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Comments: I am writing to comment on the scoping process for the Land Management Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System #65356. This Proposal is important, but has omitted mature forests, despite preceding directives. The inclusion of mature forests with old growth forests is essential in areas like the Southwestern forests. There are almost no old growth forests left in the southwest; most old growth was logged for railroad ties and homes long before our present day. I have lived and recreated in the Zuni Mountains of western New Mexico since the 1970s, and I have seen the many remnants (huge tree stumps) of the ancient forests all over the Zuni Mountains. However, there are forests that are now becoming mature and deserve to be preserved.

I have been a member of the Zuni Mountain CFLRP since 2012 and of the SW Jemez CFLRP since 2012, and I do agree with the thinning of those areas that are wildly departed from an old growth or mature and fire resilient state. I am also a member of the Sandia, Mt Taylor, and Magdalena Collaboratives and understand the issues of forest health and restoration. However, I do not think that excessive expansion of the WUI around existing roads is necessary, and any forests that have the potential to become mature should be protected.

I have visited all of the national forests in New Mexico and many of those in Arizona, Colorado, Utah and Nevada, as well as Oregon, and want to see them protected from any kind of logging.

I especially think that the mature pinyon/juniper forests should be protected. My family sees pinyon jays many times a month at our home in the Sandia foothills, and the world will be a lesser place without them and the other threatened and endangered species like the Mexican Spotted Owl and the Zuni Bluehead Sucker. (And yes, I have seen those tiny fish in the western Zuni Mountains at Agua Remora and Tampico Draw.)

I hope my comments will be considered; I have spent countless hours in the last 12 years learning about forest health. A healthy forest is not a plantation, and cannot be replaced with a plantation and remain a positive place for wildlife, for people, and for our planet.

I appreciate your consideration of my comments.