

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/9/2024 10:09:54 PM

First name: Warwick

Last name: Hansell

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Old growth and mature forests, like the forests of the Black Ram, are essential to removing climate-warming carbon pollution from the air and storing it in their leaves, branches, trunks, roots, and carbon rich soils. These forests also provide wildlife habitat and provide clean drinking water for our communities. Old growth forests are increasingly threatened by logging as well as the effects of human caused climate change- wildfires, drought, insects, and disease.

We need to protect not only our existing stocks of old growth forests, but also our nation's mature forests. These slightly younger forests are still developing the characteristics that will create the complex ecosystem found in an old growth forest. The Biden proposal as written would not ban logging in old growth forests; it would merely limit cutting of old growth trees within those forests. It would also allow thinning under the guise of wildfire mitigation, counter to research that suggests that old growth forests are more resilient to fire if left alone. I believe these loopholes should be closed-that enough old growth has been lost to logging, and that the new policies must protect from commercial logging all old growth trees and forests, as well as the mature component of our National Forest system.