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Comments: With regard to your request for public comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), I deeply hope that the US Forest Service will take a hard look at its priorities and practices in this era of climate crisis. President Biden's Executive Order called for conservation strategies that address threats to mature and old-growth forests on federal lands. The Forest Service should protect and steward those forests, not slow-walk and subvert options for better policies and a healthier future.

Continuing to log those forests is short-sighted and wasteful of rare resources. Now is the time for change-management at the USFS. Providing timber for the country is an outdated mission. Privately owned land supplies more than enough wood for building, pulp, and paper, as evidenced by the large proportion of USFS timber sales that fail to reach market price.

It's time to set aside old-growth forests in a separate category that acknowledges the extraordinary value of old-growth for its carbon storage. More than virtually any other federal agency, the Forest Service has the power to slow climate change, by NOT doing. The health and well-being of life on the planet are tied to halting management practices that exacerbate the climate crisis and terminate the opportunity for mature forest to become old-growth.

While the stated goals within the DEIS represent a strategy long-needed for the country's forests, the current policy has major loopholes that allow old-growth logging, road-building, and allow for dubious judgment calls on USFS district levels, such as old-growth cutting due to insects and disease in trees that may develop immunity and recover, and salvage logging post-fire.

Thinning has allowed excessive removal of mature and old-growth from national forests, while drying out forest floors and inviting wind and ample oxygen to feed fires. In the East, managing for uneven-aged forests ignores the millennia that those forests survived and thrived without human interference. It's not as if storms and other natural events have ceased that create clearings and open up canopy. Due to the climate crisis, those storms are more frequent and violent than ever.

The policies laid out in the DEIS should specify:

1. Old-growth trees should never be logged or permitted to be sold.
2. Logging should not be allowed within moist forest types, of old-growth or mature trees.
3. "Proactive Stewardship" should never be permitted to degrade the conditions that define an area as old-growth. Managing old-growth is should mean leaving it alone. Proactive Stewardship defies the clear intent of the

executive order.

4. Measurable goals should be established and planning implemented to recruit future old-growth in forests currently classified as mature.

The USFS must make up for historic losses of old-growth due to logging. Do not cut forests that are our best candidates to age into old-growth.

Our mature and old-growth national forests represent a climate solution available right now that costs nothing. These forests have taken centuries to develop and provide immense climate and biodiversity benefits. Please rise to the challenge and meet the climate crisis head-on with a comprehensive moratorium on chopping old-growth and mature forests. These are public lands. We hold you responsible for acting in the public interest. That includes you, your family, your neighbors and your colleagues.

Thank you for addressing our concerns about these important issues.