

Description

Old growth forests are important in maintaining biodiversity, values for society (recreational and spiritual), and ecological services such as carbon sequestration and soil quality. In addition, they also harbor highly valued timber resources.

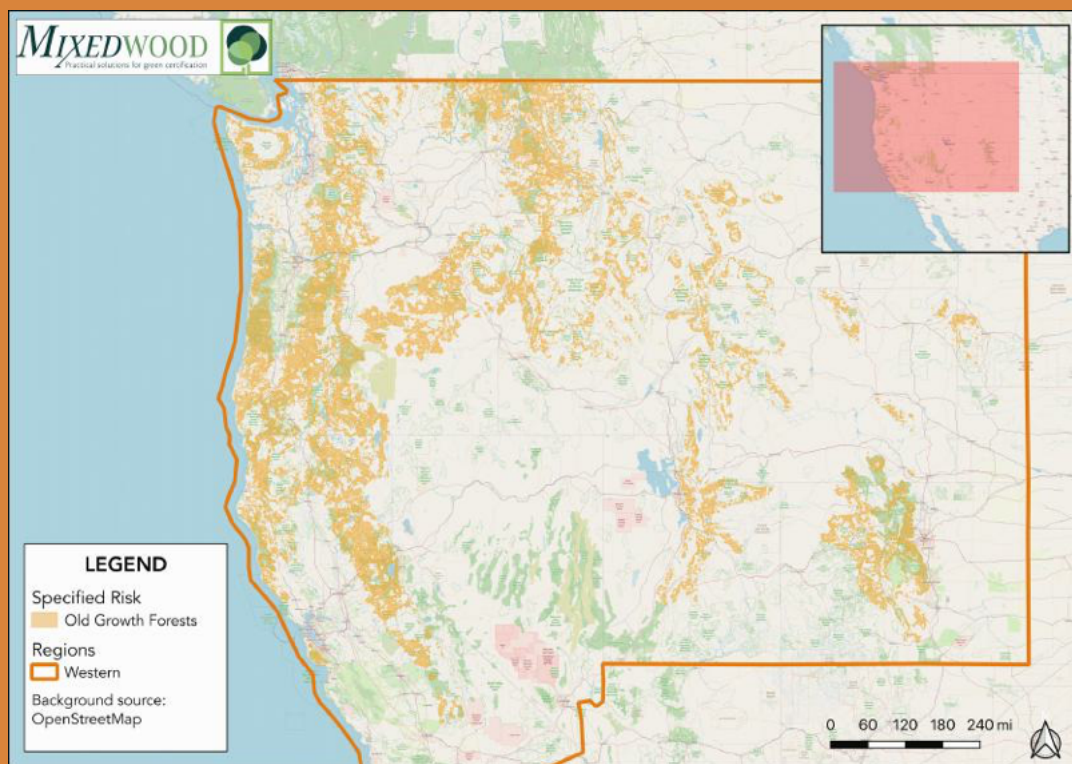
These habitat characteristics are important to a number of rare

species that depend upon western U.S. old growth forests, including Northern Spotted Owls, Marbled Murrelet, and American marten, along with much lesser known species of land snails, mollusks, and amphibians.

Old growth forest is generally considered to be rare, but how rare depends on the part of the country being considered: in the Pacific Northwest (including Northern California), the estimate is that old growth constitutes approximately 6% of the existing forest. A comprehensive spatial inventory of old growth forests across the entire US does not exist, although a few localized inventories have been completed.¹

OLD GROWTH FORESTS

FSC Controlled Wood Specified Risk Fact Sheet



FSC US
Region: Pacific Coast & Rocky Mountains

Type: rare habitat

NRA Category: HCV 3.3

Scope: region-wide

¹Forest Stewardship Council. (2018). FSC US Controlled Wood Regional Meeting Report Pacific Coast & Rocky Mountain Regions: Portland, OR. Retrieved from <https://us.fsc.org/download.controlled-wood-regional-meeting-report-pacific-coast-rocky-mountain-regions.a-704.pdf>





High Conservation Value (HCV)

Old growth forest ecosystems have been greatly reduced by human activities compared to the historic extent. Old growth includes both Type 1 (stands that have never been logged and display late successional/old growth characteristics) and Type 2 (stands that have been logged, but retain significant late-successional/old growth structure and functions). Primary forests (a forest ecosystem with the principal characteristic and key elements of native ecosystems that is relatively undisturbed by human activity) are generally synonymous with old growth forests.¹

Recommended Mitigation

- **Education & Outreach:** information sharing with landowners, loggers, wood suppliers.

Mitigation Resources

- **Ecotrust** - Tipping the balance to more carbon storage in Pacific Northwest Forests. Article.
- **Land Trust Alliance - Conserve Your Land:** Resource listings for support opportunities.
- **Sierra Forest Legacy website.** Regional status and resource links.
- **SFI Implementation Committee Map:** find your local SFI community.

Information Sources

- **National Commission of Science for Sustainable Forestry:** Beyond Old Growth – Older Forests in a Changing World. Publication with included references.
- **Conservation Biology Institute:** Old Growth Forests in the Pacific Northwest, USA. GIS data collection.

Social Value

- **Forest Stewards Guild - Old growth forests deserve protection:** Article.
- **The Wilderness Society** - 6 reasons old-growth forests are really important. Article.
- **Volunteer Latin America** - The Healing Power of Old Growth Forests. Article.

