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Title:

Comments: It is vital that we conserve and protect our old-growth forests across the country from being cut. These trees produce a natural cycle of births and deaths, and citing the increased breadth of values the US Forest Service places on old-growth forests, namely carbon sequestration and habitat for biodiversity, it is even more critical that we protect, rather than cut these forests. Old-growth naturally produces snags and tree falls that benefit forest ecosystems in numerous ways, and removing the opportunity for these trees to lay the groundwork for more dynamic forest life is a tragedy. It has been well documented that old-growth forests are major carbon sinks in forests with larger trees like redwoods, but we are just now beginning to understand the dynamics that oak-hickory old-growth forests in the Eastern United States play in carbon sequestration. Not only should we protect these forests for the pivotal roles they play in their ecosystems, but for the educational value they provide for our future generations of researchers. There is still so much to learn about old-growth forest dynamics, and clearing major stands of old-growth is extremely detrimental to our increased understanding of just how crucial these trees are in their forest systems.