

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/11/2024 4:34:06 PM

First name: Charlotte

Last name: Fremaux

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Environmental scientists, environmental activists, and naturalists like me have been calling for this comprehensive view of the value and role of mature and old growth forests in maintaining necessarily biodiverse ecosystems and preserving soil and microbial health, sequestering humidity and water resources, and promoting optimal growth of plants and animals in forest lands. This science-and-fact-based view of supporting the biosphere through supporting ecosystems and their species at every level is the way nature survives.

Unfortunately, for most of their existence, the agencies tasked with managing our environmental resources have been focused on what humans can receive from nature, rather than on supporting life at every level, respecting nature's standing as preeminently important, and making sure we leave alone enough of nature to support itself.

Leaving intact ecosystems alone to do their jobs, leaving water in source places, leaving trees where they belong, and respecting every life-form as a necessary team player that deserves to live as much as any and all humans, are basic mandates for global survival. Ruining the fact that we have utterly failed to recognize our own unimportance and impermanence and respect the natural world to which we owe everything is a waste, and is too late. But changing the way we behave is essential. I am grateful that somehow word has gotten to the halls of power and that now the Forest Service is actually changing the paradigm to address the need for an ecosystem-based holistic approach to "forest management." It's about time. Any waffling, diluting, and weakening of the proposed directive is completely unacceptable, as it is already too late to correct or save most of what has already been lost or compromised. I hope that the USFS, whose work force deserves respect, will not be politically misdirected to undermine the science and the intent behind the proposed plan, and will not (as is, unfortunately, still in the language) put human use first in the management of these critical forest systems.

Monetary profit from natural resources cannot be the point. We depend upon nature, not the other way around. Time to do our jobs.