

Woodpecker Ridge
86070 Cougar Lane
Eugene, Oregon 97402
January 4, 2008

1629

U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Western Oregon Plan Revision
P.O.B. 2965
Portland, Oregon 97208

RECEIVED
JAN 07 2008

Dear Sirs:

During the process of revising Alternative 2 of the Western Oregon Plan Revision, please keep T. 19S. R.06W. Sec. 17 as a Late Successional Management Area. Approximately one quarter of this section is an old-growth grove, the Grandmothers of Wolf Creek, and nearby older forest, an area important for environmental education and recreation. Although the B.L.M. has turned this forest down three times so far as a formal Environmental Education Area (because an additional EEA would be too expensive, they have said) it is greatly valued by students, teachers, and residents in Crow and Eugene. In the Draft Environment Impact Statement of Alternative 2, this section, T. 19S. R.06W. Sec. 17, was included in a Late Successional Management Area, and I was happy and relieved to know that. However, I learned yesterday from B.L.M. staff that at this stage of the process, it is now in a Timber Management Area. However, T. 19S. R.06W. Sec. 17 is very close to the northern edge of L.S.M.A. 33 on the revised map of the B.L.M.'s Eugene District, and I ask please that it be included in this L.M.S.A.

This small, beautiful old-growth forest near Crow is one of the the oldest stands of old growth close to Eugene. It has

* 300 - 400-year-old Douglas firs, along with very old western red cedar and western hemlock

* younger trees of diverse ages

* diverse understory of shrubs, herbaceous plants, mosses, and fungi

* habitat suitable for spotted owl and marbled murrelet

* forest stretching from Wolf Creek up to Timber Ridge, a 600-foot elevation span that adds species and habitat diversity to the area.

I'm not an adjacent landowner. The Grandmothers grove on Wolf Creek is about 12 miles from my house and land. But like many Oregonians, there are places on B.L.M. land that are important in my life. And this particular forest has become important in the lives of many other people, too.

I work as an instructor at Lane Community College, teaching English as a Second Language to adult students. As part of a federal civics grant to teach immigrants their civic rights and responsibilities while they learn English, curriculum in several classes for the past three years has included environmental civics:

teaching immigrants to respect and protect the environment in their new home. A field trip to the old growth forest on Wolf Creek is an important part of class study of western Oregon nature and environmental protection. L.C.C. classes have visited the Wolf Creek forest once or twice a term during most terms of the past three years, with the most recent visit in November, 2007. A photograph is enclosed, of students stretching their arms around one of the old Douglas firs to measure its girth. In addition, students have learned to explain such elements as snags, nurse logs, vegetation layers and food chains of an old-growth forest to others. They served as forest guides for another group of E.S.L. students from L.C.C., and also began to introduce the forest to students from Crow High School. The Wolf Creek forest is becoming an educational element in the lives of more and more students, and other people as well.

I believe it is important to have an old-growth area for learning about the forest in the Coast Range and west of Eugene, in addition to the B.L.M.'s two formal Environmental Education areas east of I-5, which are not in the Coast Range. With gas prices rising and concerns about global warming, plus instructors' concerns about travel time and distance, it helps many educators and students to have an old-growth forest close to educational institutions in and near Crow/Lorane/Veneta and west Eugene, in a place on Wolf Creek Road that is easily accessible to everyone. I believe this forest is the closest publicly-owned old-growth forest in our area that is accessible from a paved road.

I hope this lovely old growth grove can remain as a Late Successional Management Area, for the continuing benefit of Lane County students now and for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours,

Kate Rogers Gessert