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Comments: I strongly encourage proactive forest management of our National Forests, including old growth lands. We are losing too much of our forest lands to wildfire and insect infestations over the past two decades. The combination of climate change, overly aggressive litigation by so called environmentalists and complex federal regulations that delay sound forest management projects all result in unhealthy forest conditions leading to the current crisis.

Every year the size and number of wildfires grows. Ten years ago 100,000 acres was a record size for wildfires but now 300,000 acres and even larger are common. The USFS must be more aggressive in their approach to forest management, including in protected wilderness areas. Thinning these protected areas is the only way to conserve the old growth trees. Fire does not distinguish between protected areas and other forest lands.

We need streamlined regulations and protection from time delaying litigation so that the USFS can implement proactive measures that allow logging and thinning activities. This is the only way to create open canopies that slow the spread of fire and disease to protect our forests.

Respectfully submitted.