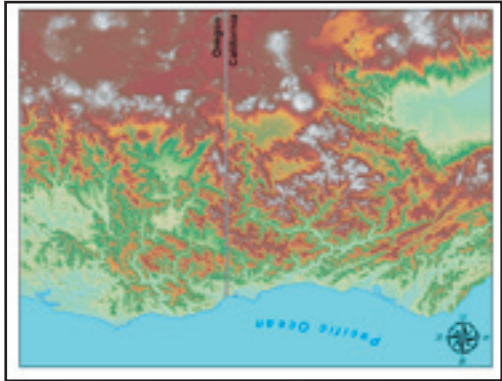




KS WILD

Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
PO Box 332, Williams OR. 97544
www.kswild.org

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The Klamath-Siskiyou region of southwest Oregon and northwest California is a world-renowned hub of biological diversity. Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Cascade Mountains, this region houses more conifer species than any other region in the world. From ancient old-growth forests to dry desert climate - and everything in between - the KS is a refuge for wild nature.

KS WILD NEWS

The Journal of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
Summer 2008



In This Issue: Help Protect "Oregon Treasures"
Good News for a Beleaguered Forest
Mining: In Desperate Need of Reform
Climate Change, ORVs, and more...

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Cover Photo:
Somes Creek,
Salmon River
tributary, Klamath
National Forest.
Scott Harding.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST BENEFIT

Sunday, July 13th, 8-11am

Pilaf Restaurant, 18 Calle Guanajuato, Ashland

KS Wild is partnering with Pilaf for a pancake breakfast benefit, and we hope you will help make it a wild success! Breakfast includes pancakes, eggs, local chicken sausage, and juice or coffee for \$12 (kids are half price). Five dollars of every breakfast will be donated to KS Wild. Make a date with friends to enjoy a lovely summer breakfast on Ashland Creek!

WILD ROGUE HIKES Join KS Wild and Sis-kiyou Project on the last Saturday of every month for a hike into proposed Wilderness along the Lower Rogue River. Carpools leave Gooseberries Natural Foods in Grants Pass at 10am. **July 26, Aug. 30, Sept. 27, Oct. 25**

WHOPPER HIKES In 2007, the BLM released the draft Western Oregon Plan Revisions, which would remove 2.5 million acres of public forests in western Oregon from the scientific framework of the Northwest Forest Plan. Join KS Wild for a hike to Medford District BLM public lands that would be affected by this whopper of a plan. **August 16:** Moon Prairie, Indian Plateau; **September 20:** Long Gulch, Applegate Valley. Visit www.kswild.org for more details, or call 488.5789.

KS WILD ANNUAL DINNER & AUCTION

Saturday, September 27th, 5:30pm

Historic Ashland Armory, 208 Oak Street

Join KS Wild's staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, interns and supporters for a night of great food and stimulating company. The evening will feature a locally-inspired dinner by Kate Dwyer Catering, a beautiful array of auction items and a lively update on KS Wild's activities.

KS WILD'S MISSION:

KS Wild is an advocate for the forests and wildlife of the Klamath and Rogue watersheds 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:

Kristin Biechler, Ralph Bloemers, David Calahan, Cascadia Wildlands Project, Regina Chichizola, Holly Christiansen, Maria Clementi, Roger Dorband, Marianne Dugan, Francis Eatherington, EPIC, Kyle Haines, Aubyn, Timothy Ingalsbee, Melanie Jessee, James Johnston, Andy Kerr, Spencer Lennard, Connie Lynn, Sally Mackler, Erin Madden, Malena Marvin, Krista Meany, Beverly Moore, Ken Morrish, Jeff Nadler, Rich Nawa, Oregon Wild, Oregon Sierra Club, Stephanie Parent, Tim Ream, Red Buttes Wilderness Council, Lauren Regan, Barry Snitkin, Jonathan Spero, Barbara Ullian, Erin Volheim, Pete Wallstrom, Greg Walter, Carson Whitehead, Sarah Wilson, George Wuerthner & many others.

