



KS WILD

Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
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Cover Photo: Smoldering snag at Shadow Lake after the Red Rock Fire, Marble Mountain Wilderness Area, Klamath National Forest, CA. September 7, 2009. Photo by Scott Harding/scotthardingphoto.com.

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KS WILD NEWS

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KS News is produced
by the KS Wild staff.



PATAGONIA'S WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL

November 19 - Ashland; Nov. 20 - Medford


Join KS Wild again for an evening of dynamic film screenings selected from America's largest environmental film festival! This two-day event will be held in two locations, beginning Friday night at the Ashland Congregational Church and concluding Saturday at the Medford Congregational Church. Each screening will include speakers from KS Wild along with progressive civic and environmental leaders from the region. Visit www.kswild.org for more details and a list of films to be shown.

Get to Know the Clean Water Act

December 2, 7pm
Ashland Public Library

Join Rogue Riverkeeper
for a primer on the
Clean Water Act.

Learn how you can help
implement this keystone
environmental law in the
Rogue Basin.



KS WILD'S MISSION:

KS Wild is an advocate for the forests, waters and wildlife of the Klamath and Rogue Basins of northwest California and southwest Oregon. We use environmental law, science, collaboration and education to defend healthy ecosystems and help build sustainable communities.

MANY THANKS TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

DEEP GRATITUDE GOES TO: James Almarode, Neal Anderson, Joseph Bower, Richard Brock, Paul Brown, Christopher Cali, Ginger Cassady, Linda Connolly, Romain Cooper, Clint & Mary Driver, Shelly Elkovich & Jeff Heglie, David & Carol Gasser, George and Karen Getty, Brad Horwitz, Jeff Kahn, Philip Krohn, Tracy Parks Lamblin, Walter and Conny Lindley, Anne Mack, Sally Mackler, Ann Macrory, Erin Madden, Steven & Jennifer Marsden, Katherine Mechling & Jim Gurley, Lewis Nash, Tom Peil, Tom Powell & Maud Macrory, Margaret Purves, Lundy & Fredric Reynolds, Gene Rhough, Victoria Richert & Thomas Brown, Edward & Gloria Robin, Peter & Karen Salant, Melissa Schweisguth, Lynda & Steven Sirianni, William and Barbara Steele, Hans Stroo, Steven & Priscilla Weaver.

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THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS: 444S Foundation, Anne K. Millis Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation, Bullitt Foundation, Burning Foundation, Conservation Alliance, Deer Creek Foundation, Environment Now, Firedoll Foundation, Heller Charitable & Educational Fund, Jubitz Family Foundation, Kenney Watershed Foundation, Lazar Foundation, Suzan R. Mackler Fund, McKenzie River Gathering Foundation, Norcross Wildlife Foundation, Patagonia, Resource Renewal Institute, Sangham Foundation, Sperling Foundation, Weeden Foundation, Wilburforce Foundation, Zephyr Fund.

PLEASE JOIN KS WILD TODAY!

✓ Yes, I want to support KS Wild's efforts with a tax-deductible membership donation of:

\$20 \$35 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

Name _____ Date _____

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Mail this form along with your membership donation to: KS WILD, P.O. Box 332, Williams, OR 97544 or visit www.kswild.org/JoinNow to donate with a credit card

FOCUS ON OUR KS WILD FAMILY

NORTHERN FLYING SQUIRREL - *GLAUCOMYS SABRINUS*

This night-time photograph of a Northern flying squirrel was captured by a motion detector camera placed by KS Wild near the shore of Bigelow Lake in the area proposed as part of the Oregon Caves National Monument expansion. This image shows the amazing and unusual animal in a “braking posture” just at the end of a flight. Being small, silent, shy and almost strictly nocturnal, flying squirrels are enigmatic and rarely observed creatures.



