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Comments: Please protect all Pacific Northwest old growth and mature, biodiverse forests 80+ years old from commercial logging, including commercial post-fire salvage logging and commercial logging as a "forest management" technique.

In Pacific Northwest forests west of the Cascades, logging can create dryness and even make the land more flammable. See recent research by Millikin that shows that PNW coastal forests don't respond well to thinning, partially because it dries them out. <https://www.richmond-news.com/bc-news/fuel-thinning-compromises-coastal-forests-natural-fire-resilience-whistler-ecologist-9378786>. To protect communities and people from fire, it has proven to be more effective to provide escape routes, harden homes, and create defensible space near homes, rather than logging far out in the forest, far away from homes and structures. Part of the issue is that when you thin a forest, you do not know where the fire will land. So you will end up thinning forests that may never burn, harming ecosystems, and emitting carbon in the meantime. However, in coastal and western Pacific Northwest forests, logging causes a far worse problem - it creates the very problem you were trying to avoid in the first place - "increased wildfire potential."

Old growth trees, complex old growth ecosystems, and future old growth (mature) forests are irreplaceable. They support our water supply and generate fertile, stable soils; they support habitat and biodiversity; they help cool our local climate and stabilize our global climate, they foster precipitation, which is vital; they reduce flooding. They also support public recreation, which in turn returns far more economically to the surrounding PNW communities than commercial logging does. Historical research by John Perlin has shown that nations that destroy their forests through logging may eventually experience devastating economic and social consequences.

Dr. Jerry Franklin has advised leaving many old growth forests alone, to grow, instead of "doing things" to them (logging/burning them). This applies to temperate forests in the Pacific Northwest west of the Cascades. On July 10, 2024, Jerry offered words of advice to the USFS and all of us, specifically starting with the old growth stand we were in, in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest: "This forest is fine on its own. Many old growth forests don't need intervention. Many foresters would think this stand is decadent[hellip]but it has so much potential for more carbon[hellip]Stands like this tend to unravel when people start messing with them. They don't take to treatment well."

Fuel-thinning compromises coastal forests's natural fire resilience: Whistler ecologist - <https://www.richmond-news.com/bc-news/fuel-thinning-compromises-coastal-forests-natural-fire-resilience-whistler-ecologist-9378786>