



KS WILD

Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
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**DON'T MISS THE
KLAMATH-SISKIYOU REVUE**
MAY 14TH IN ASHLAND
More information inside...

CHECK OUT NEW FEATURES
ON KS WILD'S WEBSITE:

WWW.KSWILD.ORG

Action Alerts: Our website now includes regularly updated, easy-to-use automated email letters sent to decision makers about the most pressing threats and opportunities.

Conservation News Digest: This new feature is where you can find the latest news and views on conservation issues in the Klamath-Siskiyou.

Visit often to stay up-to-date on issues affecting your public forests and rivers, and make your voice heard!

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KS WILD NEWS

The Journal of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
Spring 2009



Inside: Off-Road Vehicles and Rare Plants
BLM Begins Implementation of the WOPR
Klamath-Siskiyou Revue, Spring Hikes
Salvage Logging in California, and more...

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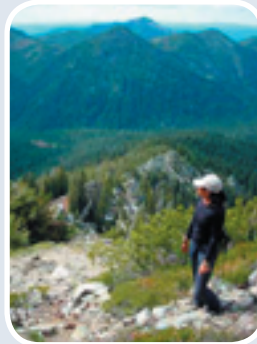
LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE,
DEFEND WHAT YOU LOVE

KLAMATH-SISKIYOU REVUE

THURSDAY, MAY 14TH, 6:30-9PM

ASHLAND COMMUNITY CENTER, 73 WINBURN WAY

Come for wine and appetizers and stay for a live report by KS Wild staff on the state of the Klamath-Siskiyou. Our campaign and conservation directors will present a slideshow highlighting recent successes on behalf of native forests and wildlife and take you on a virtual tour of current threats and opportunities facing our bioregion today.



Lesley Adams

The Rogue Riverkeeper will present on KS Wild's newest program area, and our grassroots organizer will give you options to get involved in upcoming campaigns, hikes and volunteer opportunities to support the preservation of biodiversity in this outstanding wild region we call home.



Cover Photo: Once found throughout the Klamath-Siskiyou, porcupines were the target of a successful eradication campaign by timber interests and are now rare creatures in our region. See page 12. Photo by www.zastavki.com.

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

VOLUNTEERS AND COLLABORATORS: Brenna Bell, Ralph Bloemers, David Calahan, Holly Christiansen, Marianne Dugan, Francis Eatherington, Forrest English, Kyle Haines, Bob Hunter, Robyn Janssen, Melanie Jessee, James Johnston, Andy Kerr, Spencer Lennard, Sally Mackler, Erin Madden, Duane Martinez, Rich Nawa, Savol, Stephanie Parent, Tim Ream, Red Buttes Wilderness Council, Mark Riskedahl, Barbara Ullian, Ann Vileisis, Greg Walter, Pete Wallstrom, Sarah Wilson & many others.

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FEATURED HIKE: ILLINOIS RIVER & THE EIGHT DOLLAR MT. BOTANICAL AREA

Eight Dollar Mountain is one of the most botanically diverse places in the Klamath-Siskiyou Mountains. Meadows, wetlands, stream-side riparian habitat, and upland conifer forests converge to create unmatched biodiversity.

A few miles south of Selma, Oregon, paved Forest Service road 4201 leads west from Highway 199 towards the Kalmiopsis Wilderness. Less than 1.5 miles on 4201 is a parking area and a short boardwalk trail leading through an impressive darlingtonia fen – a wetland habitat on serpentine soils - containing carnivorous plants.

Shortly thereafter is a signed trailhead on the south side of road 4201 for the Little Falls trailhead, which accesses a beautiful segment of the Wild and Scenic Illinois River. The trailhead also serves as a small developed campsite. The Little Falls themselves are more of a rapid than a classic waterfall. If hiking during spring, keep an eye out for flowering Siskiyou azaleas with their pungent pink flowers.

Less than a mile from the Little Falls trailhead is a turnout (good for parking) on your left, and unmarked Forest Service Road 016 to your right. Road 016 is better for walking, biking or horse riding than it is for driving. This route has long attracted irresponsible ORV use, and a number of meadows and riparian areas have been severely damaged as a result. Please see pages 3-4.

A dedicated hiker can walk the 016 road 2.5 miles one way to the confluence of Deer Creek and the Illinois River. Unfortunately, the 5 mile-round trip is currently marred by extensive ORV and four-by-four damage. But KS Wild is working to change that. The current Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest Transportation Management Plan provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of the public to get involved in determining how the Forest Service will manage its transportation system for the foreseeable future. We would like to see roads like 016, that harm water quality and damage rare plant habitat, closed to motorized use and open to sustainable hiking, biking and horse riding.



