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Comments: The Northwest Forest Plan does need updating, but the current amendment is flawed in many ways.

Old-Growth and Mature Forests are our best natural defense against climate catastrophe.

We are in a climate emergency. Structurally complex mature forests are our best natural climate defense. These forests mitigate climate chaos through natural carbon sequestration, efficient rainwater management, and natural reduction of floods, mudslides, and soil erosion.

Old-Growth and Mature Forests are our best natural defense against wildfire.

Structurally complex mature and old-growth forests are fire resistant and naturally resilient to disease and pests. Recent mega-wildfires have caused devastation to homes, buildings, and human life because climate chaos driven winds whip through lands that have been stripped of mature and old-growth trees. Letting these trees stand in the ground is, along with home hardening, our best defense against loss of life and entire communities.

Old-Growth and Mature Forests are our best natural protection for wildlife habitats and clean water.

Structurally complex mature and old-growth forests provide essential habitat for imperiled species like the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, and coho salmon. They also naturally filter drinking water for communities across the Pacific Northwest. Logging them demolishes biodiversity so important to the cycle of life.

Old-Growth and Mature Forest reserves are VITAL

Once our few remaining structurally complex mature and old-growth forests are logged, they are gone forever and cannot be replaced even in our children's or grandchildren's lives.

The Forest Service should serve the forests through preservation and conservation! The forest service should strengthen or expand protections for forest reserves under the Northwest Forest Plan to recruit more habitat, protect streams and rivers, and enhance carbon storage-not open them to more logging.

The Forest Service's Northwest Forest Plan should place a complete moratorium on the logging of any structurally complex mature and old-growth forests.

Our Founder's daughter, a holder of four college honors degrees by age 21, a young person serving our country through a maximum allowed term with Americorps, wishes to spend her life working in the Forest Service. However, if the Forest Service's "plan" is to log more forests, where will she serve? Why would she want to? I urge you to not upend her life's goals, she is too valuable in the PNW conservation and restoration arena. We need more youth to join her, not get discouraged and disengage. Protect all old-growth and mature forest on public lands so our precious forests will remain as places in which our precious offspring can work, hike, breathe deeply, and enjoy their well-deserved sustainable future.

Signed,

Cascadia Climate Action Now