

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/9/2024 10:17:50 PM

First name: Stefanie

Last name: Schweer

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear U.S. Forest Service,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed amendments to national forest management plans aimed at protecting and enhancing old-growth forests, in alignment with President Biden's Executive Order 14072. This historic proposal is a significant step forward in addressing climate change, improving wildfire resilience, and preserving the invaluable ecological, cultural, and biodiversity values of old-growth forests. However, I urge you to strengthen the proposal with the following critical improvements.

Necessary Improvements:

Prevent Degradation of Existing Old-Growth Forests: The proposal must include clear directives to protect and enhance current old-growth conditions. Management actions should be strictly beneficial, with a focus on preventing any degradation of these critical ecosystems.

Recognize the Value of Passive Stewardship: Many old-growth forests, particularly in regions like the Pacific Northwest and the eastern U.S., do not require active management to thrive. The policy should recognize the importance of passive stewardship-allowing nature to take its course-and incorporate it as a key strategy in preserving old-growth forests.

Establish Clear Standards for Stewardship: To restore and expand old-growth forests, the proposal should establish clear, enforceable standards and guidelines. This will ensure that sufficient mature forests are conserved and managed to achieve the broader goal of increasing old-growth distribution and abundance.

By incorporating these changes, the U.S. Forest Service can ensure that this proposal not only protects existing old-growth forests but also promotes their expansion and resilience in the face of climate change. I urge you to adopt these improvements and make this policy as effective as possible in safeguarding our nation's forests for future generations.

We must do everything possible to protect old-growth forests!

Thank you for your consideration and for your efforts to protect our invaluable old-growth forests.