George Sexton

WORLD-CLASS BOTANY AND A WILD RIVER: Wildflowers and a wild river with easy hiking access await your visit in a region unlike any other in the United States.

KS WILD SPRING HIKES GET TO KNOW YOUR BIOREGION!

Join a KS Wild naturalist for a free, guided hike through some of the outstanding landscapes the Klamath-Siskiyou has to offer. We will learn the names of plants and birds while discussing the most pressing conservation threats and opportunities facing our region today.

APRIL 5TH AND 11TH: ILLINOIS RIVER

Just an hour west of Ashland lies a strange and beautiful wilderness - hike along the gorgeous Illinois River through the most botanically diverse National Forest in the U.S. during the start of wildflower season! We will walk over green serpentine bedrock along one of America's last free flowing rivers to learn more about this unique and threatened landscape. Easy to moderate difficulty.

MAY 16TH: WILD ROGUE RIVER

Walk with us into the Zane Gray roadless area along the Wild Rogue River for lunch at an historic cabin on Whisky Creek. This gorgeous old-growth forest and river corridor is the heart of our Save the Wild Rogue campaign, which seeks Congressional Wild and Scenic River and Wilderness designations to permanently protect this special place. This is a world-class river canyon and a pivotal time in its history to visit it! Easy to moderate difficulty.

JUNE 13TH: SISKIYOU CREST AND RED MOUNTAIN

When the valleys start to feel the heat of summer, spring is just starting its spectacular show on the Siskiyou Crest. This is a special walk through rare wildflowers, unusual geology and fantastic views in every direction. Don't miss exploring the biodiversity of this unique land bridge that we are working to protect as the Siskiyou Crest National Monument. Moderate difficulty.

We will meet at 9:30am at Evo's Cafe across from the Public Library in Ashland (and at 10:45am at Coffee Heaven in Cave Junction for the Illinois River hikes and 10:45am at Gooseberries Natural Foods in Grants Pass for the Wild Rogue hike) and carpool from there to the trailhead. We will still hike in a light rain, but will cancel for severe weather. Please RSVP to laurel@kswild.org or call the KS Wild office at 488-5789.

Bring: food, water, warm clothes, rain gear if needed and binoculars if you have them!
Visit www.kswild.org for updates and additions to our hike schedule.



George Sexton

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES WREAK HAVOC ON RARE PLANTS

Where most people see gorgeous meadows brimming with native wildflowers and rare plants, some only see a place to spin their tires and go “muddin.” Increasingly, the rare meadow habitats of the Klamath-Siskiyou are falling victim to irresponsible Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) use.



George Sexton

MEADOWS OR MUD PITS: ORVs are harming the botanical riches of the Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion.

The Klamath-Siskiyou Mountains of southern Oregon and northern California are a world-class hotspot of botanical diversity and endemism. When writing the management plans for rare plant habitat in the region, Forest Service botanists advocated that large swaths of intact serpentine habitat be protected as “botanical areas” due to their fragile botanical values. Unfortunately, the botanists were largely ignored, and only a scattered few of the very best meadow habitats were designated as protected areas.

THROWING BIODIVERSITY UNDER THE WHEELS

Even the few botanical hotspots that the Forest Service did identify for protection as botanical areas are not safe. Increasingly, uncontrolled ORV use is turning wildflower meadows into mud pits.

The Oregon Mountain Botanical Area on the Oregon/California border has been hit especially hard by destructive ORV use. Set aside in order to protect seventeen sensitive plant species, this botanical area is widely recognized as a unique hub of unusual serpentine plant communities. Unfortunately, ORV routes have trashed much of the biologically rich meadow habitat.

Similarly, the relatively famous meadows, fens, and wetlands of the Eight Dollar Botanical Area in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest are also being overrun by malicious ORV damage. Unwilling to stay on the Forest Service road system, ORV riders routinely drive into the meadows to turn “cookies” and kick up mud.

Despite the fact that the Smith River National Recreation Area in northern California was created by Congress to “emphasize, protect, and enhance the unique biological diversity,” the Forest Service wants to give its blessing to permanent ORV routes in both the L.E. Horton Research Natural Area and the Myrtle Creek Botanical Area.

