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First name: Connie

Last name: Bozarth

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Chief Moore,

Executive order EO14072 is designed to identify, inventory and protect mature and old growth forests on federal lands. While the US Forest Service has a draft environmental impact plan to assist in implementing this executive order, several areas need clarification and strengthening to make meaningful safeguards for conservation of mature and old growth containing forests.

* Commercial timber sales should not be used as a default management tool for these forests. If, after careful analysis, timber sales are to be used as a complement to other management tools, only younger trees should be harvested. No mature or old growth trees should be harvested. The 'convenience' of removing old/mature growth trees in order to harvest younger stands is not offset by removal of the most fire resistant trees, and those that provide the most carbon storage.

* Mature trees need explicit protection. A pipeline of trees of various ages needs to be maintained to provide the old growth of the future.

* Passive management should be applied to vegetation management in old/mature growth forests unless 'proactive management' is necessary to maintain the trajectory of forests towards mature/old growth status.

* Loopholes allowing removal of old growth trees should be removed from the document

* Water quality values of old/mature growth forests should take front and center in all considerations of management. Nutrient retention, water retention and slow release and water filtration are all necessary to maintain the clean water supply upon which we all rely

Finally, the draft environmental impact statement should fully and explicitly recognize the conservation of old/mature growth forests as a valuable way to mitigate the impacts of climate change. It is all too easy to let the focus fall on the removal of rainforests, for example, in South America, while ignoring the damage continuing to occur in our own country. The shortterm gain of a few who stand to benefit from unrestrained logging practices does not outway the damage done to the rest of the population and to the environment upon which we all depend. Look at history-do we want the remaining old/mature forests in the USA to go the way of those once in the southeast and upper midwestern USA?

Sincerely,

Connie Bozarth

Corvallis Oregon