

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/19/2024 4:00:00 AM

First name: Shirley

Last name: Welch

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Simply put, the Preferred Alternative #2 of the Old Growth Amendment is not about protecting old growth forests, it is about managing old growth forests via what seems to be the only tool in the Forest Service's tool box: logging. Old growth is old growth because it has persevered through adverse conditions for, in many cases, centuries, without the benefit of "management." The Forest Service even admits that some management activities allowed in old growth under Alternative #2 may result in that forest no longer meeting the definition of old growth. More logging is not the answer: it is the problem. Alternative #2, instead of preserving what is left of old growth forest on USFS land, represents a continuation of its destruction.

Because it removes commercial timber harvest as a management tool in old growth forests, Alternative #3 is the better choice of the choices offered. However, I urge the Forest Service to craft an alternative that not only includes meaningful, mandatory standards for preserving old growth forest in its natural condition, but also requires protection of the mature forests that will some day become old growth if not logged.

For the sake of biodiversity, water quality, wildlife habitat, climate mitigation and much more, our remaining old growth forests deserve protection.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.