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Comments: I appreciate the Forest Service's stated intention to protect old growth forests and mature forests that are growing/ evolving in that direction. It's about time! These eco-systems and the ancient trees in them are national treasures.

We know that ancient trees are wise beings whose presence on the surface of the earth is an important stabilizing influence. That we have ever cut trees like these is unconscionable.

I have learned however that the supposed protections that are planned are a bit of a smoke screen for more business as usual, such as taking out the largest trees because it is the most profitable--but pretending that it is NOT for economic reasons.

~The Forest Service must be impeccable in its commitment not to cut these forests.

~That means addressing all the exceptions, exemptions, etc in these plans. For example the Tongass forest must not be an exception--that ancient forest must be protected as well, no matter how far out of sight and out of mind it may be. The carbon stored there benefits the entire planet.

~Thinning must not be allowed "to lessen fire danger /fuel load" since old growth forests tend not to burn since they hold a great deal of moisture if not disturbed. It is precisely all the downed wood and debris that hold that moisture and act like a sponge. These messy, moist, mossy, overgrown forests are carbon sinks. We need more of them!

It tends to be irresistible to humans to think they know better than Nature how to manage the natural world --- often with disastrous consequences. Native Americans, with their respectful and spiritual relationship to the world may have been able to do that well, but westernized capitalist humans less so.

The less interference in old growth forests the better. We the public deserve to be able to experience Nature expressing herself unimpeded, in all her glorious complexity, without the hand of man interfering.

Time I have spent in old growth forests in Oregon and Washington has indelibly etched my soul. These are holy places where the diversity of living organisms is nothing short of miraculous--some amazing lifeform happening anywhere one looks, at every scale. There is absolutely no comparison between harvested forests (barren agricultural landscapes) and the richness and abundance of old growth areas. "Mature forests", particularly where not a bit of old growth has been spared from our voracious appetites, MUST be allowed to truly mature into more of these full blown old growth forests.

I have seen the devastation that the Forest Service has allowed to be wreaked upon these spaces.

The thoroughness and efficiency with which they are liquidated.

There is a long history of collusion with private for-profit timber businesses whose greed is limitless.

Every word that would allow a continuation of this culture of extraction and exploitation must be stricken from these plans. You know the sneaky double speak, the obfuscation, the misleading phrases, better than I.

The world desperately needs these wild mysterious magical places, some would say as sanctuaries for the Nature Spirits who have been driven away from so many places by our obtuseness and abuse.

We the people have a right to demand their protection. They belong to us and we are beholden to them for their "ecosystem services"--but more than that, for their ALIVENESS and for showing us what Nature is capable of.

Please put real teeth into these plans.