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Comments: In relation to "Land Management Plan Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System":

Please retain and preserve and expand our mature forests. I use the term "mature forests" to include those which are understood as old-growth, along with forests that are established, old (a threshold could be considered, such as 80 years) with \*potential\* to become old-growth. These forests together are a reservoir of genetic diversity that cannot be replaced if these trees are cut. Diversity includes the characteristics of the trees themselves, but also the breadth of animals, vegetables and fungi that inhabit and rely on mature forests. Climate models suggest that we can expect more frequent heat domes, water shortages, decreased snow cover, increased fire activity, extreme seasonal variation, and other effects during the next 10-100 years. Genetic diversity as retained in mature and old-growth forests may become a lifeline to our future quality of life and economic success. Killing those trees now for short term profit could have significantly bad consequences for human and natural systems in the coming relatively nearterm decades.

Please save the old growth for the future. Please nurture mature tree stands for the possibility of becoming old growth and broadening our capabilities to adapt to change, across the nation and especially across the pacific northwest.

Thank you - Mike Ruth