KS Wild file photo

Scientists are just recently teasing out the integral role these gliders play in forest ecology. It has long been known that flying squirrels are a favored food of spotted owls, but it is now understood that they themselves feed almost exclusively on fungi, showing a particular fondness for truffles. Truffles, which are one type of fruiting body from a mycorrhizal mat, are essential for the survival of trees and depend almost entirely on these squirrels and other small mammals to dig them up and pass their intact spores through their digestive system. Flying squirrels, which can travel up to 2 miles in a night, deposit these spores in a perfect blend of nutrients and beneficial bacteria for them to thrive, closing the loop between mushroom, tree, mammal and bird.

GREG WALTER

Greg Walter is a great friend of the Klamath-Siskiyou. He is a local historian, vintage map collector, old trail finder and tourism advocate. And if that’s not enough, Greg makes a mean chocolate espresso cookie! Greg and his wife Mary own Jefferson State Financial Group in Cave Junction, which is KS Wild’s insurance agent. Greg has been instrumental in building the campaign to expand the Oregon Caves National Monument and retire the associated grazing allotment. After working to gain local business support for the legislation, Greg traveled to Washington D.C. in July and testified in front of a subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Greg represented for our communities and our wildlands in the nation’s capital, and we are deeply grateful. We also can’t wait for him to bake a cake for the celebration party once the legislation passes!



KS Wild file photo

WAKING FROM A WHOPPER OF A NIGHTMARE

Most everyone has nightmares. Perhaps you’ve woken up in a cold sweat at some point, and needed to remind yourself it was just a dream. So it is with KS Wild and the Western Oregon Plan Revisions – we are shaking off the nightmare. With WOPR finally gone, we are working overtime on the still uncertain future of Western Oregon’s BLM forests.



Lesley Adams

THE POST-WOPR ERA

BLM forests have received a lot of attention lately. In July, high-level Obama officials toured western Oregon forests, habitats and logging projects in the region. When scrapping WOPR, the administration made clear that it wanted “ecologically based” timber sales moving forward. The officials produced a list of these “good” projects, and most were precisely what our forests need: thinning in second growth plantations and removing fuels in fire-starved forests. The administration, however, indicated there were a few old-growth logging proposals that they supported. KS Wild wrote the administration explaining the problems with those sales and continues to urge them not to support destructive logging practices.

HERITAGE FORESTS: KS Wild continues to work on a progressive agenda for BLM forests.

BACKLOG OF DESTRUCTION

In addition to successfully challenging the WOPR, KS Wild has also been successful at stopping nearly all old-growth logging projects on BLM land for the past decade. Unfortunately, most of these projects have not entirely gone away, but instead sit on the shelf awaiting the blessing of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). According to the FWS, over 11,000 acres (18 square miles) of planned BLM logging projects in southwest Oregon are likely to harm the spotted owl by removing its nesting and foraging habitat. Over 4,800 of those acres (7.5 square miles) are the very oldest forests. By proposing to aggressively log these forests, the BLM is threatening the integrity of ancient forest ecosystems and eliminating their carbon storage capacity.

MOVING FORWARD, CREATING JOBS

The time to create and support a workforce to restore watersheds and thin fire-prone tree plantations on federal forests is now. KS Wild is urging the BLM and the Obama administration to do away with old projects that remove owl habitat by logging large trees, while also encouraging new projects that thin small trees, remove old logging roads and restore watersheds.

TIME TO CELEBRATE

Pop the Champagne! We have many reasons to celebrate. Years of hard work to gain national forest protections and stop damaging land management proposals have paid dividends. Listed below are a number of very important victories for the wildlands and watersheds of northern California and southwest Oregon. These victories would not have been possible without the hard work of KS Wild and our conservation allies, our brilliant and tireless attorneys, and thousands of volunteers and supporters like you.



Martha McCord

PROTECTING OLD-GROWTH AND ROADLESS: After years of work, KS Wild helped protect BLM forests and roadless areas, including the Kangaroo Roadless Area pictured here.