PLEASE SUPPORT THESE BUSINESSES BECAUSE THEY SUPPORT US:

Ashland Food Co-op, Claudia Beausoleil Mediation, Contempl8 T-Shirts, Crystal Clear Satellite, Dagoba Organic Chocolate, Dan the Backhoe Man Excavation, Deluxe Awning Company, DeRiemer Adventure Kayaking, EcoTeas, Eric Strong Furniture, Euro-Mek Auto Repair, Fourth Corner Fine Quilt Gallery, Freeburne's Honey, Full Circle Bison Ranch, Full Circle Real Estate, Greenleaf Restaurant, Herb Pharm, Horizon Herbs, Jefferson State Financial Group, Kalb Chiropractic, Morning Glory, Morningstar Healing Arts, MyCommunityMatters.net, Naturalyards, Northshore Productions, Northwest Biological Consulting, Pacific Domes, Plant Oregon Nursery, Quail Run Vineyard, Sandy Bar Nursery, Sunday Afternoons, Sunshine Natural Foods, Sweetgrass Natural Fibers, Talent Cafe, The Manor Motel, Tree Star, Trillium Natural Foods, WCFL Insurance Services.

DEEP GRATITUDE GOES TO:

1% for the Planet, Astrov Fund, Janet Boggia, Paul Christensen, Elizabeth Coker, Romain Cooper, Alexandra Dilworth, Clint & Mary Driver, Jo Ferneau, David Gasser, Ryan Ginn, Ken Himes, Brad Horwitz, Andy Kerr & Nancy Peterson, Dorothea Hover-Kramer, Jeff Kahn, Tracy Parks Lamblin, Walter & Conny Lindley, Suzan R. Mackler Fund, Erin Madden, Stanley Marchington, Katherine Mechling & Jim Gurley, Lewis Nash, Dia Paxton, Tom & Maud Powell, Florence Prescott, Margaret Purves, Lundy & Fredric Reynolds, Gene Rhough, Victoria Richert & Thomas Brown, Edward & Gloria Robin, Peter & Karen Salant, Frederick Schilling, Melissa Schweisguth, Randi Spivak, Joyce Stahmann, Valerie Swales, David & Leann Tourzan, Ted & Ginger Wilson.

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS:

444S Foundation, Ashland Food Cooperative, Burning Foundation, Cereus Fund of the Trees Foundation, Deer Creek Foundation, Environment Now, Firedoll Foundation, Foundation for Deep Ecology, Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, J.W. and H.M. Goodman Family Charitable Foundation, Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation, Heller Charitable and Educational Fund, Jubitz Foundation, Kenney Watershed Foundation, Laird Norton Endowment Foundation, Maud T. Kernan Fund of McKenzie River Gathering, Giles and Elise Mead Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Norcross Wildlife Foundation, Outdoor Industry Conservation Alliance, Patagonia, Ralph L. Smith Foundation, Raynier Foundation and Institute, Sperling Foundation, Tides Foundation, Weeden Foundation, Wilburforce Foundation.

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FEATURED HIKE: BOUNDARY TRAIL

The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest's Boundary Trail offers an epic ridgeline experience in a botanically wondrous roadless area. The 15-mile trail criss-crosses the ridge between the Illinois and Applegate Valleys, offering spectacular views of the maze of jumbled mountains that define southern Oregon and northern California.



Lesley Adams

The Boundary Trail is a recreational paradise within the 100,000-acre Kangaroo Roadless Area, which is proposed as an addition to the Red Buttes Wilderness. On the north end are glorious wildflower meadows, an historic cabin and the monumental peak of Grayback Mountain. On the south end are the marvels of the Red Buttes Wilderness, with complex geology and mountain lakes tucked into forested folds. To the west is the Oregon Caves National Monument and the flower-laden Bigelow Lakes basin. From anywhere on the trail one can discover rare plants and climb peaks that are mostly unseen from any road.

