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Comments: Thank you for taking the time to explore updates to the management of old-growth forests in our National Forest system.

With the effects of climate change being increasingly evident and startling, the habitat loss that has occurred over the past several decades, and the pollution and degradation of watersheds, it is essential that we take immediate action to strengthen protections for mature and old-growth forests.

Mature and old-growth forests are still at risk for timber sales, road building that bisects and disrupts habitat, post-fire logging, and unnecessary and non-scientific-backed fuel reduction projects. The amendment still allows for numerous exceptions that would permit commercial logging of old-growth trees. It also nothing to protect mature forests from logging, which is a ridiculous oversight: after all, mature forests are the old-growth forests of the future, so they need equal protections. Protecting mature forests is critical to addressing the biodiversity and climate crisis.

I encourage the agency to strengthen the language of this proposed amendment to solidify the amendment's focus on protecting these forests. As the plan currently stands, there is potential for interpreting the language to allow more logging and unnecessary thinning of old-growth and mature forests under the guise of fuel reduction. This loophole needs to be definitively closed.

I request that you add language to prioritize and clarify how the plan will address climate change and President Biden's executive orders on this subject-in particular the urgent need to protect old-growth and mature forests in order to increase carbon sequestration.

Please put a stop to the practice of cutting down old-growth trees except in instances of direct threat to life or property. Implement tight control of management of old-growth stands. Eliminate financial incentives to logging because this directly contradicts any protections for old-growth and mature trees. Remove ambiguous wording from the plan; definitions should be clear, simple, and easy to apply in the field, and they should include both mature and old-growth forests. For fire reduction and planning strategies, focus on helping communities prepare, not logging forests.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my input.