FOCUS ON OUR KS WILD FAMILY

NORTH AMERICAN PORCUPINE (*ERETHIZON DORSATUM*)

Have you ever seen a porcupine in the Klamath-Siskiyou? Unfortunately, nearly everyone seems to have the same answers: either “no” or “I used to, but not for years . . .” Porcupines have no legal status offering them any protection, but it is universally understood that they have declined sharply across our region. Though their actual impact on forestry operations is likely insignificant, local timber companies have waged an aggressive and effective eradication campaign, killing these gentle creatures with poison and hired hunters.

Porcupines are calm, deliberate and peaceful animals. They do not attack and contrary to popular belief cannot shoot any of their 30,000 sharply barbed quills. They are vegetarians, mostly solitary and active at night. They are known to be fiendish for salt in any form and will chew on anything containing even a trace of it.



E.J. Peiker

At KS Wild, we believe it is crucial to advocate for research and conservation of lower profile animals like the porcupine and not let any of our native wildlife slip through the cracks, becoming just a memory told by old timers.

HELP GET RIVERKEEPER ON THE WATER

The Rogue River watershed covers more than 5,000 square miles. Central to the concept of a Waterkeeper is that s/he actively patrols the water to monitor discharges and identify issues that compromise water quality.



KS Wild’s Rogue Riverkeeper program is looking for a vessel to patrol waters of the Rogue and its tributaries. Given the diversity of the watershed, a kayak, a raft and an aluminum outboard boat would all be useful in different areas of the basin.

Do you know of a boat that is sitting idle? Put it to good use and help get the Rogue Riverkeeper on the water to enforce the Clean Water Act. Please contact lesley@kswild.org or call 488.5789 if you or someone you know may have a boat to donate or sell. All donations are tax-deductible.



KEEPING WATCH ON A WORLD-CLASS RIVER

KS Wild's Rogue Riverkeeper program is in full swing. While there are numerous water quality and quantity issues that we anticipate addressing in the future, the following four initiatives are the program's foci during 2009.

CLEAN WATER ACT OVERSIGHT:

Hundreds of Clean Water Act permits are active in the Rogue Basin, with new and renewal applications regularly coming out for public review. Rogue Riverkeeper has identified severely expired permits and various permit violations, including exceedances of pollutant limits and negligent reporting, and is assessing legal options to force these permits into compliance. In addition to ongoing oversight of existing and new permits, Rogue Riverkeeper is petitioning to have toxic algae listed as a pollutant for Lost Creek reservoir.

ADDRESSING ABANDONED MINES: Since 1851, mining has dramatically changed the aquatic landscape of the Rogue Basin, and today there are hundreds of abandoned mines in the watershed. Abandoned mines leach an undocumented amount of toxic pollutants into salmon-bearing streams each year, including arsenic, mercury and lead. The Clean Water Act and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act provide tools to force documentation and clean up. Rogue Riverkeeper is collecting data, visiting sites and developing a strategy to address this silent threat.

HALTING LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS: The Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project would build an import facility in Coos Bay and a 230-mile pipeline to California. The pipeline is proposed to cross several water-quality impaired salmon streams in the Rogue Basin, as well as perform a dubious drill under the Rogue itself. Rogue Riverkeeper is working in a large coalition to stop this ill-conceived proposal. In March, the LNG Public Protection Act was introduced in Oregon's legislature, which would protect Oregon from proposed LNG facilities by clarifying the state's authority in permitting such projects. Visit www.kswild.org to send an email in support of this bill.

GAINING PERMANENT PROTECTION: Rogue Riverkeeper is pursuing legislation to increase protections for the Rogue. Thanks to a diverse coalition, the Oregon Treasures Act was introduced into Congress in 2008. Unfortunately it did not pass before Congress adjourned. With a better Oregon delegation in 2009, Rogue Riverkeeper continues to pursue legislation that would add 143 miles of Rogue tributaries to the Wild and Scenic system. Visit www.savethewildrogue.org to send an email in support of reintroducing this bill.



Lesley Adams

MONITORING POLLUTERS: A Rogue Riverkeeper volunteer gathers a water sample from an industrial outfall on the Rogue River in White City.

Due to government foot-dragging, very few at-risk rare plants in the region have made it onto the Endangered Species List. One that has threaded this needle is the beautiful Gentner's fritillary (pictured at right). Yet in its initial plan for the Timber Mountain ORV play area, the Medford BLM intends to encourage ORV use in up to eight critical Gentner's fritillary populations.

