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Comments: Old growth forests provide the greatest combination of environmental gifts to our society that is found on our public lands. Accordingly, they deserve the highest possible level of protection.

Consider carbon sequestration, a high priority worldwide. Old Growth is a champion at sequestering carbon. Old growth forests play a critical role in supporting numerous threatened and endangered species identified by the Endangered Species Act. They enhance water quality, reduce erosion, and are more resistant to fire than second growth and younger stands.

Consider as well the human spiritual value of old growth forests. For many people, a walk amongst ancient cedars or sequoias can be easily described as a religious experience.

The option-cut it down. Roads, logs and slash, normally followed by a tree farm. Under the best of circumstances, the benefits of old growth are lost for at least a dozen generations.

The destruction of existing old growth forests cannot be justified. Mature forests capable of becoming old growth forests within perhaps 50 to 100 years deserve equal protection.