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Organization:

Title:

Comments: We Support the USFS Proposal to Protect Old-Growth Forests (with a few suggestions)

Dear U.S. Forest Service,

My family and I strongly support the proposed amendments to national forest management plans aimed at protecting and enhancing old-growth forests!!! We agree that these amendments are in alignment with President Biden's Executive Order 14072. (We were excited about his historic proposal, which we agree was a significant step forward in addressing climate change, improving wildfire resilience, and preserving invaluable ecological, cultural, and biodiversity assets of old-growth and legacy-aged forests).

However, we do strongly urge YOU to strengthen your proposal with the following suggested improvements:

1. Ceasing Degradation of Existing Old-Growth Forests: We agree that your proposal must include clear directives to protect and enhance current old-growth stands. Your management policies and actions should always be beneficial and prevent any degradation of these critical ecosystems.

2. Recognizing Passive Stewardship as an Effective Strategy: We appreciate that many old-growth forests, particularly in the Pacific Northwest and eastern U.S., may not require much management to thrive, i.e. ecological forestry and minimal selective cutting, and NO adjacent clear-cutting. Your policies should also recognize the importance of keeping surrounding areas, especially legacy forests with trees that will become old growth within 25 years.

3. Establishing Clear Standards for Stewardship: To restore and expand old-growth forests, your proposal should establish clear, enforceable management standards and guidelines. This action would ensure that sufficient mature forests are conserved and managed to achieve the increase of old-growth distribution and abundance.

In the Pacific Northwest, we particularly appreciate the value of old growth and legacy stands to protect watershed health, increase ecological diversity and help suppress wildfire.

By incorporating the above suggested improvements, the U.S. Forest Service would ensure that this proposal not

only protects existing old-growth forests but also promotes their expansion and resilience in the face of climate change. We urge you to adopt these suggested improvements and make this policy as effective as possible in safeguarding our nation's forests for future generations.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment, your consideration of our comments and for your efforts to protect our invaluable old-growth and legacy-aged forests.

Sincerely,

Dan, Lys, Mike and Dan (a family of four adult taxpaying and voting U.S. citizens, who care about forest health, especially in this time of climate change).