

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/2/2024 11:18:25 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing as an endangered wildlife species and old growth forests protection advocate because old-growth forests provide trees big enough to contain the large nest cavities pileated woodpeckers need for nesting and an abundance of insects for the birds to feed on. However, I am now very concerned because as the climate changes, old forests that woodpeckers and other wildlife depend on are increasingly threatened with destruction.

Please understand that I extend my sincere appreciation and thank you for proposing a nationwide plan amendment to address the long-term persistence, distribution and recruitment of old-growth forest across national forest systems. This proactive step will help protect the countrys oldest trees. However, please understand that to truly safeguard their vital role in combating the ever worsening climate crisis, I strongly urge you to please make the amendment significantly stronger.

At this time, I extend my sincerer appreciation and thank you for initiating this process to secure the long-term health of old-growth forests. Although these important forests provide numerous benefits to people and to nature, they are present on only a fraction of the landscape they once covered. This reality, along with the increasing stressors that these forests face from climate change, highlights the need and urgency for national direction to secure the conservation and health of our remaining old-growth forests.

As the agency refines its old-growth proposal, I strongly urge you to please undertake on-the-ground identification of old-growth stands to ensure that the proposals plan components are applied to the appropriate places. It is vital to fully clarify when proactive management can occur to ensure that management is driven by forest health needs and I strongly encourage you to please ensure robust engagement of the public and Tribes in developing local or regional Adaptive Strategies for Old-Forest Conservation.

To successfully formulate this nationwide plan, I strongly urge you to please provide adequate resources to support the proposals monitoring requirements so that the efficacy of the management approaches can be assessed and adapted, as needed, to meet the proposals goals. To truly foster a nationwide plan that will be adopted throughout our country, it is vital that you promote full data transparency by publicizing information compiled through the National Old-Growth Monitoring Network, as well as information on vegetation management projects occurring either in old-growth stands or in priority fire sheds under the agencys Wildfire Crisis Strategy.

At this time, I thank you for your consideration of my letter and my recommendations. To ensure full protection for our old growth forests, I very much appreciate and thank you for recognizing the many important values of old-growth forests through the initiation of this process, and for ensure that these old growth trees can serve to absorb the recored levels of carbon dioxide that are needed to successfully combat the worldwide climate change crisis and protect our country and our planet.

Sincerely,

Jean Marie Naples, MD-Ph.D.