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Comments: I am writing to urge the USFS to preserve old-growth trees and provide sustained maintenance and oversight that will provide a future for these natural areas and the animals that depend on them for shelter and food. I am not an advocate for the lumber industry and do not believe the current logging practice of clear cutting and replanting while leaving the hillsides barren of all cover can provide a path to a sustainable future. I have spent the last 10 summers in Oregon and Washington state, and I am not impressed with the condition of the forests in the logged areas. A mature forest must have multiple species of trees and other plants. The present method of establishing forests of the same species can not maintain itself in time of stress. This practice will eventually lead to more wildfires and less support for native animals.

I would like to see a commitment from USFS to protect and promote the renewal of old growth trees over time, and increase the use of beneficial fires, removal of brush, fallen limbs, and small trees that only provide intensity and destructive heat to naturally occurring forest fires. If our forest are to survive the coming draught years the forest must be thinned allowing the mature trees to acquire the sustenance they need. Large areas of brush and small trees in the undercover diminish the vitality of the older trees and will lead to their destruction from disease and/or fire.

On a social note. It would be beneficial for such a program to engage with local native American Tribes as much as possible in these restoration efforts. The indigenous peoples of forest and prairie lands have a history of monitoring and taking measures to promote natural processes that could prove vital to the success of such a project. Also, I believe local people and all communities would derive economic benefits by providing knowledge, skills and labor in support of such projects.

Thank you for your time and please maintain our old growth forests.