



FEDERAL FOREST

RESOURCE COALITION

FFRC Press Statement on Forest Service Old Growth Threat

Assessment: On Friday, June 14, 2024, the USDA Forest Service released the “Threat Assessment” for Mature and Old Growth Forests called for by President Biden’s April 2022 [Executive Order](#). You can find the final, 210-page report [at this link](#).

FFRC Executive Director Bill Imbergamo issued the following statement regarding the Threat Assessment:

“Fire, insects, and disease killed nearly 100 times more National Forest old growth than timber harvest in the last quarter century, and yet the Administration is pushing through an unprecedented nation-wide Forest Plan amendment that will make forest management on the National Forests even more difficult.”

“USDA’s decision to slow-walk the release of this report, culminating with choice to release it on a Friday afternoon, seems calculated to downplay the fact that timber harvest hasn’t been a major cause of old growth loss on the National Forests in decades.”

“The report documents what professional foresters have long known: timber harvest is a tool to develop and maintain a wide variety of forest and habitat types. It shows that most Forest Plans already restrict harvest in old growth stands. All it does is reinforce the fact that the old growth policies being pursued by this Administration are driven by pure politics, not ecological need.”

“Moreover, the report found that existing Forest Plans restrict tree cutting in old-growth forests to conditions where tree cutting benefits the durability of the old-growth through stewardship that maintains old-growth

characteristics. Wildfire caused the destruction of over 700,000 acres of old growth since 2000, while insects and disease destroyed another 182,000 acres. That's 98 times more acres than was impacted by timber harvest."

"Rather than waste limited staff time and resources re-writing Forest Plans and developing old growth management approaches, the Forest Service ought to use the authorities and funding Congress has provided to focus on reducing the threat of catastrophic wildfires and insect outbreaks on our public lands before it's too late."

About the FFRC: FFRC is a national coalition of wood products companies, local governments, conservation groups united by concern for the National Forests. FFRC supports improving the management of the federal lands to support healthy forests and vibrant rural communities.



Federal Forest Resource Coalition
1901 Pennsylvania Ave., NW Suite 1007
Washington, DC 20006