ORVs ON THE BOUNDARY TRAIL? All National Forests are undergoing a "Travel Management Planning" process to determine which roads remain open to motorized recreation and which will be closed (see page 10). The Boundary Trail is currently being considered as a designated route for ORV use. While thousands of acres of existing roads are appropriate for motorized recreation, high elevation hiking trails with exceptional botanical diversity are not. Motorized recreation can create safety hazards for hikers and horseback riders. This is an important time for the Forest Service to hear from you that the Boundary Trail should be closed to motorized recreation. Please take a few moments to write a letter advocating for non-motorized recreation on the Boundary Trail. Visit www.kswild.org/ForestWatch/orvs for more information.

- L. Adams

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 _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Mail this form along with your membership donation to: KS WILD, P.O. Box 332, Williams, OR 97544

OREGON TREASURES INTRODUCED

In a major step toward safeguarding some of southern Oregon's special places, Senator Ron Wyden and Representatives Peter DeFazio and Earl Blumenauer introduced companion legislation in June to protect the Rogue River and Oregon Caves. Senator Smith, so far, is silent on the matter.



Ken Morrish

The "Oregon Treasures" legislation proposes to add 143 miles of the Rogue River's tributary streams to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, expand the Oregon Caves National Monument by 4,000 acres, and add nearly 8 miles of Cave Creek to the Wild and Scenic Rivers system - making its underground portion, the River Styx, the first subterranean waterway to be protected under the Act. The bill also provides for the opportunity to retire a grazing permit on an allotment that overlaps the Monument's water supply (see page 10). The bill also expands protections for Mount Hood.

Representative DeFazio said, "These are places that merit special protection so that not only this generation of Oregonians can continue to enjoy them, but future generations... will have access to these wonderful places unchanged further by the hand of man."

Senator Wyden stated, "You can't keep the Rogue pure and wild if the waters that feed it aren't - and you can't protect the underground parts of the Oregon Caves unless you take care of the land above and around them."

KS Wild, our supporters, and partners are working hard to secure these protections and are excited about the potential for this dream to become reality in 2008. Oregon Treasures was introduced because people like you asked Congress to take action. Now is an important time to speak up to secure these safeguards so that future generations may enjoy Rogue River salmon and marvel at the wonders of the Oregon Caves.

Please join us in making a proposal become a law. Contact Reps. DeFazio and Blumenauer and Sen. Wyden and thank them for their work to protect the Rogue River and Oregon Caves.

Sen. Ron Wyden: Email him via wyden.senate.gov/contact or call 202.224.5244
Rep. Earl Blumenauer: Email him via blumenauer.house.gov or call 202.225.4811
Rep. DeFazio: Email him via defazio.house.gov or call 202.225.6416

WHERE IS SENATOR SMITH? Contact Senator Smith and ask that he support this legislation to protect the Rogue River and the Oregon Caves. Ask your friends and family to do the same - these are national treasures that deserve protection.

Senator Gordon Smith: Email him via gsmith.senate.gov or call him at 202.224.3753

MT. ASHLAND FOREST RESTORATION: GOOD NEWS FOR A BELEAGUERED FOREST

Many *KS Wild News* readers are familiar with the forests and watersheds that surround Mt. Ashland. It is a land of contrasts: ski runs and service roads on the north face of the mountain versus back-country winter recreation on the south-side; intact wild native forests in the Ashland Creek Watershed versus second-growth true-fir plantations in Beaver Creek; rugged botanical hotspots like the McDonald Peak roadless area versus large industrial clearcuts in the private timber lands on the Siskiyou Crest. The forests and watersheds surrounding Mt. Ashland defy generalization and often surprise even the seasoned forest visitor.



George Sexton

DECADES OF MISMANAGEMENT: This stand of trees in the Mt. Ashland project is emblematic of the forest conditions that require careful thinning to restore older forest structure. These trees are the result of past clearcutting, monoculture planting and fire exclusion.

Much of the public land on both sides of Mt. Ashland is protected as Late-Successional Old-Growth Reserves. These forests are set aside for the protection of old-growth, wildlife, and water quality. Unfortunately, these forest reserves are far from pristine. On the south side of the mountain, the reserves were extensively logged around the turn of the century. The largest old-growth pine and cedar trees were taken while the fire-prone (and less valuable) true-fir trees were left. After the logging, the Forest Service excluded fire from the ecosystem for decades. This combination of logging and fire suppression resulted in an old-growth reserve that primarily consists of stunted small-diameter fir trees.