NO MORE WHOPPER

The Bush administration's Western Oregon Plan Revisions would have slashed stream protections and ramped up clearcut logging on 2.6 million acres of BLM forest in western Oregon. Obama scrapped the WOPR this July, stating that it was legally indefensible. KS Wild and allies had sued in federal court and the new administration saw it was a wise move to abandon the plan. While we have won a momentous victory and need to celebrate, KS Wild fully expects the timber industry to continue the fight to log old-growth and streamside forests on BLM lands. The Obama administration is crafting new plans, which will determine forest management for many years to come.

ROADLESS AREA REVIVAL

The 2001 roadless rule - which protected 58 million acres of roadless land on national forests from certain development activities - has had a rocky eight years, to say the least. First, the Bush administration attempted to throw the rule out and replace it with a meaningless and unenforceable rule. Then, in response to lawsuits by development interests, a Wyoming Judge enjoined the rule nationwide. Without a doubt, the fate of roadless areas remains in question.

Recently, however, there has been some great news for roadless areas. In response to a lawsuit filed by KS Wild and several other conservation groups, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a Northern California District Court opinion throwing out the Bush rule. This effectively reinstates the 2001 rule. While the Obama administration has put a one-year hold on the roadless area rule and is approving projects at the secretarial level, the administration recently appealed the Wyoming ruling and has pledged to

The creation of a new National Monument is a major decision involving policy makers and elected officials from the bottom to the very top. Our campaign launch has inspired many. There is also concern and some misunderstanding over what the proposal actually entails. We will be counting on our supporters and allies to spread the word. If you would like to set up a meeting in your area for locals to learn more about the proposal, please email laurel@kswild.org.

FEATURED HIKE: RED MOUNTAIN

A wonderland of geologic and botanical diversity, Red Mountain is distinctly unlike anywhere else. The red peridotite soil, silvery chromium crystals and soapy green serpentine rock on display were born in intense pressure beneath the planet's crust and are rare on Earth's surface.



Martha McCord

RED ROCKS, VIEWS AND FLOWERS: Visit this geologic and botanical wonder on the Siskiyou Crest.

Together with the odd associations of plants they help create, the metamorphic rocks lend an otherworldly aspect to this subalpine section of the Siskiyou Crest.

Red Mountain hosts an unusually rich diversity of plant species, from its Mars-like summit studded with rare, endemic wildflowers, to its forested slopes of stout Jeffrey pines, tall Western white pines and moody red fir and mountain hemlock. When you add the extraordinary views in all directions, you have a world-class wilderness experience right in our backyard. On a clear day you can see the entire Little Applegate Valley below you, with the Table Rocks, Rogue Valley and Crater Lake rim above. In the other direction stand Mt. Shasta, and the Scott, Marble and Trinity Mountains.

The trailhead is easily reached by taking the Mt. Ashland Ski Area exit off I-5 at the Siskiyou Summit, and following signs to the ski area. Drive past the parking lot and onto the unpaved Forest Service Road 20. Follow Road 20 for about 7 miles to the spot where the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) crosses the road just above Siskiyou Pass.

From the trailhead, head uphill onto the PCT. You can make a loop by following the trail around the mountain to where it hits Road 20 again, and then walking off trail up and over the summit of Red Mt back down to the PCT. The road past Siskiyou Pass is difficult without a high clearance vehicle, and Road 20 is closed by snow from approximately late November until late June or July.

SISKIYOU CREST MONUMENT GAINS STEAM AFTER TREK

The visually stunning and ecologically diverse Siskiyou Crest has always played a central role in KS Wild's work, both geographically and ideologically. 2009 has seen this role blossom, as our proposal to establish the Siskiyou Crest as America's next National Monument has caused a stir across the region. Our recent backpacking expedition through the heart of the proposed monument generated a good deal of media, public interest and enthusiasm.



Martha McCord

ON TOP OF THE WORLD: Views from the Siskiyou Crest include the Klamath and Rogue Basins, Mt. Shasta, and the Marble, Scott and Trinity Mountains.

