

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/3/2024 4:00:00 AM

First name: Devin

Last name: Field

Organization: Peng Field Foundation

Title: CIO

Comments: Having been a forest service employee in the 1990's I am familiar with the need to balance resource extraction, multiple use activities, and conservation/protection within PNW National Forests. Back then, the forest service set aside small "no cut" areas such as SOHA triads to protect threatened and endangered wildlife species. Over time, timber lobby pressure in congress forced changes to the Forest Management Plan and even those historically protected areas got rotated and cut. Even in the 1990's visiting foresters from Europe were surprised to see we were still clear cutting, and had not learned the lessons of the Black Forest for example, where older forests on third and fourth cut had depleted soils, mono/biculture species forests, and little wildlife habitat extant.

Now, 30 years later, it is time to finally heed the peer-reviewed, scientific research compiled by wildlife biologists and climate scientists over the decades, and understand that once cut, an old growth forest will never again grow to become an old growth forest. With cut rotations of 80 years or less, and old growth firs exceeding 600-750 years of age, we must recognize the distinction between an old growth forest and a second growth forest. We must also recognize the distinction between the impact to the broader climate, of a second growth forest versus an old growth forest. It is high time timber extraction be limited to second growth forests, and preserve the last of the giant trees (and the corresponding ecosystems they represent), for these last remaining old growth stands will be lost forever to future generations if we do not stop now.

The Peng Field Foundation strongly urges the Forest Supervisor and other decision makers on up the chain to choose Alternative #3. Please consider protecting the last of the old growth while there is still some left to protect. Treat it as a national natural treasure, and understand that tourism and recreation fees can generate funds in perpetuity to offset revenue streams generated by harvests. Witness the Olympic National Park which was set aside by visionaries in 1938, as an example of how old growth can be protected yet enjoyed by many, while still meeting the various mandates of "managed" public lands.