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First name: David

Last name: winters

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I applaud the US Forest Service for considering future protection for old growth vegetation, the ecosystems they influence, and the extensive biodiversity characteristics they provide. I do believe that ALL old growth forests and vegetation components be protected and not be open to interpretation as to their ecological function. We have lost the vast majority of old growth ecosystems, and even a very small community of old growth vegetation to only one tree in the case of large trees cannot be sacrificed. As a retired USDA Forest Service employee, I often had to listen to our silviculturists call stands of old growth timber "over Mature" and "Rotten Timber. We cannot allow this type of ignorance persist as we watch our old growth stands be reduced further.

Please ensure there are management Areas for functioning Old Growth Ecosystems, as well as standards and guidelines for the protection of these diminished, incredibly important functioning ecosystems and individual components of Old growth Ecosystems. Our resource managers do not have the foresight and backbone to ensure their protection as well as the political ability to do "The Right Thing" given political pressure.