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RE: Amending Forest Plans to address Old Growth Forests

To Whom it May Concern:

I am very concerned that this mandate to amend the forest plans for the National Forests is being rushed through for political purposes and not to truly protect our national resources. It is inconceivable to me; how 128 National Forests can accomplish this task in one year when it takes years for anything else to be done on a National Forest.

This entire endeavor appears to be an effort to stifle harvest from our National Forests in the name of protecting old growth forest. The work done so far on this project has shown that harvest is a very minor component of old growth loss, with the main drivers of old growth loss wildfire, or insect and disease. With active, sustainable forest management, old growth forests can be protected by having buffers of actively managed land around them. In fact, using management, particularly thinning, you can create old growth characteristics as one of the benefits while creating conditions which can minimize wildfire or insect and disease issues.

At a time when neither of our local National Forests are meeting their plan objectives it seems like folly to divert the efforts of staff away from the other work they need to do. We need to untie the hands of Forest Service employees so they can get more projects done which in turn will go further towards protecting the resource than letting insects and disease kill it or wildfire burn it up.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.