SPEAK SOFTLY AND CARRY A BIG STICK

In 2005, the Klamath National Forest proposed to “restore” the Mt. Ashland reserve by building over 8 miles of new logging roads in sensitive watersheds to access several thousand acres of proposed logging units. The logging would have relied on tractors dragging the felled trees to the newly constructed roads.

KS Wild submitted detailed technical comments on the Forest Service’s logging proposal, and 130 of our supporters wrote to the agency requesting that they refrain from punching roads and unleashing tractors throughout the reserve. The combination of public sentiment and KS Wild’s ability to successfully litigate destructive Forest Service timber sales caused the agency to go back to the drawing board.

- G. Sexton

Continued from page 11...

THE DREAM ON THE HORIZON

Events of the past year have created an opportune climate for making this plan a reality. With the permittee amenable to a buyout and Oregon’s Congressional delegation supporting the proposal, we have a short window of opportunity to enact lasting protection for this phenomenal resource. On June 18, a bill to accomplish these goals was introduced in both the House and Senate (see page 2). KS Wild is working to secure funding to facilitate the allotment retirement, as Congress has made it clear that it will provide the means but not the funding for this part of the proposal.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW

We now face the task of quickly raising \$160,000 to fund the buyout. If you are interested in helping, please contact Stephanie Tidwell at stephanie@kswild.org or 541.488.5789.

- S. Tidwell



Joe Serres

GRAZING A BOTANICAL GEM: Grazing cattle in high elevation public meadows is damaging to natural resources.

FOCUS ON OUR KS WILD FAMILY

KRISTA MEANY AND CARSON WHITEHEAD

KS Wild is thrilled to have law students Krista Meany and Carson Whitehead as interns this summer. They are both working closely with Legal Director Chris Len to research industrial logging in northern California.

Krista grew up in New York City and graduated in 2006 from Bennington College in Bennington, Vermont, where she studied literature and French. This fall she will begin her third year working toward a certificate in Environmental and Natural Resources Law at the University of Oregon School of Law.



Carson arrived in the Northwest in 2002 and immediately fell in love with big trees, glaciers, and wild places. He hopes to stick around the Northwest when law school (at Lewis and Clark) ends and work to keep those places he loves healthy and intact. Besides working at the KS Wild HQ this summer, he is spending as much time as possible in the wilds of the KS.



THE LAND DOWN UNDER: PROTECTING CREEKS & MEADOWS TO SAVE A CAVE

Although the Oregon Caves National Monument (OCNM) is a natural wonder that delights more than 80,000 people annually, at 480 acres it is so small that it only shows up as a dot (if at all) on atlases and maps. Since OCNM's creation in 1909, the Park Service has proposed a boundary expansion several times in order to better protect the caves. Unfortunately, that dream has yet to be realized.



Lesley Adams

COWS GRAZING IN A BOTANICAL AREA? We have a special opportunity to remove cows from the Kangaroo Roadless Area and safeguard unique botanical and aquatic habitat around Oregon Caves.

Now, on the eve of the Monument's centennial anniversary, we have what is perhaps the best opportunity yet to protect and enhance this southern Oregon gem. KS Wild and allies propose to expand OCNM by 4,400 acres in order to protect caves-related natural values like clean water and old-growth forests and expand nature-related outdoor recreation opportunities in rural Josephine County. We also propose the designation of 7.6 miles of Cave Creek under the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act.

Unfortunately, much of the public land in OCNM's proposed expansion area is grazed by livestock. The Forest Service's Big Grayback Grazing Allotment, located atop three Botanical Areas, is home to sensitive and rare habitat, as well as miles of hiking trails. It also includes the headwaters of Cave Creek - the drinking water supply for OCNM. Protecting the water quality of upper Cave Creek is critical to protecting OCNM, as the River Styx that flows through the caves is hydrologically connected to the surface watershed. Thus, this livestock grazing allotment needs to be retired in conjunction with the expansion.

