FFRC Press Statement: Comments on Forest Service Proposed Old Growth Policy: *January 29, 2024*: FFRC Executive Director Bill Imbergamo issued the following statement on the Forest Service's Notice of Intent on Old Growth:

"Older forests are a diverse and transitory set of ecosystems found throughout the United States, they are found across wide swaths of the National Forest System, including millions of acres in legally protected areas where no management will take place under current laws. Old growth forests have been expanding on the National Forest System, because current forest plans already provide for their management and protection. The Forest Service says the main threat to old growth are disturbances like megafires and large-scale insect and drought related mortality.

All of this demonstrates that there is little to no value with pursuing a nationwide forest plan amendment that inherently violates substantive provisions of the 2012 Planning Rule, and which would potentially hinder the Forest Service's ability to meet other forest management objectives. Given the generally poor conditions on many acres of National Forests, dedicating limited staff time to a national plan amendment is a strategic misallocation of resources.

Rather than pursue this ill-advised strategy, we urge the Department to continue addressing old growth issues through the locally-led planning process, managing stocking levels appropriately for each forest type, engaging in regulated harvest on unreserved acres, with substantial carbon storage in long-lived wood products, and more aggressive recovery of damaged timber and reforestation following disturbances.

For more information, contact Bill Imbergamo, Executive Director, at 703-629-6877 or bill@fedforest.org

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.

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