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Comments: With this letter I am commenting on Land Management Plan Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System #65356. I am one of our nation's experts on old-growth forests. I wrote the book, "Nature's Temples: A Natural History of Old-Growth Forests" and I am the Founder of the Old-Growth Forest Network -- a national nonprofit organization with thousands of supporters. I have been in many, many, old-growth forests.

I was so pleased to read President Biden's 2022 Executive Order requesting that the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management define old-growth and quantify its extent as a first step in its protection. I was impressed that the agencies could complete the task within one year. I was further encouraged by reading that all National Forest Plans were to be amended to restrict cutting of old-growth forests.

When the Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released for comment I was disappointed to see that the agency selected Alternative 2 as their preferred alternative. This Alternative allows harvesting of old-growth trees. I was under the hopeful impression that the purpose of the Executive Order, and the work that went into responding to it, was a first step in putting old-growth forests off limits from cutting. Alternative 3 offers stronger protections for ancient forests, and that is the Alternative I prefer and that I am asking the agency to recommend. Even that Alternative has loopholes that should be removed.

I hope you will listen to the US citizens, the true owners of the national forests, who recommend, as I do, that our remaining old growth be preserved.