

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/2/2024 2:50:31 AM

First name: Jayne

Last name: Baker

Organization:

Title:

Comments: February 1, 2024

Director, USFS Policy Office,

Thank you for initiating the rulemaking process ("Forest Service Functions" 9FS-2023-0006-0002) to move forward with U.S. Forest Service policies to protect, conserve, and manage our National Forests and public lands for climate resilience and sustainability. Our mature and old-growth forests are habitat for countless plant and animal species-many of them highly endangered. They also help maintain ground and surface water quality and quantity, they stabilize soils and prevent erosion, and are an important part of our national heritage. Our planet needs these trees if people and other living things are to survive the devastation we have brought upon ourselves.

Research has proven that these forests are a powerful, natural tool to slow and-if given the opportunity-to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Old-growth forests act as "carbon sinks," absorbing massive amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis and permanently locking it away deep in the soil. It behooves us to listen to and act upon science and this important research. I want future generations, especially my new baby granddaughter, to have opportunities to explore parks and greens spaces that protect and nurture our forests and trees anywhere they are growing.

Any new Forest Service rules need to give clear, meaningful, and permanent protection to mature and old-growth forests and trees from logging and other destructive practices so they can continue to help mitigate the climate and biodiversity crises.

Thank you again for your commitment to protecting, conserving, and restoring America's public forests.

Sincerely,

Jayne D. Baker