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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this historic old growth conservation proposal.

As a retired NEPA Program Manager and EIS reviewer (for the EPA), I know that a well-developed purpose statement is fundamental to developing alternatives. I encourage you to consider and provide purpose statements and alternatives in the EIS that significantly strengthen old-growth forest protections by limiting the stated exceptions to protections.

The national forest plan amendment must also incorporate strong monitoring and accountability measures, both for tracking the abundance and distribution of mature and old-growth forests, and for ensuring their value as a natural carbon solution is optimized over time.

Mature and old-growth forests are a nature-based climate solution for storing large amounts of carbon, supporting biological diversity, and enhancing climate resilience. Mature forests provide many of the ecological roles as fully functional old growth forests.