STANDING UP FOR BIODIVERSITY

Fortunately, there are those who see rare wildflowers as something worth fighting for. KS Wild is vigorously engaged in the ongoing Travel Management Planning process for the Rogue-Siskiyou, Klamath, and Six Rivers National Forests. Through these planning efforts we hope to convince the Forest Service to actively protect the irreplaceable botanical, hydrological and fisheries resources of our public lands from irresponsible ORV use.

While there is a long way to go before these planning efforts bear fruit, our efforts have already made a difference. In response to our appeal, the Six Rivers National Forest withdrew a decision that would have encouraged ORV use in botanically-rich roadless wildlands in the Smith River National Recreation Area. In response to our field-work and photo-documentation, the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest is working with us to develop protection plans for the Oregon Mountain and Eight Dollar Botanical Areas. And the Klamath National Forest is working with KS Wild to identify funding sources and opportunities for watershed restoration and road decommissioning in strategic locations to protect rare plants and water quality.

NOW OR NEVER

When meadows that support plant species that live nowhere else in the world are trashed, we lose a botanical legacy that can never be regained. The National Forests of the Klamath-Siskiyou region, along with the Medford District BLM, are all completing Travel Management Plans that will determine if sensitive watersheds and botanical treasures are protected for the future, or thrown under the wheels. Please visit www.kswild.org and make your voice heard.

THE FOREST SERVICE ON ORVS AND BOTANICAL AREAS

Illegal off-road vehicles have damaged plants in the Eight Dollar Mountain and Day's Gulch botanical areas in the forest's Illinois Valley Ranger District, said Pam Bode, [Forest Service] district ranger. "Botanical areas are relatively boggy, wet areas," Bode said. "They are very popular for use in the Illinois Valley and Grants Pass. They come here and drive through with large trucks and get muddy."

- Medford Mail Tribune, November 3, 2005



BOTANICAL LEGACY: KS Wild is working hard to make sure that the irreplaceable natural legacies of the Klamath-Siskiyou are left for future generations.

THE WOPR HITS THE ROAD: BLM PROPOSES 1,400 ACRES OF CLEARCUTTING

The term “regeneration” is the BLM’s euphemism for what most people refer to as “clearcutting.” If the term “clearcutting” brings to mind habitat destruction, soil damage, and watersheds destruction, while perhaps the word “regeneration” references a fresh start...as in an endless crop of Douglas-fir seedlings replacing the native flora and fauna of old-growth forests.

So rather than call their proposed 1,400 acres of clearcutting “Edson Clearcut,” the Coos Bay BLM wisely opted for the kinder gentler name “Edson Regen.”



George Sexton

BUSH’S FOREST LEGACY: CLEARCUTS FOREVER

In the waning days of the Bush Administration, the BLM signed a decision to drastically increase the amount of clearcutting on public lands. This decision (known as the Western Oregon Plan Revisions or “WOPR”) was opposed by over 25,000 Americans who asked the BLM to manage these lands for the benefit of all, not just for the profits of a few. Now the BLM contends that despite the wishes of the public, that large-scale clearcutting will be their primary forest “management” tool. Edson Regen timber sale is the first BLM timber sale planned under the authority of the WOPR.

ELIMINATING COMMON SENSE PROTECTIONS

Prior to the Bush rule changes, the BLM would have been required to: 1) Leave 15% of the native forest stands intact within the clearcut units; 2) Provide adequate buffer zones along streams and creeks; 3) Protect “Key Watersheds” for salmon recovery; and 4) Conduct surveys for rare species prior to logging.

In the Edson Regen timber sale, none of these safeguards will apply. Instead the BLM intends to clearcut across the landscape.

Fortunately, Bush’s WOPR is extremely controversial and highly illegal. In particular, the BLM is refusing to abide by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, which requires the agency to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine if the WOPR will result in the extinction of the northern spotted owl or the marbled murrelet.

WHAT IS THE BLM’S VISION FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT? Private and public clearcuts dominate Oregon’s coast range.

IT’S TIME TO RECOVER AND REINVEST

Here in the Klamath-Siskiyou, stimulus monies are already being allocated to land management projects. We are hopeful that as more funding is allocated, resources will be focused on watershed restoration, pollution cleanup from abandoned mines and the reduction of fuels near homes and communities. This is not only an opportunity for what’s so much needed restoration work, but also to train workers to implement these important tasks.

WATCH DOGGING THE STIMULUS

As of early March, only about 10% of the stimulus money had been allocated to specific projects. KS Wild is keeping a close eye on these projects and advocating that the money is spent wisely. What we are finding is that while some projects funded with stimulus money are good projects that we have already endorsed, others are lost opportunities to put these monies to the best use, and a few ideas are downright ugly.

