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First name: Mark

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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:

I am writing to convey my concerns about the DEIS for protecting old growth in our national forests. I ask that the DEIS be strengthened to ensure that strong protections needed to protect our remaining old growth are included in the text. Here in the Pacific Northwest, the vast majority of old growth was logged over the fifty years after WWII. In addition, much of our natural forests were transformed into timber plantations. Much more can and should be done to help these timber plantations develop into old-growth forests.

Sadly, mature and old-growth forests continue to be logged in our national forests. Here in the Pacific Northwest, our old-growth forests are among the most carbon-dense in the world. These forests also help us fight the biodiversity crisis. I understand that in some rare circumstances, such as for public safety, older trees need to be cut; in such cases, those trees should be left on the forest floor. I also understand that here in the Pacific Northwest, we need to manage our moist west-side forests differently than our dryer east-side forests. Yes, ecologically appropriate restoration is needed on those east-side forests, but that should never include logging old-growth trees.

Mature and old-growth trees and forests protect our climate and provide critical environmental benefits by absorbing and storing carbon, boosting resilience to fire, helping regulate temperatures, filtering drinking water, and sheltering wildlife. These forests also provide a wonderful sense of awe for our citizens; one cannot help but feel a sense of wonder in these extraordinary forests. Given these many benefits, logging these forests makes no sense.

Lastly, I encourage you to do a better job of ensuring strong monitoring and accountability measures. The public needs to know the results of these amended plans to protect old growth. In that way, trust can be strengthened.

Sincerely,