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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Director of Ecosystem Management Coordination,

I am writing to comment on the Management Plan Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System #65356.

I was very excited to see that the forest Service is making a bold move to inventory and protect old-growth and mature forests across the U.S. As a native Oregonian currently living in Virginia, I know this is such a critical move if we are to save the last standing old growths (on average only 17% of the forests by your measures and much less in Virginia). As you know they have multiple important roles to play in the larger forest and global ecosystems, not to mention in the psyche of those lucky enough to experience these wonderful places. Numerous studies have shown the health and well-being benefits of spending time outside in nature and forests in particular.

I have a couple of concerns to express about the proposal as I am unclear on the protections that it affords especially if the definition of an "old-growth" forest is too narrow. It seems that mature forests also need protections so that there will be a future "supply" of the old-growth ecosystem.

My other concern focuses on logging. Will it still be allowed in the forests defined as old-growth? I believe the threats to these ecosystems due to climate change are already severe, and that we should not harvest the small percentage that remains. Additionally, timber sales in younger forests must not impact key watersheds and wildland that are critical to the health of the older forests.

Thank you for your time to consider my comments,

Brenda Wiens