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Comments: Thank you for requesting public input on how the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management should foster ecosystem resilience and climate resilience on federal forest lands. To meet President Biden's goals for tackling the climate crisis and the biodiversity crisis, it is imperative that both agencies prioritize the protection of mature and old-growth forests and trees.

As your agencies have identified, older forests and trees are crucial for addressing the climate crisis. These trees and stands store the vast majority of the above ground carbon in a forest. In addition, older forests and trees are far more adaptable to the impacts of climate change, especially compared to industrial tree plantations. Nationally, carbon losses from clearcuts and other logging are up to 5 times higher than emissions from fire and other natural forest disturbances combined. Logging older forests and trees grossly undercuts these benefits.

Our older forests are also critical for addressing the biodiversity crisis. These complex ecosystems provide vital and unique habitats for birds up above, critters down below and everything in between. Intact forested watersheds produce very high quality water vital for aquatic life in the forest and those who depend on it downstream.

We urge you to include in any future administrative rules an end to ecologically harmful logging of mature and old growth forests and trees on federal land. While there are certainly other threats to our older forests, including wildfire and drought, the threat of logging is fully under your control and can be quickly acted on.

We ask you to act quickly to protect mature forests and trees both for their current important values and so they can grow to become old growth and continue their work to help mitigate the climate crisis, contribute to healthy watersheds and provide ecosystem resilience. These forests are worth more standing.

Sincerely,

Aaron Murphy