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Comments: Dear U.S. Forest Service Staff,

Thank you for all you do to preserve our national forests.

I have fond memories of tent camping in the White National Forest in Colorado. We extensively hiked the trails during our week visit, lived simply, and made sure to make our campsite better than when we arrived.

We felt that we could breathe deeper and our spirits were revived.

We returned to work with our rejuvenation to do our best for the common good.

Yes, national forests do much for us who are able to visit them.

But they do so much more.

They are necessary for our ecosystem, valuable to human life as well as as the life of plants and animals that we are interconnected with and depend on.

Old Growth and Mature Forests store carbon, are resilient to wildfire and buffer us against climate change.

Without them biodiversity would even more drastically be reduced.

Many endangered species depend on mature forest for their survival as the coho salmon and northern spotted owl.

But humans rely on these forests also. For example communities in the Pacific Northwest have clean drinking water at least through these forests filtering their drinking water.

Let us not forget the first settlers of our country who lived in tune with nature and respected the land and waters.

Native American nations continue to be good stewards. I strongly urge the Forest Service to uphold their sovereignty and have meaningful consultations with them.

They have centuries old wisdom that have served them well and can serve us as a nation well also.

Please do all you can - Forest Reserves Are Vital. Strengthen and expand protections for forest reserves under the Northwest Forest Plan. Recruit more habitat, protect streams, and enhance carbon storage-not reduce them or open them to logging.

Most Sincerely,

Janice Flahiff