For ten days in August, our crew of naturalists, conservationists, outdoors enthusiasts and filmmakers hiked the rugged ridgelines, expansive forests and wildflower meadows of the Siskiyou Crest, documenting and offering a 'virtual tour' to the public through regular updates at the newly launched www.siskiyoucrest.org.

Along the way, we interviewed climate scientists, fire ecologists, ornithologists, long time locals and recreation industry representatives who extolled the virtues of the Siskiyou Crest through the lens of their own expertise. We created an interactive online map and posted ten short YouTube video clips and an extensive photo gallery of San Francisco photographer Martha McCord's images.

From its rock types and landforms to its plant and animal communities, the Siskiyou Crest is filled with so much diversity that a day of walking through the area feels as if hundreds of miles have passed. Our experiences ranged from waking in an alpine meadow at dawn to hiking along dry, chaparral covered ridges to lunch deep in an old-growth forest and then finally setting up camp on the shores of a small glacial cirque lake – all in a single day.

Our casual observations included 20 species of conifers, nearly 100 species of birds and 100-plus species of wildflowers. We encountered many plants found here and nowhere else, as well as birds of special conservation interest, including goshawk and white-headed woodpecker. From bugling herds of elk to a hail and lightning storm on a high, exposed ridge, the trip was filled with enduring images of a timeless wilderness.

Unfortunately, we also saw sensitive wetlands and springs trashed by livestock, a labyrinth of roads crisscrossing old clearcuts, mismanaged, fire-excluded forests and intense soil erosion from reckless off-road vehicle use. Unseen but ever present were alarming predictions from climate scientists of transformations already under way.

protect roadless areas in our national forests.

SPOTTY RECOVERY PLAN NIXED

Due to a deal between the timber industry and the Bush administration, in 2008 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released a deeply flawed recovery plan for the Northern spotted owl. The population of this well-known old-growth denizen is continuing to rapidly decline due to a loss of habitat and competition from the invasive barred owl. The Bush recovery plan was widely criticized for failing to use the best science and allowing more critical owl habitat to be removed through logging and road construction. This spring, the Obama administration signaled that it would not defend the owl plan in court and ordered the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to come up with a competent plan to save this keystone species.

VILSACK OFFERS BLUEPRINT

While most of Obama's Forest Service appointees have not yet been confirmed (it generally takes many months for appointee nominations), Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack laid out a comprehensive policy for the nation's forests in August. Vilsack's major speech announced the administration's policy on roadless areas, climate change, fish and wildlife conservation and community collaboration.

Vilsack's speech was very encouraging and a sharp departure from the regressive eight years of the Bush administration. Through protecting roadless areas and recognizing the importance of older forests as carbon reserves in a changing climate, the secretary's speech was a refreshing change from the previous administration's approach to national forests. He also noted the need to build trust between the Forest Service and the community through collaboration, a time-intensive process that KS Wild finds itself engaging in more and more. KS Wild will hold him to his promises.



Lesley Adams

INVESTMENT PAYS OFF FOR BLM FORESTS: KS Wild has spent years leading hikes to threatened forests and building legal cases against damaging projects. The cancellation of WOPR is a huge victory, but we will continue our advocacy for BLM forests.

MANY THANKS TO JIM BOWNE

KS Wild Board Member Jim Bowne is leaving the organization after four years of service. Jim is a lifelong naturalist, environmental and human rights activist and a former Buddhist monastic monk. As a professional accountant, Jim helped KS Wild on financial matters and brought a wealth of experience to our organization. We deeply thank him for his contributions and wish him well in future pursuits.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES COMING TO A FOREST NEAR YOU

For decades, Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) riders have enjoyed unfettered access to the public lands that belong to all Americans.

Want to drive your truck *in* a salmon-bearing stream? No problem.

Care to cut a motorcycle track *through* a spotted owl site during nesting season? Be my guest.