The proposal will also retire the BLM's Billy Mountain Grazing Allotment, held by the same rancher and located nearby in the Enchanted Forest. It is also important habitat for the federally-protected Gentner's fritillary (*Fritillaria gentnerii*).

In the simplest sense, the boundary adjustment draws a line around a geographic area, transfers its management to the National Park Service from the Forest Service and provides stronger protections for the area's rare and fragile resources. However, the proposal will also help draw visitors to the trails and botanical areas and encourage local overnight stays and dining. These factors create a situation where conservation and community economic stability go hand-in-hand, fostering support across the political spectrum.

Continued on next page...

A HAPPY ENDING

Recently the Klamath National Forest signed a decision to dramatically reduce the amount of proposed new road construction while thinning the dense second-growth stands and retaining the old-growth trees that remain. Best of all, the Forest Service has agreed to work with us to use prescribed fire to help restore the fire-evolved forests of Mt. Ashland.

Thanks to everyone who spoke up for the forests and watersheds of Mt. Ashland! Your letters made a difference.

SAVING OLD-GROWTH FOR THE FUTURE: The photo at right illustrates proposed new road construction that would have logged old trees. KS Wild succeeded in removing this, and miles of other road, from the project.



Lesley Adams

UPPER APPLGATE FUELS PROJECT: MAKING A GOOD THING BETTER

There is little doubt that 60 years of Smokey Bear's fire suppression activities in the Applegate Watershed have significantly changed the area's forests. Old-growth pine trees are stressed, and slow-growing oak stands are shaded out as young fir stands proliferate in the absence of natural fire events.

Hence many folks applauded when the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest proposed several thousand acres of small-diameter conifer thinning in the Wildland Urban Interface surrounding Upper Applegate Road. The project is located near at-risk communities, calls for a light touch on the land, and would reintroduce prescribed fire to these fire-evolved forests.

KS Wild believes in trust with verification. For this reason, we carefully reviewed the Forest Service's final proposal for the Upper Applegate Project and were disappointed to learn that it also authorized: (1) removal of late-successional forests in the Kinney and Little Grayback wildlands; (2) harming spotted owl suitable habitat; and (3) cutting 12' foot-wide cable yarding swaths through riparian reserves.

KS Wild responded by filing an administrative objection to the project in which we proposed ways for the Forest Service to accomplish its forest restoration goals while avoiding the harmful practices listed above. To their credit, the Forest Service worked with us to eliminate the objectionable elements of the project while allowing the positive restoration work to proceed. That's called a "win-win." The project will be auctioned in 2008 and likely implemented in 2009.

- G. Sexton

COLLABORATION CORNER: BUTCHER KNIFE SLATE

Does Butcher Knife Slate sound like a cheap horror movie you've promised yourself to avoid? Don't fret, you're not going to read about psycho butchers wielding meat cleavers. Butcher Knife Slate is actually the name of an important restoration project – the latest example of KS Wild's community collaboration efforts.



Joseph Vaile

FINDING COMMON GROUND: KS Wild is working with diverse community interests in the planning of the Butcher Knife Slate timber sale in Josephine County.

KS Wild is helping spearhead an effort to engage diverse community interests in the planning of Butcher Knife Slate, a project on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, west of Grants Pass, Oregon. Butcher Knife and Slate creeks are important watersheds that support salmon and steelhead, rare plants, spotted owls, and some incredible features of the wild Klamath-Siskiyou.

WHAT IS COLLABORATION?

Collaboration is a method of problem solving that brings all the key players to the table. It is increasingly used as a means of preparing land management plans in our region. Although time-intensive and often uncomfortable, collaboration is a way to get issues worked out up-front and avoid controversial decisions that propose damaging the environment.

In this project, a core group of specialists, known as the Butcher Knife Slate Recommendations Working Group, will be offering specific advice to the Forest Service. The Working Group collected this input through numerous meetings, field trips and discussions. We have consulted with Forest Service specialists, local experts with knowledge of the area's natural resources and stakeholders invested in the Butcher Knife Slate project area and objectives.

