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Title:

Comments: Thank you for taking the time to consider amending forest management plans to conserve old-growth forests. It is vital that we protect our few remaining old-growth forests. They are instrumental in storing carbon to fight the effects of climate change, they provide essential (and unfortunately, rapidly disappearing) habitat for wildlife, they help ensure clean water supplies for animals and humans who depend on these watersheds for drinking water (during a time when dwindling drinking water supplies are a topmost concern in this country), and they help prevent erosion that affects surrounding forests and communities. In addition, old-growth forests are the heart and soul of our country and provide beautiful, inspirational, calming places for people to relax and recharge and connect with one another.

In drafting this plan, I encourage you to consider the following points.

Please consider a policy that promotes wildfire resilience. In doing so, please take into account Indigenous knowledge and land management practices. The overly repressive fire suppression policies of the Forest Service over the past many decades along with the effects of logging and road building (removing old-growth trees, having younger trees that are all of the same size and variety, bisecting forestland, increased erosion, etc.) have led to more devastating wildfires in the west.

Please also give more attention and emphasis to the huge role that old-growth forests play in storing carbon and fighting climate change. This is reason enough to protect these forests.

Please reduce the amount of logging allowed in old-growth forests. The damaging effects of logging are clear: they reduce biodiversity in forests, pollute watersheds, cause rivers and creeks to run hotter and shallower, which affects fish populations, lead to erosion and catastrophic landslides, cause fires to burn hotter and longer. I understand that there are communities that rely on the timber industry as an employer. Please consider ways to encourage economic opportunities for these residents in more sustainable industries such as recreation and restoration.