

October 24, 2011

Medford BLM

3040 Biddle Road

Medford Oregon 97504



To Whom it May Concern:

We are writing today about the "Pilot Thompson" Project.

As residents of the Applegate Valley, we were thrilled with the recent collaboration between the BLM and our local community in the "Middle Applegate" pilot restoration project. We were confident that old-growth forest in the pilot area was protected and that critical habitats for old-growth dependent species were retained. As a result of these modern and sensible forest management practices, the forest is much healthier and fuels reduction has significantly lessened the chance of crown fires.

What concerns us most about "Phase Two" in the Thompson Creek watershed is the possibility that the BLM may wish to construct new logging roads to accomplish its goals. As we understand it, there are sufficient roads in the Thompson Creek watershed; the density is already greater than the recommended 3.5 linear miles per square mile of land. Several of these roads are problematic, especially those near streams and in other ecologically sensitive areas.

We would hope that the BLM would stretch its vision by *removing* these problem roads in order to protect the critical salmon fishery in this watershed.

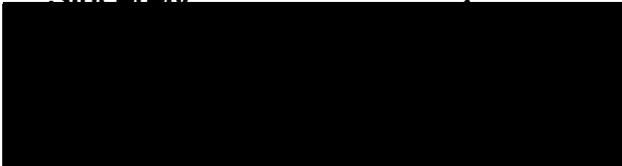
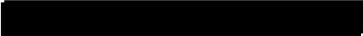
Perhaps just as important: the BLM must ensure that the larger trees are NOT targeted for logging. What made the Middle Applegate pilot restoration project successful was the emphasis on removing the smaller diameter trees that are crowding our forests, leaving the large trees and old forest habitat for the benefit of the northern spotted owl and other indicator species for forest health. By focusing on the thinning of small trees, the BLM will avoid potentially negative impacts as they continue to make our forests more resilient.

As you move forward with this restoration project, we encourage you to focus on those areas most in need of work. Those areas are tree plantations, the wild land interface areas and places where small trees are encroaching onto dry sites such as those with pine trees on ridge tops. Wetter fir forests are not a restoration priority in this landscape.

One last word. We strongly encourage you to use stewardship contracts which, as we understand, will help offset the cost of this important restoration work.

Thanks for the chance to provide these initial comments. Please keep us informed as the project proceeds.

Sincerely,

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