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Comments: Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the draft EIS for the Land Management Plan Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System #65356.

In 1956, one of your foresters, C.M. Cunningham, reported observing that fire conditions were "more severe in the clear-cut areas than in either the heavy or light partial-cutting areas and more so in the later areas than in original timber." This shouldn't surprise anyone, as a well-developed forest will slow wind, hold moisture, and shade and cool its environment through evapotranspiration. It's something anyone can experience for themselves and verify with simple, easily purchased devices.

Not surprisingly, this is confirmed by recent research, again by your own scientists. Lesmeister, et al, wrote in 2021 about the "hotter, drier, and windier microclimates" of open forests, noting that those conditions "decrease dramatically over relatively short distances into the interior of older forests with multilayer canopies and high tree density." Again, isn't this what common sense would predict? Biological richness is also hydrological richness, meaning "where there's more life there's more water."

"Mature" and "Old-Growth" are simply terms for forests that have recovered from severe injury, and are returning to their original richness and complexity. They're our second chance at beginning a new relationship with the land. Please give them, and us, that opportunity by protecting mature and old growth forests.

Thank you very much,

Rob Lewis