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Comments: I concur with the conclusions of the letter submitted by the Gallatin Wildlife Association and attendant signees. Severe loss of biodiversity and increased planetary temperatures require recruiting, conserving, and stewarding old growth forests!!!! All are under severe risk of insect infestation, drought, urban-interface development, commercial logging (in Canada most old-growth trees goes to the manufacture of toilet paper), to name a few. Based on these threats all old-growth forests must be protected, and more mature forests stands recruited and conserved for old-growth conservation.

In certain regions of the country, there are virtually no old-growth stands left due to logging. This fact alone makes protecting mature forests all the more imperative. Inappropriate, unmitigated logging remains directly under the purview of the USFS.

The importance of old-growth forests cannot be overstated. They provide carbon capture, increase biodiversity, and mitigate wildfire risks.

*The EIS must analyze alternatives with significantly strengthened protections for old growth. *Currently the amendment would still allow for numerous unacceptable exceptions for commercial logging of old-growth (which goes to superfluous uses).

*The Forest Service should end felling of old-growth trees everywhere and eliminate cutting in of old-growth stands where fire is infrequent.

*Amendment language must be strengthened to completely eliminate the commercial exchange of old-growth trees.

*Forest Service must remove the Tongass old-growth logging exception from any further analysis in the upcoming EIS.

*expand distribution and abundance of old-growth forests, including in the EIS process alternatives for conserving mature forests and trees, including their value as future old growth.

*National Forest Amendment plan must incorporate strong monitoring and accountability measures to track the abundance and distribution of mature and old-growth forests!!!!