The recommendations deal with nearly every major ecological and social aspect of the Butcher Knife Slate project, such as: 1) removing noxious weeds in the area and preventing new weed invasions, 2) focusing thinning on small trees and second-growth tree plantations, 3) protecting water quality by limiting road construction and putting some of the old, crumbling roads to bed, 4) saving big trees and old-growth forests, and 5) getting contractors out to the project to talk over operational feasibility.

- J. Vaile

MOTORIZED NIGHTMARE

More than 500,000 miles of roads - enough to circle the earth 20 times - fragment our National Forests. Roads can be ecologically devastating, and are costly to build and expensive to maintain. In addition to this pervasive road system, off-road vehicle (ORV) users create new "routes" and keep "decommissioned" roads open by riding where they should not. Local conflicts may arise from such use, including the Boundary Trail (see page 13) and damage to the threatened Port-Orford cedar and salmon in Josephine and Canyon Creeks.



D. Calahan

TRASHING THE COMMONS: While only 2.5% of Americans pursue motorized recreation, the activity degrades public lands and waters.

FUN FOR A FEW, DAMAGE TO ALL

While the damage from offroading is extensive, a small minority of the public engages in ORV recreation. Nationally, about 2.5% of annual visits to National Forests have ORV use as their primary activity, yet these activities can devastate public resources. The excessive road system, coupled with unregulated ORV routes, bleed sediment into creeks, degrade water quality, suffocate fish, muddy drinking water, fragment wildlife habitat and encourage the spread of invasive weeds. In addition, ORVs are noisy, often trespass on adjacent private land, or public wilderness, and pose a safety risk to non-motorized recreators on public land.

TACKLING A GROWING PROBLEM

All National Forests are currently engaged in a "Travel Management Plan" process to determine which roads will be designated "open" or "closed" to motorized activity. KS Wild is working with forest managers on the Six Rivers, Klamath, Modoc and Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forests to ensure that clean water, rare plants and valuable wildlands have a voice in this process. Early indications from the Rogue River-Siskiyou and Klamath are that these proposals will designate ORV routes in sensitive areas, such as the South Kalmiopsis and Kangaroo Inventoried Roadless Areas. Due to the profusion of roads and the advocacy of a vocal minority of ORV users, broad public engagement will be critical in developing safe and ecologically sound management plans. Public comment periods will open in 2008 for both the Rogue River-Siskiyou and Klamath National Forests.

TAKE ACTION: Visit www.kswild.org/ForestWatch/orvs to speak up for non-motorized routes in your neighborhood or favorite recreation spot. Email lesley@kswild.org to sign up for our monthly *KS eNews* and receive alerts for public commenting on travel management planning in the Klamath-Siskiyou.

- L. Adams

SPOTTED OWL BACK IN THE NEWS

In May 2008, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released the much-anticipated “Final Recovery Plan” for one of the most captivating and (sadly) despised species in North America: the Northern spotted owl. The plan is the result of a legal settlement between timber companies and the Bush administration, which outlines a new strategy to recover the old-growth forest denizen throughout its range in the Pacific Northwest.



James Johnston

SCIENTIFIC JOKE

A 2007 draft of the plan drew intense criticism; it received 80,000 public comments, spurred congressional oversight hearings, and led to a high-level resignation of a Bush appointee. Scathing scientific reviews shed light on the plan’s shortcomings. For example, the draft focused on the threat of the spotted owl’s invasive competitor, the barred owl, but ignored the species’ dwindling old-growth habitat. And while the final plan is a huge improvement from the draft, it is far from effective. It proposes protecting most high quality owl habitat west of the Cascade Crest, but leaves open loopholes for damaging proposals like the BLM’s Western Oregon Plan Revisions and for logging older forests in the Klamath-Siskiyou.

A STRUGGLING INDICATOR: The spotted owl (juvenile pictured here) is an indicator of the health of old-growth forests, and is declining throughout its range.

