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From: trenor scott <tscott@uci.net>
Subject: **WOPR comments**
Date: January 10, 2008 11:25:36 AM PST
To: <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr>, www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr

In re: Problems with unseen defect in old growth.

I favor Alternative 2 Plus, since that is what the O&C Act directs, but no matter what alternative is chosen, it would appear that the timber sale program will be dealing with some old trees.

This often presents the challenge of determining unseen defect which, in a lump sum sale context, can cause real problems for both buyer and seller.

Personally I can recall two instances where this occurred. The first was on a BLM sale in the Molalla area - the Crown Z cruiser I was working with - was able to spot small upper log conks missed by the BLM sale cruisers. This threw the volume off to the extent that the value was below the minimum bid. And Crown did not bid on the sale even though it was in their backyard.

The other instance was not a BLM sale, but Forest Service in the Snoqualmie area of the Washington Cascades. It was a large high elevation sale with several miles of expensive KV road included. I think that Bellingham Pulp was the buyer, and when they got the road built, the timber - mostly hemlock and true firs - turned out to be so defective, even though it was a scaled sale, that it wouldn't pay for the road costs. Mason, Bruce and Girard was hired by the Pulp company to see if the USFS should have known about the high percentage of defect. MB&G found that an expert cruiser could have determined that it was not as good as it might have appeared. The suggested adjustments to Bellingham Pulp for the road cost deficits, were approved all the way from the District, S.O., R.O. to the Chief's office but were finally turned down by President Johnson's White House!

Therefore I suggest that when working with old timber a special effort be made to train, cultivate and retain, on the Districts, some really expert check cruisers who are familiar with local conditions.

In general I was very impressed with the WOPR document, although with such a complex, technical subject, out for comment by the general public, I wonder what sort of responses you might be getting!

Best regards,

Trenor Scott, MS Forestry 1962

From: trenor scott <tscott@uci.net>
Subject: **Comments on the August Newsletter questions**
Date: January 10, 2008 4:00:38 PM PST
To: <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr>



In re: The page 3 questions - August Newsletter.

The questions relating to fire resiliency, Northern Spotted Owls and structurally complex forests would seem to be interconnected to the extent that some form of unevenaged forest management - seed tree or shelterwood type of cutting - might achieve those results - since older/larger D.fir and ponderosa pine tend to be more able to survive ground fires.

However on the other side of these issues are the questions of whether the O&C Act would really mandate "structurally complex forests" if that results in reduced harvest levels. And the recent Supreme Court decision in National Association of Home Builders v. Defenders of Wildlife - 06-340, may have rearranged priorities in NSO protection on O&C lands. It would appear that the O&C Act, due its specific directions, may take priority over the more general nature of the Endangered Species Act.

It may be time to use some other methods of NSO encouragement, such as are suggested in the Endangered Species Committee procedures, which include: "live propagation, transplantation, and habitat acquisition and improvement...." (page 16). David Siddon, Sr., of Wildlife Images in Grants Pass once told me that owls were quite easy to raise. If it works for eagles and condors, maybe it is time to try it with Northern spotted Owls. The current approach, if one were to factor the Congressional payments to the O&C Counties, will make the Northern Spotted Owl the most expensive bird in history.

As to fire resiliency - it has been my observation after 40 years in Josephine County, and having been involved in wildland firefighting in Idaho and Montana in the past, that this area - in the peak of the fire season - needs rapid and effective suppression action.

We are indeed fortunate to have the tanker base in Medford.

Fire can be a useful tool but not in July, August and September! And the opportunities for successful and safe broadcast burning in the spring and fall are rather limited.

Best regards,

Trenor Scott, MS Forestry 1962

Comments for the WOPR - Medford District

January 9, 2008

We are concerned about a proposal to create a new wilderness area near Galice which could potentially increase the risk of wildfire.

Attached are a photo and a map that may help to illustrate what we have observed over the years we have lived at the east end of the Rogue River canyon - on Buckhorn Mountain.

On summer afternoons there is a regular and strong upcanyon wind - even when the usual summer inversion pretty much suppresses other surface winds in the valley.

Even though the location of the tree (indicated by the circle on the aerial photo) is about a mile south of the river in the Hog Creek/Hellgate area and at the mouth of the canyon, the picture shows the bending top and upper limbs (see arrows) that indicate a strong breeze

This is a natural condition but combined with the proposal to create a wilderness area downriver from Galice could have the effect of making response time much slower and access more difficult for fire suppression in the canyon area if road construction is restricted in the difficult terrain in areas back from the river.

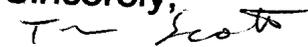
And if a fire got loose lower in the canyon, the upcanyon wind could very easily cause spot fires that could threaten Galice and even out into the Merlin valley.

I certainly hope that considering the increased risks due to delayed response and MIST constraints would be a big factor in any future EIS process, and I believe that some remote wind sampling points along the canyon would be a prudent way to assess the risk.

What kept the Biscuit Fire from reaching the river in '02 was a prevailing moderate northerly - as shown on visible satellite images of that period - but had it reached the canyon - and the canyon winds - the fire would have been difficult if not impossible to stop.

So I hope these potential fire hazards are studied before any instant wilderness or roadless classification is seriously considered.

Sincerely,



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