

“My ancestors planted for me, so I plant for my children.” -- Babylonian Talmud, *Taanit* 23a



## **ACTION ALERT– TU B'SHVAT 2000 / January 21**

### **Help Save Remaining Old Growth Forests in the Pacific Northwest**

**The majestic ancient forests that once covered our continent have been reduced to a small remnant. The United States has already lost 96% of its old growth forests.** The wild forests that remain are refuges for thousands of threatened creatures and plants, and are vital to the protection of clean water sources for tens of millions of North Americans. Wild forests also serve as refuges for the human spirit, places where we can witness the Creator's majesty, reflect upon the mystery of life, and hear the small, still voice within.

The Clinton administration is amending the Northwest Forest Plan, implemented in 1994, that governs the 17 National Forests west of the Cascade Crest that are home to the endangered Spotted Owl. The Northwest holds some of the last remaining great ancient forests in the United States.

**The current draft amendment to the Plan proposes to log nearly 1.0 million acres of old growth forest and weaken protection for 64 species** dependent on old growth forest habitat. Unless comments in favor of a “no logging old growth” alternative to this plan are submitted, the plan will go forward, leading to the destruction of more old growth habitats and the further endangerment of many already imperiled species.

#### **WHAT IS THE JEWISH POSITION ON PROTECTING FORESTS?**

**In Genesis we learn that “God put the human being in the Garden of Eden to till it and to tend it” *Genesis 2:15*.** Judaism calls us to serve as protectors and defenders of God's magnificent creation. In a brief moment in the life of our planet, we have destroyed all but a remnant of Earth's ancient forests. It is our duty as Jews to safeguard and weave together this patchwork of remnants as best we can as our legacy for generations to come.

**The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), a coalition of 27 national Jewish organizations spanning the spectrum of American Jewish religious and communal life, advocates that public lands should be managed to preserve and restore biological diversity,** and that government should not subsidize logging, mining, or grazing on public lands. Furthermore, such activities should be immediately suspended in all old-growth forests and other threatened habitats on public lands.

#### **WHAT CAN I DO?**

**Sign the attached postcard to Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck. And pass out postcards to people attending Tu B'Shvat seders and other events in your community.** COEJL will forward postcards in bulk to Chief Dombeck at the beginning of February.

**For further information,** contact Ari Gilbert, COEJL legislative assistant in Washington, D.C., at: [coejlindc@coejl.org](mailto:coejlindc@coejl.org) or (202)-387-2800 x 29. You might also visit the Oregon Natural Resource Council at <http://www.onrc.org/alerts/068.oldgrowth.html>.