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First name: Nicole

Last name: Martel

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello,

Thank you for truly protecting our forests...

There is nothing more important than protecting old-growth trees and forests. They affect everything else. Over management is causing unnecessary harm and problems, especially when it comes to wildfire. These may be well-intentioned management practices, but the research is showing that old growth trees and forests resist wildfire better naturally due to their density and water retention.

Mature and old-growth forests are also known as "climate forests" because they offer natural climate solutions that remove and absorb large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere while providing vital refuges for many at-risk species and vulnerable wildlife. Thinning practices destroys this benefit.

I am urging you to please protect mature and old-growth forests to address our climate and biodiversity crises now. We need to commit to strengthening the proposed protections for old growth and also protect mature trees across federal lands from logging.

Safeguarding and expanding carbon-rich forests on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands is one of the most important, cost-effective, and immediately available strategies to fight the climate crisis. Older trees accumulate and store enormous amounts of carbon over many centuries and provide vital wildlife habitat, clean water, clean air, and mitigation for floods and droughts. Larger, older trees are also more fire resistant. We need to ensure both mature and old-growth trees and forests remain in place to mitigate climate change, and to maintain their natural benefits for future generations.

The Forest Service's promising new proposal rightly recognizes the importance of mature and old-growth forests and trees. Protecting them is exactly the direction federal forest management needs to move, and I am very grateful for the integrity of this new direction away from logging.