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First name: Jennifer

Last name: Singer

Organization: 4Corners Broadband/Great Old Broads for Wilderness

Title: leader

Comments: 4Corners Broadband/Great Old Broads for Wilderness

To: Chief Randy Moore, United States Forest Service

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Land Management Plan Direction for Old Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System

Date: September 16, 2024

4Corners Broadband/Great Old Broads for Wilderness supports Forest Service's preferred alternative (Alternative 2) with the following clarifications and modifications in quotes:

Since our local Mancos-Dolores Ranger District was clear-cut logged 100 years ago, we have mostly mature trees. The only old growth area I'm aware of is McPhee Park which was set aside from logging for future generations and was protected heroically when there was a fire a few years back. So we need you to "direct forest managers to identify and steward mature forests that are best suited to become old growth forests."

"Modify Guideline 3 to recognize the ecological value of old trees in younger stands" is also necessary to protect mature forests that were heavily logged in the past, so they may become old growth forests once again. Our McPhee Park shows us what the forest could become, if not over-logged. We are facing 5 thinning projects which required a lawsuit to "stop loggers from taking the largest- most resilient from insects, disease, and fire- trees."

Proposed projects include logging for bio-char, pellets, and cross-laminated timber. We won't have a forest if these projects keep getting approved. We are on the edge of the San Juan National Forest with desertification happening all around us. The forest is "a carbon sink to mitigate effects of climate change." Our mature forest "leads to better water quality and quantity" in the Dolores River- the only water source for our communities. We need our forest managers to "steward the forest like our community life depends on it"- not cater to loggers. We urge the agency to consider and implement the recommendations in quotes. We look forward to working with our local forest managers when it's time to implement the final National Old-Growth Amendment.