THE GOOD - The East Illinois Valley Young Managed Stands on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forests has been funded. The Forest Service is also considering road decommissioning and fish passage projects that have been approved and are literally sitting on the shelf, but have not had the funding for implementation.

THE BAD - The Six Rivers National Forest announced its first project would be clearing brush along approximately 1,000 miles of roads on the forest. KS Wild is concerned that projects such as this, with little restoration value to public lands, are lost opportunities. This project won’t fix any of the ecological problems that roads create, such as ensuring fish passage or reducing salmon killing erosion.

THE UGLY - Representative Greg Walden (R-OR) is urging the Forest Service to use stimulus dollars to build roads and salvage log 350,000 acres in the Fremont-Winema National Forest. Clearcut logging and road construction is not restoration, and is the wrong use of this coveted money.

Rest assured that KS Wild will continue to monitor all projects in the region and work to ensure that public resources are best spent restoring, rather than degrading, public lands and waters.

STIMULUS SNAPSHOT

While only a small percent of the stimulus monies have been allocated, here are some of the projects that have been announced so far:

U.S. Forest Service

- Hazardous Fuels Reduction in Northern California: \$1.5 million
- Fuels Reduction and Biomass Projects across 8 counties in Oregon: \$10 million

Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- Forest Health and Hazardous Fuels Treatments: \$140 million nationwide
- Roads, Bridges and Deferred Maintenance: \$180 million nationwide
- Remediate Abandoned Mines: \$320 million nationwide

STIMULATING RESTORATION IN THE KLAMATH-SISKIYOU

With the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will gain over \$1 billion of new appropriations. This money will create over 25,000 jobs on “shovel ready” land management projects in economically distressed rural areas.



George Sexton

BLOCKING FISH: Inadequate road culverts block fish from accessing their spawning habitat and offer opportunities for fruitful restoration work on public lands.

In addition to creating jobs, the management goal of dedicating stimulus money to National Forests is to restore degraded forests and streams – and so far, most of the projects are legitimate restoration. Not surprisingly, some lawmakers and land managers are attempting to highjack stimulus money to carry out ecologically damaging projects.

NO SHORTAGE OF WORK

Restoration on our National Forests is long overdue. After a half a century of constructing logging roads into remote areas and through important salmon watersheds and converting old-growth forests into tree plantations – all the while neglecting necessary maintenance – our National Forests need help. Some of the severe problems facing our public lands include:

- Thousands of miles of un-maintained, unnecessary logging roads bleed sediment into salmon streams and rivers.
- Inadequate road culverts block fish from accessing their spawning habitats.
- The build-up of small trees and brush from decades of fire suppression can fuel uncharacteristically severe wildfires.
- Overstocked, monoculture tree plantations are biologically deficient.
- Noxious, invasive plants spread by logging and machinery overtake and threaten native plant communities.

The BLM doesn't want to consult with scientists because they do not want to know the likely impacts of their WOPR clearcutting plans on these endangered species.

KS Wild, our conservation allies, and Oregon Governor Kulongoski have all filed challenges to the last-minute attempts by the Bush Administration to accelerate clearcutting on these public lands.

WORSE THAN THE BAD OLD DAYS

Edson Regen contains some of the last intact native forest located in the Sixes and New River Watersheds of the Oregon Coast Range. Both watersheds contain struggling runs of Coho salmon that are listed under the Endangered Species Act. They also provide the last tiny fragments of habitat in the area for the threatened marbled murrelet and the northern spotted owl. The Industrial timberlands that comprise most of both watersheds are subject to intensive and frequent clearcutting.

Until Bush changed the rules, one could assume that the public forests on BLM lands would be managed with a lighter touch than the adjacent timber industry tree farms. Whereas the Oregon Forest Practices Act limits the size of clearcuts on private lands and requires prompt re-planting, the BLM contends that it is free to clearcut as much acreage at one time as it pleases and not re-plant in any given timeframe.

GOODBYE SALMON

Currently, the canopy of these mature forests helps protect water quality by moderating the timing and quantity of “peak flows” and by filtering sediment that would otherwise reach the salmon and steelhead habitat in the Sixes and New Rivers. In addition to the massive clearcuts, the BLM is also proposing to build 10 more miles of logging roads on steep slopes and across creeks in these already severely degraded watersheds. The combination of road construction and clearcutting is a death sentence for watersheds that are already on the brink of collapse.

