drought-resistant forests is even more imperative in the face of climate change.

I now live in the redwood forests of California. Only 5% of old growth coastal redwood forest remains. Now is the time to protect ALL mature and old growth forests throughout the United States before it's too late. We are out of time. I urge the Forest Service to act now to protect these irreplaceable ecosystems as buffers against climate change, for wildlife conservation and to help safeguard the future of life on our planet.