

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/1/2024 7:22:09 PM

First name: Steve

Last name: Massell

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Sirs:

In addition to the benefits which "Old-growth" provide (carbon storage, cleaning the air we breathe and water we drink, biodiversity, and reducing wildfire risks), the old-growth forests of the Nantahala-Pisgah National Forests are home to several endangered and threatened species: endangered bats, green salamanders, and outdoorsmen with families.

The amendments proposed by the Forest Service should create standards for the protection of all old-growth forests on National Forest Lands. It's important that the new rule is strong enough to protect the rich biodiversity of our region and to keep these massive carbon stores firmly rooted in the soil to mitigate climate change and flexible enough to allow for the restoration of old-growth stand structure and wildfire resilience.

Thank you for reading my letter!