WANT TO HELP?

KS Wild is working tenaciously for the native forests, wildlands, watersheds and critters that mean so very little to the BLM and so very much to nearly everyone else. Our strength comes from your support. Please take a moment to learn more about Edson Regen, the Western Oregon Plan Revisions, and how to make your voice heard to protect the public lands we all steward. You can send a quick letter by visiting: www.kswild.org/take-action/ActionAlerts.



Chandra LeGue

LIQUIDATING THE FOREST: The BLM's plan harms old-growth forests, water quality, salmon, carbon storage, wildlife and recreation.

SALVAGE LOGGING HEATS UP IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

From an ecological perspective, the lightning-started wildfires last summer in northern California's National Forests were long overdue. For well over 60 years, the Forest Service has been extinguishing every fire at every opportunity in forest ecosystems that have evolved for millennia to require fire. As a result of the Forest Service "Smokey Bear" fire suppression policy, the species composition and density of conifer trees in the Klamath-Siskiyou has shifted dramatically in some places.



LOOK OUT BELOW: Forest Service dumps tons of toxic slurry, and money, on remote wildfires.

Many scientists and forest lovers were thrilled when the 2008 wildfires created a mosaic of green and dead trees (snags) bringing long-absent diversity and heterogeneity back to our fire-evolved landscape. Rare snag-associated species like black-backed woodpeckers flourished, salmon-bearing streams received a much-needed burst of large down wood, adding to stream complexity and habitat richness, and decades of true-fir encroachment threatening old-growth pines and hardwoods was reversed.

EXPLOITING FIRE FOR PROFIT

Unfortunately, there are still some in the Forest Service who view fire primarily as a way to make a fast buck. It is an open secret that fire suppression - including helicopters, air tankers, dozers, road and line construction - has grown to consume the lion's share of the Forest Service's budget. The agency spends orders of magnitude more money fighting fire than on projects like thinning hazardous plantations and prescribed fire that would prepare the forest for the inevitable occurrence of fire.

The fire suppression effort during the summer of 2008 in the northern California Forests was an exercise in hubris. Overzealous out-of-state fire crews illegally felled thousands of trees located deep in the wildlands of the Marble Mountains Wilderness many miles away from any homes or communities. Ancient forests in the salmon-bearing Blue Creek watershed were severely burned via Forest Service "burnout" operations over the strenuous objections of the local Karuk tribal members who have managed these forests for centuries. Hundreds of miles of duplicative dozer lines were punched onto steep slopes and across streams without any environmental oversight.

HERE COME THE LOG TRUCKS

While ecologists, biologists and hydrologists across the board acknowledge the forest health benefits of last summer's fires, many in the Forest Service and the timber industry see post-fire ecosystems as an opportunity to push an agenda of clearcutting and industrial plantation forestry.

The Klamath National Forest is currently planning salvage logging clearcuts in two watershed strongholds for at-risk salmon: Elk Creek and the Salmon River. The timber sale in Elk Creek, called "Panther," would clearcut 254 acres along the road to the Bear Lake trailhead access to the Marble Mountains Wilderness. The salvage timber sale along the Salmon River, called "Caribou," targets 400 acres for logging via the so-called Healthy Forest Restoration Act, which eliminates the normal citizen appeal process.



George Sexton

FIRE RETURNS TO A FIRE EVOLVED LANDSCAPE: The 2008 northern California fires created a mosaic that contributes to the rich biological diversity of Klamath-Siskiyou forests.

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest hopes to log over 3,700 acres of post-fire forests via the "Trinity Roadside Hazard" project wherein the agency will clearcut snags within 150 feet of the road system across the landscape. Justified as a "roadside hazard" reduction, the timber sale will log trees on the downhill side of roads (which are extremely unlikely to fall on the travel way) and snags within otherwise protected areas such as riparian and late-successional reserves. The Shasta-Trinity Forest is also proposing a salvage timber sale called "Ironsides" that will clearcut 200 acres through a "categorical exemption" to the National Environmental Policy Act such that the normal pre-logging environmental analysis would not occur. Ironsides also targets forests protected as late-successional reserves for logging.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

The scientific consensus is becoming increasingly clear. Salvage logging harms: (1) forest recovery and re-growth; (2) soils; (3) watersheds; and (4) increases fire hazard. It's time for Smokey Bear to go back to school.

"Salvage logging of large snags...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, College of Forest Resources, University of Washington