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Comments: We have a long, sad, history of forest mismanagement by politics. I am retired but worked post wildfire recovery, in Colorado, for 21 yrs. (non-profit) We know that a forest with varying ages of trees is the healthiest. We know that even thinned stands can catch an ember on hot wind and burn. Age does not matter. We have some extremely smart forest stand managers, and timber sales employees in the USFS. I trust these folks. Creating a policy to protect old growth over managed forest, well I can see the misinterpretations happening. Harvesting marketable trees along with clearing of thick stands funds the projects. I see this old forest management focus as a way to shut down the important work the timber industry provides. It must be cost effective. Right now timber sales include all the above. they leave a nice variety.

We are way past the days of demonstration sites, such as the one by Deckers. The important work done by Chuck Dennis on Denver Water properties is an excellent example. Large trees, that have space to grow, with a future of cutting more marketable timber as time requires, that give space and sunlight to a new generation of trees, that's the ticket. Special interest groups do not look at the big picture. this new policy can not give them an inch to stop forest thinning projects. It will.

We need to remove barriers to thinning forests, we need to let the USFS employees do their job. More important is the recruitment of new staff that will work towards a variety of tree ages, less paper work and more actions. case in point, wilderness designations. I get it, roadless areas that stop the All terrain vehicles vegetative slaughter. Its turned into a do not touch,. No logging, no grazing, NO NO except to hikers. A special interest group. Sounds emotionally pleasing. Until there is a fire. I detest that these areas can not be thinned, because of the need for heavy equipment, they burn hot, have special fire suppression rules. then after the fire the flooding from small rains greatly effects the down stream users. No rehab can be done on these lands, because the process, not the work, is to strenuous. Down stream is where the debris laden water rips through and destroys our water sources. Bad policy's. Not to mention the number of water consumers-- too many trees for the ecosystems.

I see creating a focus solely on old growth as being just as detrimental.

Second is the carbon sequestering issue. a young growing tree, in a well spaced forest (pre-euro) putting on 1/2 inch or more rings a year is sequestering carbon at a high rate of speed. An old growth forest, no more large rings. one has to use a magnifying glass to see the rings. as in a unmanaged forest. A mature tree with timber value takes the tree and converts it to lumber, preserving the carbon.

Can we just stay the course of creating huge swaths of healthy forests, that have a chance of burning on the ground and not crowning. WE are just starting to turn the wheels on these projects. If you must have old growth, do it along the coast where forest grow faster, not in dry Colorado, and the rocky mountains.