A 2007 draft of the plan drew intense criticism; it received 80,000 public comments, spurred congressional oversight hearings, and led to a high-level resignation of a Bush appointee.

Why would the government create a recovery plan that failed to protect old-growth habitat? The answer is clear – the government wanted to open up federal lands for logging. After all, the timber industry donated millions to the Bush/Cheney election campaigns of 2000 and 2004, and the administration needed to pay back favors.

CRITICAL HABITAT SHRINKING

The Service is also re-designating the threatened bird’s “critical habitat.” This Endangered Species Act designation identifies habitats vital to the owl’s recovery. It has already designated critical habitat for the owl, but the Service is now proposing to reduce critical habitat, despite the fact that the bird is still declining throughout its range. Southwest Oregon would be hit the hardest with dramatic reductions in critical habitat, which could help facilitate old-growth logging plans.

- J. Vaile

IN DESPERATE NEED OF REFORM AN ARCHAIC LAW REIGNS ON PUBLIC LAND

1872 was a banner year. The U.S. was nearly 100 years old. Calvin Coolidge was born and Horace Greeley died. Brigham Young was arrested for polygamy. And Ulysses S. Grant signed into law the General Mining Act of 1872, which still governs mining in America 136 years later.

The General Mining Act reflected the misconceptions of its day – that our natural resources were inexhaustible; that our national interest was always best served by development; that the natural environment – to the extent that such a concept existed – did not require protection. In consequence, the Act required no royalties to be paid for the minerals extracted, it allowed miners to acquire title to the land they were mining for dollars per acre and it required no environmental protection during operations nor cleanup when mining had ended.



Lou Gold

MINING OUR HERITAGE: Mining threatens environmental resources and human health. Placer mining operation on Josephine Creek, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

That such a law should persist 136 years is a testament to the power of the mining lobby. In 2006, the U.S. produced \$64.4 billion worth of non-fuel minerals on which mining companies paid \$0 in royalties. While Oregon placed only 35th in mineral production, there are nevertheless hundreds of abandoned mines on public lands in the state that pose a variety of hazards – from open pits to toxic waste – to human health and wildlife.

KS Wild has recently begun a review of abandoned mines on federal land and some of our findings have been quite alarming. For example, near Gold Hill, OR the abandoned Braden mine has left private landowners with soil contaminated at levels many times in excess of EPA limits for lead, arsenic, cobalt, chromium and other heavy metals. Abandoned cyanide pits, tailing piles and an open pit have the potential to wash into salmon-bearing Kane Creek, a tributary of the Rogue River.

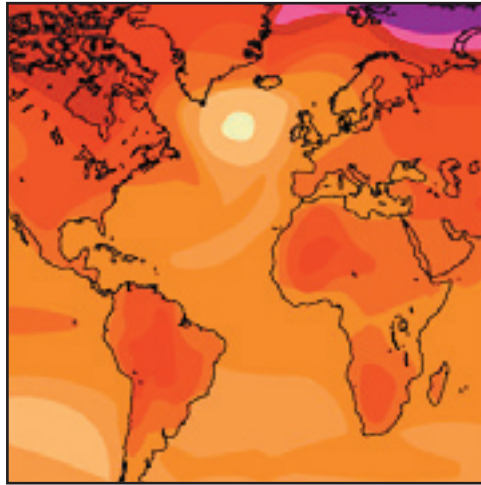
Almost since it was passed, the General Mining Act has been a target for reform. For the first time in years, the House has passed, and the Senate is considering, a bill that would impose royalties of 4 percent of net revenues on existing mines and 8 percent on new mines, give federal agencies authority to balance mining applications with other uses of public land and direct new revenues to clean up abandoned mines.

Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR), who is seeking reelection this fall, is a good candidate for constituents to contact. Please visit www.kswild.org/GetInvolved/miningreform for more information and a sample letter to Senator Smith.