Feel like spinning circles *in* a rare-plant botanical area with your quad? Why not?

ENTER TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Due to the vast damage to public lands and waters across the West, the Forest Service has been compelled to designate where ORV use should be allowed and where it must be restricted in order to protect sensitive forest values.

Here at KS Wild we are working diligently to ensure that this planning process protects the following areas from further motorized damage:

- Botanical hotspots and meadows
- Creeks, streams and wetlands
- Hiking and equestrian trails
- Erosive slopes
- Roadless Wildlands and Wilderness Areas

MOTOR VEHICLE USE MAPS

Starting this year, every National Forest will publish a Motor Vehicle Use Map, which will be available at no cost from every Forest Service office. They will also be published online. These maps will designate the thousands of miles of roads that are open to motorized use, while prohibiting motor vehicle use off of the designated road system.

KS Wild will support the Forest Service when it publishes maps that identify a reasonable, safe, and ecologically sustainable road system, and we will challenge the Forest Service if they publish maps that encourage ORV use in sensitive and fragile landscapes.

Stay up-to-date regarding transportation planning by visiting us at www.kswild.org



Elizabeth Spaulding

OFF-ROAD DAMAGE: Off-road erosion and watershed damage in the Humbug creek tributary to the Klamath.

MOVING LEGISLATION THROUGH CONGRESS

While the nation's capitol was sweating with high temperatures and humidity in August, Congressional staff headed west to visit some of Oregon's natural treasures.

KS Wild took members of Senator Wyden's, Senator Merkley's and Representative DeFazio's staff out to visit the Wild Rogue and Oregon Caves. We enjoyed perfect weather and spectacular wildlife viewing while rafting the Rogue and visiting some of the tributary streams proposed for Wild and Scenic protections.

We also viewed wildflowers at Bigelow Lakes in the Oregon Caves expansion area, and visited the River Styx, which would be the first underground Wild and Scenic River in the country.

In July, the National Parks subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing on Senate bill 1270, which would expand the boundary of the Oregon Caves National Monument and allow for the retirement of the Grayback grazing allotment. KS Wild was honored to help send Cave Junction resident Greg Walter to testify at the hearing in D.C. (see page 13). We expect hearings to be scheduled this fall for the Wild Rogue in both the House and Senate and for Oregon Caves in the House.

Thanks to Rogue Klamath River Adventures, Momentum River Expeditions, Greg Walter and Mary Reynolds for their generous help in these efforts.



Lesley Adams



Lesley Adams

VISITING OREGON TREASURES: KS Wild accompanied Congressional staff on the Rogue River (top) to view tributaries proposed for Wild and Scenic protections and into the Oregon Caves expansion area to view wildflowers at Bigelow Lakes (bottom).

SALVAGE LOGGING FRENZY

Salvage logging of large snags and down boles does not contribute to recovery of late-successional forest habitat; in fact, the only activity more antithetical to the recovery process would be removal of surviving green trees from burned sites. Large snags and logs of decay resistant species, such as Douglas-fir and cedars, are critical as early and late successional wildlife habitat as well as for sustaining key ecological processes associated with nutrient, hydrologic, and energy cycles. - Dr. Jerry Franklin, Professor, University of Washington

While many Federal land managers are starting to see the value of wildfire to the fire-evolved forests of the Klamath-Siskiyou, there are still plenty of old-school foresters who view fire as an enemy and snags as a waste.

KLAMATH NATIONAL FOREST

In 2008, the Panther fire spilled out of the Marble Mountain Wilderness and burned forests within the Elk Creek watershed. This area is a “key watershed” for salmon recovery and contains numerous unstable steep slopes that are inappropriate for aggressive post-fire salvage logging. In 2009 the Forest Service proposed to clearcut several hundred acres, including logging within supposedly-protected riparian reserves. A KS Wild lawsuit recently stopped this illegal proposal.

