

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/15/2024 2:05:38 AM

First name: Bryce

Last name: Delaney

Organization:

Title:

Comments: While I believe this new plan is a step in the right direction for the protection of old growth forests, I am deeply concerned about some of the wording and the lack of protection for mature forests.

For one, this plan allows for some "proactive stewardship" for the purpose of "fuels reduction." In reality, there is very little evidence that thinning in old-growth forests has any meaningful impact on fire prevention. That, of course, is not even considering the substantial impacts - roads, noise and air pollution, habitat fragmentation, wildlife disturbance - that are integral to the process of logging. Other methods, such as controlled burns, have proven to be much more effective in wildfire prevention and resilience. Industry has often logged or chained areas of old-growth under the guise "fuels reduction" or "habitat improvement." These loopholes are simply handouts to industry and do not reflect the best available science, which encourages intact, impacted ecosystems.

Furthermore, this effort fails to protect mature forests. Mature forests are the old-growth forests of the future, and have many of the same benefits as old-growth forests. These mature forests enable recreation, ecosystem services, carbon sequestration, and recreation/community opportunities just as old-growth forests do. BOTH old-growth and mature forests must be protected if we are to protect our ecosystems in the rapidly changing climate conditions of the present and future.