



Audubon Armchair Activist

Audubon's Letter of the Month Club

January 2004

Your Help is Needed to Protect Vital National Forest!

The U.S. Forest Service—spurred on by the Bush Administration—has announced plans to move forward with the largest salvage-logging operation in more than 20 years. **WE NEED YOUR HELP NOW: YOU ONLY HAVE UNTIL JANUARY 20TH TO TELL THEM “NO”!!!**

The Forest Service has outlined its “preferred alternative” logging plan in the Siskiyou National Forest as part of a draft environmental impact statement (a process required under the National Environmental Protection Act and intended to force environmental considerations during project planning). Their plan would log more than 29,000 acres of the nearly 500,000 acres that were partially burned in the 2002 Biscuit Fire in southeastern Oregon.

The Siskiyou National Forest, where the cutting would take place, is considered one of the most biologically diverse forests in the Northwest. Here rugged peaks and stands of fire-resistant, old growth forest are crisscrossed by clear running rivers and creeks that are home to wild salmon and steelhead. Of the more than 29,000 acres proposed for cutting, nearly half are in Inventoried Roadless Areas and are home to many sensitive plant and animal species including Audubon Watchlist birds like Blue Grouse, Band-tailed Pigeon, Northern Spotted Owl, Flammulated Owl, Calliope Hummingbird, Rufous Hummingbird, Lewis's Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Oak Titmouse, Wrentit, and Hermit Warbler and 131 plant species that exist nowhere else on earth.

But before the Forest Service can officially move forward with the plan, they must allow the general public (THAT'S YOU!) to weigh-in on the plan - and they are only giving YOU until January 20th to do so!

The Siskiyou National Forest and the so-called Biscuit Fire Complex are critical habitat for birds and other species. These areas are important for conservation and recreation and should not be considered for this unnecessary salvage-logging project. Moreover, the Forest Services “preferred alternative” would

ignore protection designations such as Roadless Areas, Botanical Areas (established to protect sensitive plant species), and Wild and Scenic River Corridors (instituted to protect outstanding natural qualities, scenic beauty, and recreational opportunities) - areas that should not be logged. It's not too late to stop this proposal, but the clock is ticking!

Contact the Forest Service today and tell them to set aside their salvage-logging plan in favor of the “Siskiyou Wild Rivers Conservation Alternative,” a common-sense restoration proposal that would:

- Allow natural recovery for natural areas, protecting the Kalmiopsis Wilderness, Wild and Scenic River corridors, Roadless Areas, Botanical Areas, and other natural or ecologically-special areas from logging, road building, tree planting, or other unnecessarily intrusive projects.
- Restore previously “managed” lands through road decommissioning and closures, noxious weed control, and erosion control (for bulldozed fire lines).
- Protect rivers and water quality by banning logging in Riparian Reserves (areas adjacent to creeks) or areas vulnerable to mass erosion due to unstable soils.
- Restrict any logging to “Matrix Forestlands,” where it is allowed under the Northwest Forest Plan.
- Prohibit post-fire logging on unstable areas and leave standing trees over 20 inches in diameter.
- Reject the Forest Services plans to conduct “research” by extensively logging (which would damage our forest soils and wildlife in the name of “science”) in the Biscuit burn area.

Refer to the letter below, or visit our TAKE ACTION website at www.audubon.org, to instantly send a message to the U.S. Forest Service Forest Supervisor Scott Conroy and urge him to consider the Siskiyou Wild Rivers Conservation Alternative, rather than the proposed Forest Service “Preferred Alternative”! Remember, comments must be received no later than midnight January 20!

Your Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Mr. Scott Conroy
Forest Supervisor, U.S. Forest Service
ACT2
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Happy Camp, CA 96039
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fax: 530-493-1775

Dear Mr. Conroy:

The Siskiyou National Forest area in which the Biscuit Fire burned is tremendously important to me, as it is an incredible natural ecosystem that supports native birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Its large roadless areas, beautiful rivers, and renowned biological resources—and the recreation they support—should be protected as a National Conservation Area, instead of being subjected to massive, unwarranted post-fire logging.

I think that the “Preferred Alternative” in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is badly flawed because it: proposes extreme logging that would hurt forest recovery; senselessly encroaches on two of Oregon’s largest unprotected roadless forests, the North and South Kalmiopsis Roadless Areas; and calls for “logging research” that has no significant scientific purpose.

As you know, large burned trees aid natural recovery and serve critical roles in forest ecosystems for hundreds of years. Logging these trees, as called for in the “Preferred Alternative,” will damage sensitive soils, cause erosion, increase fire risk, and hurt recovery.

Of particular concern to me are Roadless Areas, Botanical Areas, Late Successional Reserves, and Wild & Scenic River corridors; these special places must not be logged. In addition, I urge you to plant nursery trees only in existing tree plantation areas. The extraordinary botanical diversity of the Siskiyou should not be corrupted by the creation of unnatural, fire-prone conifer tree farms.

Rather than the “Preferred Alternative”, please choose the Siskiyou Wild Rivers Conservation Alternative, which is consistent with my comments above. This alternative is similar to the existing Alternative 4, though without the “Learning Opportunities” research-logging component.

Thank you for accepting my comment.

Sincerely,

Your Name

1150 Connecticut Ave, NW #600
Washington, D.C. 20036





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