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Comments: Since the rise of industrialization - and farming before that - America has lost almost all of its old-growth forest. Some estimates place remaining Primary forestland at only about 1% of its original extent. For me, that alone seems like a good reason to save what's left and hand it on to the next generation to explore, enjoy, and protect. But - there are other good reasons as well, including:

- * Primitive forests are biochemical factories that even scientists don't fully understand. Plant species that are native to old-growth forests may someday prove to be invaluable towards curing human ailments, as has been realized in numerous plants from tropical rainforests.

- * Old-growth forests provide habitat for species that do not typically thrive in younger forests. Primary forests provide a reservoir for many species of flora and fauna, many of them otherwise endangered.

- * Old forests absorb and store carbon, helping in the struggle to prevent run-away planetary heating.

- * The rich, spongy soil and complex root systems of old-growth forests help resist soil erosion and facilitate the absorption of rainwater.

I spend as much time in old forests as I can. There are few near where I live, but a six-hour drive gets me under their canopies. They are beautiful and magical places that every American deserves a right to experience.

Many of our great trees are gone due to disease. Chestnut and Elm are effectively lost. Ash is on its way out. Oaks, Ponderosa Pine and other species are under attack. Old, diverse forests help reduce the risk of complete loss and slow disease progression.

As for logging - it really seems there should be no excuse. These trees are now worth more alive than dead. Please, can't we at least protect them from what we can control?

With the proposed National Old-Growth Amendment, the Forest Service has an opportunity to protect our mature and old-growth trees; but the current draft proposal fails to do so. It does not fully prohibit the cutting of old-growth trees.

I ask that the amendment include provisions that:

- * End the logging of old-growth trees across our national forests

- * End the commercial exchange of old-growth trees logged on forestlands managed by the agency. No old-growth trees should be sent to mills.

- * Establish protections for mature forests and trees to increase the amount of old growth for our children and generations beyond.

There isn't much left - please help save what we do have. Once they are gone, they will effectively be gone forever.