Klamath timber planners have also drawn up plans to salvage log the Caribou Fire, above the Wild and Scenic Salmon River. Again they are targeting riparian reserves for much of the logging. And again KS Wild is challenging their illegal logging proposals.

Even burned forests within Congressionally designated Wilderness Areas are not safe on the Klamath. In 2009, the Forest Service felled more than 10,000 trees within the Marble Mountain and Trinity Alps Wilderness Areas to further fire-suppression ideology.

SHASTA-TRINITY NATIONAL FOREST

Much like the Klamath, timber planners in the Shasta-Trinity fail to see the wildlife, soil and watershed benefits of fire-killed trees. Instead, they see dollar signs. Hence the Forest is proposing to salvage log on steep, erosive slopes above the Wild and Scenic South Fork Trinity River via the Trough timber sale. KS Wild has filed a lawsuit to keep the timber pigs out of the public Trough. Learn more at www.kswild.org



George Sexton

LOGGING IN THE WILDERNESS: Fire Suppression in the Marble Mountains includes Wilderness logging. Canyon Creek 2009.

BLM DECIDES NOT TO “REGENERATE” LOWER APPLGATE WATERSHED

Of all the agency euphemisms for logging, our favorite here at KS Wild is “regeneration harvest.” Both words make us feel warm and fuzzy inside. Unfortunately “regeneration harvest” refers to BLM plans to turn older forests containing crucial wildlife habitat into dense fire-prone tree plantations.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

After a number of re-planting failures, and increased fire hazard where plantations were established, the Forest Service decided that the Applegate Watershed was better off without additional “regeneration harvests.” Instead of clearcutting, the Forest Service has elected to work collaboratively with locals to identify opportunities for small-diameter thinning of second-growth stands and fire-suppressed forests. But change comes slow to the BLM.

INCREASING FIRE HAZARD

Earlier this year the BLM proposed to increase fire hazard by “regenerating” over 500 acres of large fire-resilient trees and converting those stands into tree-plantations through a timber sale called “Cheney Slate.”

The BLM Environmental Assessment recognizes that this style of logging: 1) “would simplify stand structure”; and 2) “the potential for intense fire behavior will remain” and 3) “the potential for windthrow will increase.”

Indeed, the BLM acknowledges that, “Proposed regeneration harvest units will increase fire severity for several decades until trees dominate the site and re-establish an overstory canopy.”

A HAPPY ENDING?

Recently the BLM issued a decision to implement portions of the Cheney Slate project while “deferring” the decision to “regenerate” older forest stands. While we would like to think that the BLM listened to the concerns of their neighbors, and learned from past mistakes, it is more likely that when the agency receives authorization from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to whack down spotted owl habitat, the “regeneration harvest” will be back on the drawing board. Which doesn’t make us feel warm, or fuzzy.



KS Wild file photo

SAFE FOR NOW: KS Wild continues to keep an eagle eye on logging proposals in the Lower Applegate.



ADDRESSING THE CAUSE OF TOXIC ALGAE

Headlines from around the country: Des Moines, Iowa is changing its drinking water source. Officials issue health alerts for treatment plants on Lake Erie. Ninety miles of the Klamath River posted as hazardous. Four dogs die after swimming in the Umpqua River.

What is the common thread in these stories? It is the escalating problem of toxic algae in our public waters.

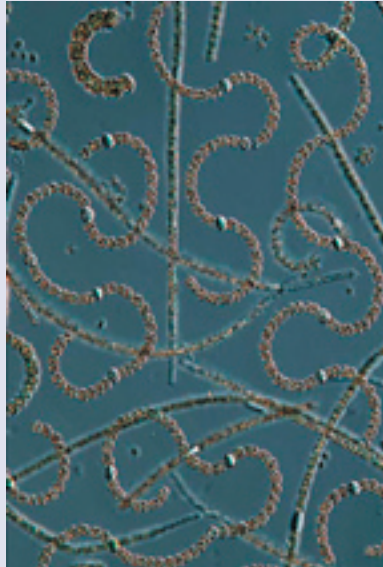
Across the U.S., the spread of toxic algae, or cyanobacteria, is a problem that threatens water supplies, human health, wildlife and recreation economies. Oregon's lakes and rivers mirror this trend and are experiencing increased occurrences of the toxic blooms. Lost Creek Reservoir in the Rogue Basin has had health advisories posted for the toxic algae *Anabaena flos-aquae* the last four years in a row, most recently on September 18.

