

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/20/2024 10:13:34 AM

First name: John

Last name: Averett

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS

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. Will hinder the USFS's ability to positively produce wildlife habitat, carbon stewardship, resilience and biodiversity.

Active forest management is necessary for restoration and complementary. I have seen the decline of song birds over the past 20 years since cutting and proactive management has declined.

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.

Increase the pace and scale of forest restoration and reduce litigation: Excepting wildfire, forest ecology moves slowly. Over the nearly 190 million acres of forest in the National Forest System, ecological problems spread faster than current restoration programs. New policy for achieving restoration goals is meaningless without new procedures to execute more projects faster each year.

Recognize the importance of other forest types: The benefits for old growth forests described in the DEIS resemble those needed for all ages and types of forests within the National Forest System. I urge the USFS to embrace a forest-wide policy of restoration that creates the diversity to support wildlife and water objectives and sustain forests overall.

I appreciate the USFS hearing input from true conservation groups toward 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.