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Comments: Eastern forests are a unique and endangered ecosystem with species and environmental conditions that have evolved for millennia. Old Growth forests that once dominated the territory are now rare and at risk.

Eastern Old Growth forests should be protected and preserved for the following reasons:

A) They are one of our best solutions and protection against climate change and its effects, storing and sequestering Carbon efficiently and abundantly. They also store water and protect us from heat and flooding effects of climate change.

B) They are diverse and unique ecosystems that cannot be replaced once destroyed. It has taken millennia for life to evolve in forests, and Old Growth forests offer a habitat that cannot be replicated in younger forests.

C) We owe it to our grandchildren to protect the biological diversity and beauty of Old Growth forests. They are a link to our planet's past and contain precious biodiversity, some still being discovered. These forests should be preserved so that future generations can enjoy them.

A strategy that protects old growth forests is the best way to conserve this ecosystem that has some of the highest biodiversity in the United States while protecting us from climate change effects. The diverse tree ages make them more resistant to pests and disease, unlike younger forests.

Any eastern forest that is 80 years or more should be considered old growth and should be protected. Mature eastern forests are not like western forests and should be managed as the wet and richly diverse systems they are.