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Comments: I support the use of sound scientific study for the management of all National Forest resources. Forest management should be conducted to support a diverse forest system include old growth but also new and early successional forests. Forest succession has always taken place; however, modern efforts in fire reduction, development and fragmenting forest lands has led to a situation where only active management processes can provide a diverse healthy landscape. Protection of old growth stands is an important component, but it can not be the only consideration in forest management. In my own region of the Northeast, second and third generation forest have grown up with many species which naturally wont last. These lands need to be harvested to make way for new growth.

I am an active outdoorsman who uses national forests in all seasons. To me, it is just as important to have a trail through a tall pine stand to cross country ski through in the winter as it aid to have a stand of 5 - 12 year growth to hunt grouse and woodcock in the fall. Our forest lands can provide both if balance is used. In my experience, there has been far too great of an emphasis on leaving timber standing in the national forest already. More needs to be done to harvest timber and provide a diverse age range of timber. Wildlife relies on a wide range of age class in a forest, and this should be a primary priority of the forest service.

In summary, I am strongly opposed to putting increased emphasis on old growth forest and would strongly recommend a more balanced approach which focuses on diverse forest stands.

Regards,

John Seelenbinder