

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/15/2024 9:04:59 PM

First name: Mark

Last name: Ristow

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to support what appears to be an effort conserve, steward and add to our nation's old growth forests and to monitor them so they can contribute to cooling our climate and improving our living environment. I think the plan that emerges should do the following to foster the growth and resilience of existing and future old-growth forests in our National Forest System:

1. Use Forest Service funds and manpower to remove invasive species which degrade our forests.
2. Protect our forests from human-caused damage especially including logging, "thinning", road building and artificial burning of the understory, all of which have recently been proposed on an extensive basis in the Hoosier National Forest in southern Indiana which is of special concern to my family and me. I expect the same destructive "improvements" to old forests have been proposed across most all of the lands under Forest Service management.
3. The true old-growth forests in North America thrived for thousands of years until the 1700s when settlers began their destruction. Our current old-growth doesn't need the Forest Service's cutting and burning schemes to help make them resilient. They do that very well on their own when left alone. What they are somewhat defenseless against is invasives like Bradford pear, Eurasian honeysuckle, etc, etc and that is where I would like to see the Forest Service focus its efforts.
4. It is a terrific idea to locate, monitor and add to our old-growth forests. I support it. Make a plan to do that, get the invasives out, protect the forests from logging and burning and let them thrive to serve us by pulling carbon out of the air, providing homes to wildlife which is struggling all over the world, and creating calming spaces for human recreation.

Thank you,

Mark Ristow