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Comments: I understand the importance of healthy forest habitat, and I support the proposed action (Alternative 2) as developed by the U.S. Forest Service in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Alternative 2 directs the national forests toward stewardship, and I urge the USFS to stand by its choice to move in this direction.

Old forests are one of several critical successional stages in healthy ecosystems. Disproportionate emphasis on old growth - without respect to forest type and in a way that prioritizes them over other forest types - could hinder the USFS's ability to optimize wildlife habitat, carbon stewardship, resilience and biodiversity.

Active forest management is necessary for restoration and complementary to overall forest policy: Many units of the National Forest System are plagued by risks of uncharacteristic wildfire, imbalanced carbon cycles, poor fish and wildlife habitat, and impaired ecosystem functions. Correcting these problems requires both action and monitoring. As restoration projects are expensive, and as many involve reducing woody material of no commercial value, America's paradigm of forest management must shift toward using commercially valuable wood to fund restoration.

Flexibility in management practices, local decision-making: A nationally important and popular objective such as sustaining old growth must not impose a general policy on the many local situations where actions are necessary. Local decisions consistent with the national objective must drive action.

I appreciate the USFS using a science-based approach that relies on local knowledge and expertise from people who work and recreate on our national forest lands. I look forward to future policies and reforms activating the same concept of stewardship across all age and habitat types in the National Forest System.