Cyanobacterial toxins make some of Oregon's cherished waterways dangerous to touch or ingest. Exposure to these toxins can cause breathing and heart problems, liver failure, skin rashes, vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, cramps, and fainting. The toxins from *Anabaena*, *Microcystis*, and *Aphanizomenon* are many times more potent than some of the most venomous snakes in the world.

Hazard warnings are vital during toxic blooms, but addressing the underlying cause is the solution. The key action needed to reduce cyanobacterial blooms is to reduce external nutrient loading to the waterbody. The three major sources of excessive nutrients are run-off from fertilized land, erosion resulting from deforestation, and sewage.

Pollution from cyanobacterial toxins violates Oregon's water quality standards. So in June, Rogue Riverkeeper requested that the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) list all waterbodies in the state that have been found to contain high levels of cyanobacteria as "water quality impaired" under the Clean Water Act. This is a vital step that will give Oregon the tools it needs to begin seeking solutions to this problem. By placing these waters on the impaired list, DEQ can encourage additional monitoring and initiate studies of the underlying conditions. Such action will help DEQ prepare management plans to remedy this water quality crisis.

DEQ is scheduled to release a draft list this fall and Rogue Riverkeeper hopes to see waterbodies impacted by toxic algae on that list. For more information, visit: www.kswild.org/rogueriverkeeper.



www.fytoplankton.cz

DANGEROUS ALGAE: *Anabaena flos-aquae* is one of three toxic cyanobacteria found in Oregon.

BREAKING NEWS: SUCKER CREEK MINER TEARS UP RIVER

In the summer issue of *KS News*, we reported on a proposed mine in the Sucker Creek watershed east of Cave Junction. KS Wild commented extensively on the Forest Service Draft Environmental Impact Statement and was gearing up to defend this Coho salmon stronghold from damaging mining activities. We were happy to learn that the miner withdrew his application mid-stride through the regulatory process. If only that had been the last of the Tracy mine.



Lesley Adams

DIRTY MINING: After withdrawing his plans, a miner damaged aquatic and forest resources along Sucker Creek.

In September, the miner entered the area with heavy equipment, built a road across Sucker Creek, logged dozens of trees, diverted one creek and buried another, dug two settling ponds and proceeded to mine. He illegally operated the site for more than a week before law enforcement found out and arrested him. He remained in jail for more than a week.

The illegal mining proposal was denied water quality certification from the Department of Environmental Quality and a field visit confirmed why. The site is a disaster and the approaching rains will trigger an increase in sediment and turbidity in Sucker Creek. At least five state and federal agencies are now scrambling to figure out what to do. KS Wild is encouraging swift stabilization and restoration of the site, which will no doubt be a significant price tag for taxpayers. In addition to emergency remediation needed at the Tracy mine, the bigger problem is that greed trumps reason when it comes to public lands mining. The 1872 Mining Law is in grave need of reform as the damage at Sucker Creek poignantly illustrates.

CALIFORNIA BANS SUCTION DREDGING

In August, California's Governor took action to protect endangered Coho salmon when he signed a bill that placed a temporary moratorium on suction dredge mining. Under this practice, miners use motorized pumps to vacuum streambeds and suck up gravel and river rock in search of gold. In the process, fish eggs and spawning grounds can be damaged or destroyed. Rogue Riverkeeper is preparing challenges to increased mining in 2010 in the Rogue Basin as a result of the ban.