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Comments:

Old Growth and Mature forests should not be logged or thinned for any reason. Intact old forests provide a myriad of benefits including carbon sequestration, carbon storage in trees, ground vegetation and soils, water purification with slow delivery, wildlife habitat, genetic diversity, functional mycelial colonies, fire resistance, beauty and peace. Logging and thinning in old forests is often done under the guise of fire prevention. Studies have shown that fire prevention should be done by home owners close to their homes. Logging in the back country will not protect houses, it is done to procure logs for the mills.

The Biden administration made a good first step to protect old forests but left loop holes that need to be closed. Old forests are now being cut while this national land use amendment is being considered. A moratorium on all cutting in old forests needs to be put in place now. The amendment, when finished, should ban all cutting in old growth and mature forests.

I do not think that the Forest Service in its current iteration is the best entity to be making decisions about amending the Forest Plan. The Forest Service is involved in setting the timber target and pleasing the timber industry. They write project plans using various descriptions of making the forest better, but always there is the production of timber for the mills. Our national forests should not be primarily for producing board feet. Our national forests should be under the Department of Interior not the Department of Agriculture. Our national forests should provide habitat for our wildlife, carbon storage for climate mitigation, serenity and beauty for all of us.

This land use amendment has got to stop any cutting in our old growth and mature forests.