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Comments: Dear U.S. Forest Service,

I am writing to express my strong support for protecting old-growth forests, particularly in addressing the increasing threat of devastating wildfires across the western United States, including Eastern Washington, Oregon, and California. Any future forest management policies must incorporate Indigenous Knowledge and Tribal Leadership to create a more inclusive, effective, and sustainable plan for the stewardship of our nation's forests.

Preserving old-growth forests is critical for maintaining biodiversity, supporting healthy ecosystems, and protecting communities from wildfire risk. The policy must include clear guidance to prevent the degradation of existing old-growth forests and trees, ensuring that all management actions are beneficial and aligned to protect and enhance old-growth conditions. It is important to recognize that many existing old-growth forests, such as those in the Pacific Northwest and eastern U.S., do not require active management, and passive stewardship should be prioritized in these areas. Choosing restraint can be as impactful as active management in preserving these vital ecosystems.

In addition, it is crucial to establish clear standards and guidelines to ensure that a sufficient amount of mature forests are preserved and restored, to maintain the distribution and abundance of old-growth forests for future generations. By integrating Tribal Leadership and Indigenous Knowledge into these efforts, we can foster a more balanced and culturally informed approach to protecting these invaluable resources.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these important issues.

Anny Campbell