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Comments: Living and going to school in the Seattle area, I was surrounded by impressive and beautiful nature. Huge Douglas Firs shaded my hiking trails and ferns brushed my ankles. Western Red Cedars provided the lifeblood to every part of the ecosystem surrounding me.

I am writing to express my support for the protection and conservation of forests under the Northwest Forest Plan. Large areas of Old-growth and Mature Forests within the area defined by the Northwest Forest Plan are unprotected. Under the amendments, Mature Forests will be subject to increased logging, including forests that are currently protected. Old-growth forests pull carbon from our rapidly heating atmosphere and account for at least 10% of the world's carbon sequestration capabilities (Luyssaert et al., 2008). Logging these trees would release sizeable amounts of carbon held within them and the soil that they are planted in. Additionally, regrowth forests with simpler structures and low biodiversity are at a much higher risk to climate disturbances such as wildfire, insects, and diseases compared to Old-growth forests (Halofsky et al., 2018). The amended plan must ensure diverse, Old-growth forests are protected from logging, as this compromises their resilience to climate disturbances, which are becoming increasingly prevalent as the world heats.

Alternatives to Old-growth logging show promising environmental effects. Thinning young forests has the potential to lead to increased plant growth, cover, and forest structural development, which are positively associated with increased wildlife habitat and biodiversity (Puettmann, 2013). The amended plan should focus on directing logging efforts to selective logging in young forests with unvaried canopy levels as a way to positively impact ecosystem health and pave the way for biodiverse and resilient Mature Forests.

Luyssaert, S., Schulze, E.D., Börner, A. et al. Old-growth forests as global carbon sinks. *Nature* 455, 213-215 (2008). <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature07276>

Halofsky, J. S., D. C. Donato, J. F. Franklin, J. E. Halofsky, D. L. Peterson, and B. J. Harvey. 2018. The nature of the beast: examining climate adaptation options in forests with stand-replacing fire regimes. *Ecosphere* 9(3):e02140. [10.1002/ecs2.2140](https://doi.org/10.1002/ecs2.2140)

Neill Andrew R. and Puettmann Klaus J.. 2013. Managing for adaptive capacity: thinning improves food availability for wildlife and insect pollinators under climate change conditions. *Canadian Journal of Forest Research*. 43(5): 428-440. <https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfr-2012-0345>