- C. Len

A CHANGING CLIMATE

Climate change has been big news for years now, but there has been little discussion of the predicted impacts on the Klamath-Siskiyou region or the role our wildlands can play in mitigating the serious impacts of these changes. Scientists around the world, and pretty much everyone else by now, have come to the consensus that the world is warming and that much of that warming is caused by human release of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The effects of this warming will increase over the next several decades and could be catastrophic in many areas of the world. It is possible that Klamath-Siskiyou forests, and specifically our public lands, will play an important role in countering the damage that industrialization has caused to our atmosphere.



IT IS EVERYONE'S ISSUE: We have much work ahead in mitigating the impacts of climate change on the planet's ecosystems.

WETTER, WARMER WINTERS; DRIER, HOTTER SUMMERS

Climate change in the Pacific Northwest is likely to result in wetter, warmer winters and drier summers. In particular, temperatures in southwest Oregon have been increasing 0.07 °C per decade. This may not sound like a big increase, but it is enough to cause more winter rain and to shift the snow line to higher elevations. The consequences of this change are reduced snowpack and earlier snowmelt. Warming temperatures have already led to decreases in snowpack throughout Oregon over the last 50 years. The peak spring flow in rivers and streams throughout the region will occur earlier, causing a detrimental effect on salmon, which are already distressed by significant habitat degradation. Due to warmer weather, species will be migrating upslope and displacing other species. Species already at high elevations will have nowhere to go.

FIRES, BUGS, AND FLOODS

Drier summers and earlier spring snowmelts will result in longer fire seasons and more acres burned per year. Infestations could also increase as pests that have been limited by temperature from entering higher elevations migrate to warming areas. Additionally, warmer winters could result in the overwinter survival of more pests. It is possible that pest problems could decrease in the short term if insects that rely on snowpack as winter insulation are unable to burrow into the decreased snowpack. Tree species could be ravished by an increase in the types and amounts of insects.

Increased CO₂ in the atmosphere could initially result in increased vegetation growth throughout the region, but decreased moisture and rising temperatures will likely result

in decreased forest productivity in the longer term. Additionally, climate change will likely result in the increase of damage from many kinds of disturbances, including those resulting from high winds, storms, and flooding.

OUT OF SYNC

As temperature and precipitation change, the timing of natural events will also change. While a shift of a few days might not seem like a big deal, it can affect (and is already affecting) hibernation, egg-laying, nest-building, flowering and pollination. This upset of natural processes is uncharted territory and the consequences are of great concern.

OLD-GROWTH STORES CARBON

There has been scientific debate about the carbon storage merits of old-growth trees versus young trees, as the timber industry tries to put a disingenuous spin on the merits of 'storing' carbon through logging. Recent studies show that old-growth trees store more carbon than young trees - especially true when accounting for the stored carbon lost through logging old forests. Although some carbon remains sequestered in logs that are turned into products, the eventual release of that carbon is more likely when the trees are no longer trees. Paper, fuel, and other products that have short lifespans do not keep the carbon stored for very long after the trees are cut down.

A report by the U.S. Global Change Research Program suggests that resiliency of plant and animal diversity in the Pacific Northwest could be increased by reducing logging and road construction while increasing stream buffers. Additionally, some thinning of overcrowded forests would be helpful in reducing the risk of uncharacteristic large-scale fires projected by changes in precipitation patterns.

ISLANDS WITHIN A SEA OF DEVELOPMENT

Americans are lucky that earlier generations had the forethought to create public lands. KS Wild works to ensure that we do not squander these public assets, but are instead good stewards of the natural world. After more than a century of exploitation of the earth's resources, most of the American landscape has been altered. Ongoing stressors like development, logging, road-building and drilling have transformed once resilient ecosystems into monocultures susceptible to disease, drought and extirpation.

Public lands serve as ecological islands within a sea of development. Protecting the old-growth forests and native ecosystems of the Klamath-Siskiyou region is an important tool in mitigating the effects of climate change. As the impacts of carbon release over the last century continue to unfold in the coming decades, we must work to preserve biological diversity, maximize carbon sequestration and encourage ecosystems to be resilient. Public lands may serve as our best hope in preserving the rich biological diversity we have inherited.



SUCKING UP CARBON: Forests and soils act as "sinks" for carbon.