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Title:

Comments: It is inexpressibly important, especially considering their increasing rarity, that the U.S. Forest Service establish nationwide protections for old-growth forests. Each old-growth forest is an irreplaceable habitat for countless animals and plants, and an educational opportunity for human beings interested in witnessing the beauty of the natural world. Old-growth forests sustain worlds of their own, and provide near-endless benefits, both physically and psychologically, to ourselves and to nonhuman species. They are sacred parts of the U.S. landscape. As someone who is growing up during this climate emergency, I am far too used to seeing our world be split apart, drilled into, stripped naked, and choked by pollutants, for the sake of profit. I understand that those of you who hold power must appeal to many opposing interests, but I implore you nevertheless to not lose your way in the crowd of voices. Loggers can find other resources, but old-growth forests cannot be replicated within our lifetimes - and the animals that thrive within them cannot ever be replaced. However, old-growth forests are not the only essential habitats at risk. Mature forests, their slightly younger siblings, are also threatened, and they are just as important to countless species, as well as to us. These forests are on the cusp of becoming old enough to be considered old-growth. Therefore, if we are to truly protect old-growth forests, we must let their mature counterparts survive as well. By doing this, we can not only preserve the existing old-growth forests within the U.S., but also create space for new ones to reach old-growth status. I am very young and not as well-spoken or as persuasive as I could be, but I am trying my best, and I hope that you will have the heart to listen. Thank you for trying to stop the rape of the land that we live on. It is kind to us. Can we reciprocate this, and allow its resources to be protected and replenished?