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Comments: RE:Land Management Plan Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System #65356

Director, Ecosystem Management Coordination

Dear Director,

Scientists are just now realizing the resources for medical applications present in old-growth forests that are not yet apparent in mature forests. Some of these beneficials take centuries to form in the trees. Old-growth forests are a resource that cannot be replaced so we need to keep them. Their economic value is directly related to their continued existence. And, we are just beginning to learn about the complexity and value of the soil underneath the trees which would be lost if the trees were cut in any way.

Humans have never lived in these high levels of carbon dioxide and we cannot afford to lose natural resources that absorb carbon dioxide from the air and replenish oxygen and support hydration. In the last couple of years science has once again proven something that traditional cultures have known for eons, and that is the benefit of being among old trees. Besides the volatiles that benefit our physical health, the calming nature of the old growth forest is something we all need right now.

In California we are seeing rapid regrowth occurring naturally in groves that were caught in fire. Imagine being a tree 250 years old or more, having built up resilience and immunity to events such as fire and having people look at your scarred outer bark and say we need to cut them down even as the tree is sending out new shoots.

Humans just can't appreciate the time it takes an ancient tree to heal, with our eight hour days and billable hours. These human constructs need to be set aside as we look at the old-growth forest.

It is imperative that any loophole that would allow for destruction of the delicate balance that is represented by old-growth forest be closed. Clauses that promote fallacies such as removing trees "to reduce fuel hazards," "proactive stewardship," or "resiliency" need to be eliminated. The best way to protect and old-growth forest is to let it be. I also understand the forests of the Tongass in Alaska are at risk. Let it be.

Currently, California redwoods are moving up to Washington state, we need to watch them, they might know something we don't. Recently a forest worker who had purchased land in southern Oregon told me of a "new" bumblebee she had seen; her description detailed a bumblebee that has been declared extinct in California, that is bombas Franklini. How many other species do we not know of that are finding their own way to survival in old-growth forests that might straddle state lines? These forests are national treasures.

It is in your role dealing with Ecosystem Management Coordination to stand for future generations as well as all those trees that are witness to history and the power of life. Please do it.

Choose love,