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Comments: Hello,

Many others have described the importance of old growth forests in more detail than I, but I am here to lend my support to their protection, and the protection of future old growth forests. Old growth forests are vital to maintaining the health of our environment for countless reasons including capturing carbon, providing a reserve for thousands of species, including economically and medically important ones, providing habitat for many unique species not found in younger forests, providing oxygen, and filtering our air and water.

This habitat is important, and especially on the east coast of the United States has been degraded in quality and diminished in size. What's more, it cannot be replaced on demand. A tree cannot be begged, paid, threatened, or forced to grow. The leaf litter, soil, insects, mosses, fungi, accompanying variety of herbs and small plants, rotten logs, vines, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and all the other things that make a forest a forest cannot be assembled without time. All you can do is wait. A forest lost is not coming back for decades. An old-growth forest lost will not return while any of us alive today still live. To let our old growth forests shrink any further would be a huge loss to all who live in America.

But there is a flip side to this revelation. Just as a forest can only be formed by time, we have an excellent opportunity to protect aging forests today. By protecting mature forest areas we can secure the old growth forests of the future, and ensure that we continue to benefit from their numerous ecosystem services.