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Comments: I am a retired, certified professional public sector land planner with over forty years of experience in land use and watershed planning, as well as land preservation in northeast Ohio. My background includes working on the municipal as well county and regional levels of government. As a former Trustee of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, I was instrumental in establishing an Audubon Sanctuary and State Nature Preserve in Aurora Ohio. Additionally, I worked to permanently protect over 1000 acres of trees and wetlands, which ultimately became part of an extensive (protected) park system in northern Portage and Summit Counties. I know the value of nature and old growth trees to the ecosystems they are a part of and the invaluable ecosystem services that they provide to their surrounding communities. While I was Planning Director in Aurora, Ohio, the city experienced a development boom in the late 1980's through the early 2000's during which land was at a premium. As watersheds were paved over or built upon, storm water management became a major concern. But because of the foresight of the city Planning Commission and Council, large tracts of land were acquired for recreation and permanently protected open space. Much of this land contained many very large and old trees, some of them white and swamp white oaks growing in and around extensive wetlands. These protected areas provided the city with natural and highly efficient flood attenuation functions at no cost to the taxpayers! They also became havens for outdoor enthusiasts, generating additional local revenues for the city.

I recount the above to stress the practical, as well as economic basis for protecting mature and old growth forests. The science is well settled on increasingly severe human induced global climate destabilization and the critical role that mature and old growth trees play in mitigating the effects of this worsening existential crisis. The Forest Service, operating on age-old, out-of-date practices, along with the undue influence of the commercial logging and wood products industries, is furthering an environmental catastrophe when it should be doing precisely the opposite: permanently protecting every bit of mature and old growth forest that remains on our federal lands! Stop destroying our National Forests, the public trust which your very own mission statement entrusts you with the responsible stewardship of! And take note: wild fires are far worse after an area has been commercially logged, NOT the opposite. This is simply more pandering to the fire fighting industry, and yes, it's an industry!

It's long past the time to stop logging the few remaining mature and old growth forests that occupy our federal lands. And it's long past the time to **START PAYING ATTENTION TO THE TAXPAYERS, THE ACTUAL OWNERS OF THESE ICONIC FORESTS, AND STOP DESTROYING THEM! WAKE UP FOREST SERVICE! STOP DESTROYING OUR MATURE AND OLD GROWTH FORESTS! THE SCIENCE AND THE TAXPAYERS ARE NOT ON YOUR SIDE!**