

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/12/2024 4:47:28 PM

First name: James

Last name: Moody

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Subject: Protect Our Ancient Forests and Strengthen Forest Service Protections

Dear Forest Service Policy Review,

I am writing to ask that you broaden your protections to include mature old forests, based on deep concern about the proposed logging of mature and old-growth forests in the Black Ram project area within the Yaak Valley. The ancient inland rainforest in Black Ram is not currently classified as old-growth by the U.S. Forest Service, which makes it subject to logging before it can receive proper protection. This approach contradicts mounting scientific evidence that shows undisturbed mature forests are more resilient to wildfires and play a vital role in biodiversity and climate stability.

Mature forests, like those in the Yaak, are on the cusp of becoming old-growth forests. These landscapes are essential habitats for a wide variety of plant and animal species, including the endangered grizzly bear population in the Yaak. Logging these forests disrupts the delicate ecological balance they support and undermines efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Old-growth forests are not just valuable for their ecological significance. They are critical in absorbing and storing carbon dioxide, acting as natural climate buffers. Logging them under the current plan weakens our ability to combat climate change and risks destroying irreplaceable natural heritage.

I urge the U.S. Forest Service to revise its draft plan to include stronger protections for both mature and old-growth forests. The ancient primary forest at Black Ram should be designated as a Climate Refuge, safeguarding it from future logging. Preserving these forests is crucial to ensuring a resilient and sustainable future.

Sincerely,

James Moody