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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To: Chief Randy Moore, U.S. Forest Service

Re: USDA Old-Growth Initiative

Date: Date, 2024

Dear Chief Moore,

Thank you for working to strengthen rules to protect Old Growth forests, and for asking for public input.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement needs to be strengthened to address the climate and biodiversity crises we are in. I live in Oregon, and know how vital our Old growth forests are in this region. Pacific NW forests are some of the most carbon dense forests in the world, absorbing and storing carbon both above and below ground.

Additionally, I have personally witnessed the way Old growth forests are essential in drawing down not only carbon but water. We camped this year in the Olympic National Park and experienced the dripping of the water from the trees, while neighboring areas without the tall trees remained dry when under cloud cover.

Without Old growth forests drawing down the water, our forests, made dryer by the rising temps, get even dryer and feed the horrific megafires we have witnessed.

Tall Old Growth trees are vital not only for the health of ALL forests and lowering temperatures, they are also essential for clean drinking water, viable salmon populations and the numerous land, water, and air species that depend on salmon. As you know, they are also the habitat for the greatest diversity of species, and saving endangers species.

Unfortunately, the current DEIS fails to adequately protect these essential Old Growth forests, or plan to restore sufficient forests to levels needed to combat a grave climate future. We need a plan that identifies mature forests to help reverse the dire trends.

The language in the DEIS needs to be clear in protecting the above forests. Currently ambiguous language could be used to justify commercial logging in old growth forests, including the Tsongass National forest.

Until the carbon and temperature trends begin to reverse and come down, we need to do all we can to preserve remaining Old Growth, and sufficient mature forests that will restore more Old Growth habitat. Logging Old Growth to save stands from potential threats has proven to invite incomplete or corruption of data to justify logging.

Lastly, I encourage you to ensure strong monitoring and accountability measures.

Sincerely, Harriet C. Portland OR