

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/2/2024 4:53:40 PM

First name: Jan

Last name: Randall

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I support the protection of old-growth forests from logging. As a biologist, I am extremely concerned about the loss of biodiversity, wildlife habitat, and carbon sequestration. Scientists have declared a biodiversity crisis as well as a climate change crisis. These two events are connected, and saving mature trees is essential as carbon sequesters as well as important habitat for wildlife. Natural forests store 50% more carbon than planted forests and mature forests store significantly more carbon than younger trees. Removal of any trees within a mature forest can have a negative effect on biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

Trees are a huge source of carbon sequestration, and, in the long run, mature trees do a much better job of absorbing carbon than younger trees. A tree's carbon absorption rate accelerates as it ages, and forests composed of tall, old trees are some of the planet's biggest carbon storehouses, but when trees are logged, immense stores of carbon are quickly released. Old growth forests are irreplaceable and no amount of small, replacement trees can take the place of them.

So much of the temperate, old-growth forests that once covered northern California and the Pacific Northwest are gone. By the end of the 19th century, all of the mature redwoods in Sonoma County, where I live, were logged, and today there is only one original redwood tree still standing. The logging companies moved north and by the 1960s only patches remained in northern California, and the Olympic National Park is an island surrounded by clear cuts. Environmental activists pressed for preservation and help preserve a few areas of what remained.

Every effort must be taken to preserve the old-growth forests that remain today. Rich species diversity of native trees is an important contributor to the health, prosperity, and beauty of our country.