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Comments:

I am writing about the recent proposal to protect mature and old growth in our national forests. This is an exciting opportunity in which to support President Biden's executive order to put in place strong protections for mature and old growth forests in our public lands.

Old growth forests sequester huge amounts of carbon. We need to protect not only old growth, but mature and legacy forests for our climate mitigation in perpetuity. These forests not only store carbon, but also provide clean drinking water, provide habitat for many species, and offer bountiful opportunities for recreation and solitude. Older trees also are more fire resistant and offer resilience from erosion, thereby reducing the risks of flooding in many regions of the country, including my own.

I reside in the Pacific Northwest where we have an abundance of clean water; however, we experience devastating forest fires and flooding from low snowpack and excessive rain. I urge you to protect our national forests so that we can continue to provide clean drinking water and, in doing so, reduce the devastation from forest fires by protecting mature and old growth forests. Thank you for your leadership on this issue and the opportunity to comment.