

Your Summer Report

To log or let grow: The fate of our oldest forests hangs in the balance

By Ellen Montgomery, director of our national public lands campaigns

Just because a forest is on federal land doesn't mean it is protected from logging. In fact, logging and selling of wood is built into the missions of two federal agencies, the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). That means logging is a persistent threat to many forests and trees that should be protected.

Some old forests are being logged right now. The Forest Service and BLM have approved numerous logging projects across hundreds of thousands of acres that target mature and old-growth trees, which store vast amounts of carbon and provide havens for a diverse array of wild plants and animals.

But thanks to hundreds of thousands of people who are speaking up for the trees—including Environment Colorado members like you—we've urged the Biden administration to establish protections for these mature and old-growth trees and forests.

Progress on safeguards

In December, the U.S. Forest Service proposed the first nationwide plan to improve safeguards for old-growth forests. The proposal came after more than 500,000 comments submitted last summer urged swift and durable action to protect mature and old-growth forests.

The draft proposal sets ambitious goals for managing and expanding old growth in national forests, but contains major gaps. Notably, it carves out the Tongass National Forest—our largest



Last summer, staff delivered more than 500,000 comments urging the U.S. Forest Service to protect old-growth forests.

old growth national forest—from protection. The proposal also leaves open the option to sell old-growth trees to timber mills that have been logged as part of ecological projects. And it does not offer protections for mature trees and forests, which if not logged, will eventually become old-growth. Our national forests, especially in the eastern United States, have little old-growth remaining.

During a public comment period that closed in early February, thousands of supporters like you asked for stronger provisions that eliminate commercial logging of old-growth trees.

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Thanks
for making it
all possible

Rooftop solar is on the rise in Colorado

Colorado has more than 300 days of sunshine per year. It should be a national leader in rooftop solar power.

The “Rooftop Solar on the Rise” report, released on Feb. 13 by Environment Colorado Research & Policy Center, identifies four crucial policies that will determine the success of a state’s transition to solar energy:

stronger standards against soot pollution, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized a rule aimed at curbing soot pollution, a major contributor to respiratory illnesses, heart issues and cancer. The new guidelines are estimated to prevent 4,500 premature deaths and 800,000 instances of asthma symptoms annually.

“Air pollution used to be the price we had to pay to heat our homes, commute or produce goods by burning coal, oil and gas,” said Lisa Frank, executive director of Environment America Research & Policy Center’s Washington Office.

“Thankfully, in the rapidly accelerating renewable energy era, that’s no longer the case. These soot standards will save lives, clear our skies and alleviate the burden of asthma and other illnesses. That’s something all Americans should celebrate.”

Good news, bad news for this butterfly

A rare Southwestern butterfly is in trouble, but its threatened status might actually benefit its chance of survival.

A subspecies of the silverspot butterfly has now been listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Typically found in Utah, New Mexico and Colorado, the silverspot butterfly is impacted by habitat loss due to climate change as well as human actions that destroy their habitat such as spraying pesticides and constructing golf courses.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, these butterflies need open meadows with plenty of vegetation to survive and thrive, and such places are quickly disappearing.

However, there is still reason to be optimistic. Now that the silverspot is officially listed as threatened, there will be more attention and resources devoted to the issue, and additional actions to protect its habitat will surely follow.

Thanks to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service taking action to list the silverspot, and to members like you for supporting our work to protect pollinators, this butterfly has a fighting chance to make a comeback.

Ted Gotwals



Mike Wagner, local permit coordinator for Photon Brothers, joined rooftop solar advocates to release a new rooftop solar report in Denver.

solar incentives, supportive rate design, interconnection policies and permitting processes.

Residential solar in the state grew 217% from 2017 through 2022, and it will only become more popular. Despite these gains, there’s so much room for rooftop solar to grow. In 2022, Denver piloted an online solar permitting platform called SolarAPP+, which reduces the time required to review and grant a permit to about 15 minutes for many solar installations. More funding for programs like SolarAPP+ will help the state transition quickly to cleaner, renewable energy.

“Today, in Colorado you can get your energy straight from your roof,” said Henry Stiles, advocate with Environment Colorado Research & Policy Center. “Why pay for power from a distant plant spewing pollution when we can just soak up the sun on our rooftops?”

EPA rule means less soot in the air we breathe

Thousands of people die each year from illnesses related to soot exposure, one of the deadliest forms of air pollution. Now, those statistics should be changing for the better.

