

<https://www.stgeorgeutah.com/news/archive/2021/01/27/mrw-center-for-biological-diversity-demands-forest-service-to-stop-cutting-down-old-growth-trees-on-north-rim/#.YBIrg-RHaEc>

Center for Biological Diversity demands Forest Service to stop cutting down old-growth trees on North Rim

Written by [Megan Webber](#)

January 27, 2021



A logging truck hauls logs from old trees in the Kaibab National Forest. Date not specified | Photo courtesy of Joe Trudeau,

ST. GEORGE — The Center for Biological Diversity submitted a letter to the U.S. Forest Service on Jan. 14 calling upon the agency to stop cutting down old-growth trees on the Kaibab Plateau in northern Arizona. The Forest Service responded saying they are willing to have a discussion with the center, although a date has not yet been set.



A logging truck loads logs from old trees onto a trailer in the Kaibab National Forest, Arizona, date not specified | Photo courtesy of Joe Trudeau, St. George News.

The [letter](#) states that the Forest Service’s logging practices involving trees older than 300 years along the Grand Canyon’s North Rim are worsening climate change, increasing wildfire risk and damaging the area’s ecosystems. In addition to the letter, the center launched an [action alert](#) asking people to add their names to the demand asking the Forest Service to stop cutting down centuries-old trees. More than 5,000 people added their names and emailed the Forest Service, Joe Trudeau, Center for Biological Diversity southwest conservation advocate, said.

“Protecting our old forests in the west is a necessary part of us combating climate change,” Trudeau told St. George News. “These old, fire-resistant ponderosa pines are champions at absorbing greenhouse gas emissions. The last thing we need in a climate emergency is to whack these giants down.”

Older trees are more resistant to wildfires because they are so large and it takes fire longer to burn them. As a result of more than a century of cutting down large trees, forests are left with only young, small trees which are more susceptible to fire damage, Trudeau said. Old trees also store more carbon than younger ones, and 50-60% of a tree’s carbon is released when the tree is processed at a lumber plant, he said.

Trudeau added that the center is happy to have a discussion with the Forest Service, but it will not be enough to create change.

“They’re willing to discuss our concerns but we’re not looking for a discussion for the sake of having a discussion, we’re looking for meaningful change,” he said. “Examples like what we’ve

highlighted really support the fact that we need a national level policy in this country that commits the Forest Service to protecting old-growth forests.”

In 2012, the Kaibab National Forest approved the Jacob Ryan logging project, a 26,000-acre initiative focused on thinning smaller trees in the area, according to a press release from the center of Biological Diversity. But logging old trees continued, the center said, and in response the center [sued](#) the Forest Service to stop the project. The Forest Service also allows logging old trees through several other projects, according to the press release.

The Forest Service is looking forward to discussing the center’s concerns and finding possibilities for collaboration, spokeswoman Brienne Pettit told St. George News via email.

“The Forest Service is committed to transparency and collaboration, and we appreciate and welcome community and advocacy group feedback,” she said. “We are optimistic that if we work together, we can find common ground on management approaches that ensure the Kaibab National Forest is healthy and resilient for the enjoyment of current and future generations.”