

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/2/2024 3:42:40 AM

First name: Jana

Last name: Hobbs

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for your notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement on the conservation of old growth and mature forest stands across the United States. Due to past logging and development, less than 17% of American national forests can claim old growth characteristics. Because of these depleted conditions, every effort needs to be made to allow the recovery of America's forests.

President Biden's proclamation calls particular attention to the importance of mature and old-growth forests on Federal lands for their role in contributing to nature-based climate solutions by storing large amounts of carbon and increasing biodiversity, mitigating wildfire risks, enhancing climate resilience, enabling subsistence and cultural uses, providing outdoor recreational opportunities, and promoting sustainable local economic development.

In considering management options, the EIS needs to considerably strengthen old growth forest protections and limit stated exceptions, with the express goal of increasing old growth cover and connectivity. All decisions should be ground-truthed, consistent with up to date scientific best practices, and made in consultation with the tribes, respectful of indigenous knowledge.