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Comments: Dear Forest Service,

Old growth forests stand as timeless monuments of ecological diversity, harboring a rich tapestry of life that has evolved over centuries. These ancient ecosystems, characterized by their towering trees, diverse understory vegetation, and intricate ecological interactions, play a fundamental role in maintaining global biodiversity and ecological balance. They serve as crucial habitats for countless plant and animal species, many of which are endemic and reliant on the specific conditions found within these forests. Furthermore, old growth forests act as carbon sinks, sequestering vast amounts of carbon dioxide and helping mitigate the impacts of climate change. Preserving these majestic landscapes is not just a matter of conservation; it is an imperative for safeguarding our planet's health and ensuring the well-being of future generations. Through concerted conservation efforts and sustainable forest management practices, we must protect these invaluable ecosystems and honor their invaluable contributions to the health of our planet.

Within old growth forests, the intricate relationships between trees and fungi form the backbone of their ecosystems. Fungi, such as mycorrhizae, establish symbiotic partnerships with trees, facilitating nutrient uptake and enhancing the resilience of the forest community. Through this underground network, fungi not only aid in the growth and survival of towering giants but also nurture smaller, often overlooked plant species. Smaller trees, shrubs, and herbs find support and sustenance within the shade of the forest canopy, benefiting from the moisture retention and nutrient cycling facilitated by fungi. Additionally, fallen trees and decaying matter provide vital habitats for various fungi species and microorganisms, contributing to the forest's overall biodiversity. Thus, the interplay between fungi, smaller trees, and the broader ecosystem underscores the interconnectedness and resilience of old growth forests, highlighting the need for their preservation as invaluable repositories of ecological harmony and biological diversity.

It is imperative that old growth trees and forest ecosystems be protected and preserved. Additionally, abolishing the practice of clear cutting forests is also essential.

Thank you,

Heather L. Ackenhusen