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Comments: I treasure old forests. I too am now an elder and my happiest and most meaningful youthful days were spent among large coastal conifers and all the flora and fauna in their midst.

In college I studied the ecological relationships of forests and began to understand the huge role they had in the water and carbon cycles, erosion prevention, habitat provision and how they influenced weather.

Old growth trees need to be valued not as board feet but as fire resistant sentinels which provide roots, fungal networks, and stability to other trees within the forest and who provide a disproportionate amount of atmospheric carbon uptake and water retention for their size compared to smaller trees.

Commercial logging is harming the Pacific Northwest mature coastal and Cascade range forests. The lumber industries are using fear of wildfires and fuel reduction as an excuse for turning intact forest into bare hillsides. Those clearcut areas will weaken adjacent intact forest, allowing temperatures to rise, the soils to dry, the wind speed to increase. Each of these changes can increase wildfire risk and intensity.

The Northwest Forest Plan needs to include full protection of mature and old growth forests and promote mature forest expansion rather than depletion.