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Comments: I just returned from visiting old-growth forest in Oregon during this very wet time of the year and was also awed by the beauty and lush diversity of the understory in this spectacular habitat. At the same time, I was more than dismayed to see lumber trucks hauling segments of ancient trees that were many feet in diameter (almost as wide as the semi rig itself). These trees must have been hundreds of years old if not more, and \*should not\* have been allowed to be cut. The use of power tools at ever larger scales often outstrips our common sense these days.

It makes no sense and is an offense to nature, humanity and our future to kill healthy ancient trees that have lived many times longer than any human, supported untold numbers of animals and plants, conserved and redistributed massive amounts of water, and taken up enormous amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> (needed for reducing climate change) while releasing proportionately enormous amounts of clean O<sub>2</sub> for us (and all aerobic creatures) to breathe. Every time we cut an enormous tree, it releases hideous amounts of carbon which accelerate climate change. We also have to wonder whether future trees will ever have a chance to grow from seeds to gigantic old-growth, given temperature destabilization, wildfires, changing precipitation patterns, and more damaging storms, even without direct human disturbance of the forests. Humans have reached the point where we need to make the right decisions to ensure nature's integrity if we want to survive.

The Northwest Forest Plan has for decades been successful in conserving many of the intact old-growth forests at a landscape-scale. This effort guides other projects across the country and around the world. Healthy old-growth forests improve salmon habitat and water quality, while redeposition of fish biomass in the forests by predators such as bear increases the forest's health and diversity. We need to keep building and extending this bank of old-growth, which provides such important ecoservices, conserving carbon, water, and soil and habitat for vast numbers of other plants and animals including imperiled species such as the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, and coho salmon. Mature and old-growth forests also enhance our resilience to wildfire.

I urge you to strengthen or expand protections for forest reserves under the Northwest Forest Plan. Create \*more\* habitat and protect more streams rather than putting us and the forests at risk.