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Comments: There are many ways to define Old Growth and Mature Forests. Having a professional degree in Forestry and reviewed the Society of American Foresters (SAF) position papers on the subject, I agree with their definitions and defining characteristics. Age or size are too limiting over large landscapes. I hope the SAF Old Growth definitions and conditions are incorporated into the Plan.

Any Old Growth Plan should incorporate allowances for human manipulation or intervention to address Forest Health issues like fire and disease. A hands-off approach doesn't take into effect the positive benefits of controlled burns and other fuel removal methods. Humans have been and will continue to influence forest conditions well into the future. It is important that we not limit the tools we need to direct or steer desired future conditions. Windstorms and fires have been part of the life cycle for a long time and necessary for creating openings for pioneering species that we also cherish.

Federal forests, including older forests, are important to people & communities for water, fish, recreation and resources. As we lock up more forests from extraction, we are creating shortages of building materials for our growing population. We also need to protect our rural communities and economies that rely on Federal timber receipts for schools, libraries and other public services.

Thank you for consideration of my comments.