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Comments: My comments are of a general nature applying to all National Forests in the continental United States, Alaska and Hawai'i:

If any National Forest has an existing Land Management Plan (LMP) containing old growth components, it is essential that this area not be logged or altered in any way. If the existing LMP of a forest contains the desired conditions for old growth, but is not yet defined as such, priority should be given to fostering old growth conditions. This is crucially important if the area is adjacent to existing old growth forest. Studies have shown that old growth spreads more quickly into an adjacent area with mature trees that have not yet progressed to the status of old growth versus an area containing no mature trees.

The above comments are not to imply that mature forests not adjacent to old growth should be logged or invaded by roads. In the northeastern United States only five percent of the old growth present when this area was colonized by Europeans remains today. Therefore, it is essential that mature forests, especially if they are adjacent or close to each other be managed to encourage their progression to old growth. As the planet warms, continuity of forest lands will help facilitate the migration of plants and animals northward.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.