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Comments: 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 addition, the Daniel Boone National Forest is home to old-growth and culturally significant trees, such as the largest known Red Hickory tree, located in an old-growth forest in an area of the Redbird district that is marked for cutting.

If the Biden administration is to do all it can - and must - to limit atmospheric carbon levels, and demonstrate international leadership, these protections must be made through binding regulations that will endure in future administrations, much as the Clinton-era Roadless Rule has done. To ensure a rule can be adopted on the necessary urgent time frame, with the opportunity for robust public engagement and environmental review, it is critical for federal agencies to initiate a rule-making process as soon as possible that would prohibit logging in mature and old-growth forests.

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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.