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First name: Mary Lou

Last name: Johnson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ms. Linda Walker,

I am writing you as a mother, a grandmother, a person of faith and someone who believes we must make environmental decisions that will benefit the next seven generations. I want to provide scoping comments on the Forest Service's notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement to analyze the development and implementation of a nationwide forest plan amendment to conserve old growth forests. Forest Service, Land Management Plan Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System, Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, 88 Fed. Reg. 88,042 (Dec. 20, 2023).(EIS)

This is a historic step to conserving old growth on national forests. I am in strong support for having a consistent policy that protects all old-growth forests and trees. I have watched and seen intensive logging and development that have decimated our old-growth forests. I understand that today less than 17% of America's national forests are old growth.

I am quite sure that you are aware of all the benefits to having mature and old-growth forests. They are storing large amounts of carbon, supporting biological diversity, and enhancing climate resilience. I think it is important that the proposed amendment set clear benchmarks for the occurrence, arrangement, and connectivity of mature and old-growth forest conditions across the landscape for ecological integrity.

It is also critical that the plan incorporate strong monitoring and accountability measures.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. This will have so many benefits for the planet. Please do maintain the timeline for this amendment process. And it is my hope that you will engage Tribal Nations as well. They have much to teach us about land management for the next seven generations.