After more than 500,000 comments from Americans and members like you called for

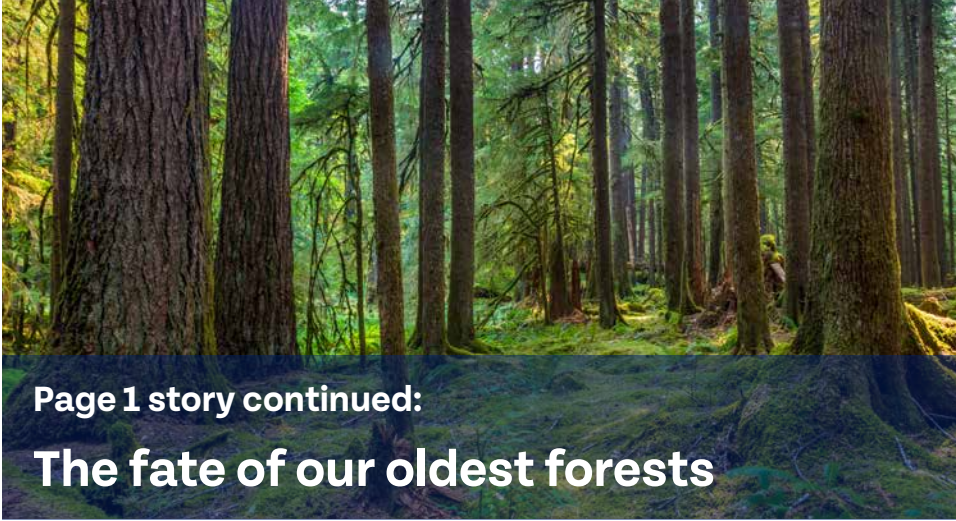


Toward a greener future

Support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future by including a gift to Environment Colorado or Environment Colorado Research & Policy Center in your will, trust or retirement accounts.

For more information call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentColorado.org

Get more updates on our work online at <https://environmentcolorado.org>.



Jim Schwabel via Shutterstock

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The fate of our oldest forests

Tens of thousands of people and more than 170 organizations called on the U.S. Forest Service to strengthen its proposal to conserve old growth trees and forests on federal land.

Standing together for the trees

We've urged Congress to oppose the Manchin-Barrasso bill, which calls for deliberately chopping down our mature forests as a way to "improve forest health"—an obviously terrible and short-sighted idea.

Once our mature forests are gone, they'll take decades to grow back. That's more than 80 years of an intricate ecosystem destroyed in the blink of an eye. That's decades we don't have to keep huge amounts of climate-warming carbon from being released into the atmosphere.

We need our forests to stay standing for generations to come, but the Manchin-Barrasso bill threatens to level towering giants and destroy many of our nation's mature

trees. Thankfully, supporters and members of Environment Colorado and our national network took more than 32,000 actions opposing this bill.

All of our old-growth and mature forests deserve protection

Seventy-six percent of the forests managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management don't have strong protections from logging.

We can't afford to cut down our oldest forests. They shelter wildlife and they shelter us from the worst impacts of climate change by absorbing carbon from our atmosphere.

Thanks to your support, we're working to save our forests by raising the voices of forest defenders everywhere and urging the Biden administration to enact the strongest protections possible to keep them off the chopping block.

With your support, we'll keep advocating for the strongest protections possible for our old-growth and mature forests.



Staff

Featured staff



Staff

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Ellen runs campaigns to protect America's beautiful places, from local beachfronts to remote mountain peaks. Prior to her current role, Ellen worked as the organizing director for Environment America's Climate Defenders campaign. Ellen lives in Denver, where she likes to hike in Colorado's mountains.



Environment Colorado and The Public Interest Network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change.

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Your 2024 Summer Report

Our mission:

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Colorado, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting Colorado's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

A bee-killing pesticide coated on a seed is still a pesticide

Environment Colorado and our national network are calling on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and states to close a loophole that contributes to bee die-offs.

More than 150 million acres of America's croplands are planted with seeds treated with bee-killing neonicotinoids, or neonic. But, for too long and for reasons that no longer make sense (if they ever did),

the EPA doesn't regulate pesticides that are coated onto seeds, and states adhere to this same troubling rubric.

Several states have stepped in, working to close the loophole within their borders, including California and New York. The latter passed a new law to restrict pesticide-coated seeds.

Additionally, in December, our supporters and partners teamed up to submit more than 37,000 comments to the EPA, echoing our call to action.

Thanks to the support of members like you, we'll keep up the buzz for restricting these harmful pesticides to save the bees.

A loophole allowing pesticide-coated seeds is a threat to bee populations.



Dave Angelini