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Comments: I am writing as a strong advocate for strengthening the protections for our stands of old-growth forest in our national parks and forests. These forests are eternal and can never be replaced once cut down. To replace them would take hundreds of years and the environmental, aesthetic and spiritual value cannot be calculated to a dollar amount. We cannot afford to lose these places or to think of them in terms of dollars. These are ecosystems which support the lives of many endangered birds, provide homes to scores of critically important insects and other wildlife. To relegate these to just a dollar amount is a form of blasphemy against nature. These old-growth stands absolutely must be preserved, celebrated, nourished and protected - not just for humanity but for the life the life that they sustain and nourish. They are one of the most important sources of carbon absorption, providing for clean water and supporting precious and irreplaceable ecosystems. We must protect them and make sure that they remain untouched. We cannot afford to lose them especially not for some dollar amount. This weekend a small forest I help manage became part of a larger network of protected old-growth mature forests. What we see there are endangered birds, beautiful orb weavers, wild flowers and we manage it so it manages itself. It is quickly fostering wildlife and bird migration records in our community. It is also now part of a county and state resource protection area that has a direct effect on the health of the Chesapeake Bay and Occoquan watersheds. We are a small 5-acre forest - and we are making an impact. How much devastation can be done when hundreds of acres of these old-growth stands are destroyed because they could yield some dollar amount. The devastation cannot be calculated in dollars if these stands are not strongly protected.