

Relying on knowledge passed down from six generations of family experience in northeast Oregon, I find the latest iteration of a forest plan revision to be at the least, insulting and at the possibly worst, extremely unprofessional and negligent of your duties as stewards of our national treasures: our national forests.

I'm well aware that those are pretty strong words, but after 45+ years of total commitment on my part to engage with federal agencies in the expectation that my investment would eventually produce positive results, the disingenuous so far unveiled re the forest plan revision, especially the Clark's segment of that effort, comes off as a deliberate attempt to "snow" us members of the public, burying us in superfluous, blatantly erroneous information that ignores the years of research that's been done to improve humans' understanding of a forest and how it functions.

Following are some of the reasons why I find your latest effort so insulting:

1. In spite of a six-year, mostly volunteer effort (the only people getting paid were the agency folks), to create a management plan for the Pine District, which we were assured – by the Forest Supervisor – would then be adopted as a "model" to be used by other Districts in Region Six in their future management of District forests. For the past 29 years (since the MS20/21 or Consensus Management Plan) was completed [in spite of the FS's lame excuse, after the Plan was completed, that FACA rules prevented him from having Pine District designated a model district, or even offered as an amendment to the Forest Plan]. Us "publics" were secretly(?) informed that the MS20/21 strategy became the guide by which other Forests were creating their own management plans.

The latest Forest Service effort, for anyone familiar with the history of management plans of the WW National Forest, especially someone who was a participant in the Consensus Process of 1988-1994, this latest attempt at a revision treats our nearly 30-year-old effort as if it never happened. Those thousands of hours – and miles of highway between Halfway and Baker City driven – are being ignored, wiped from the record! And those who've engineered the latest example of forest plan revision seem to think that no one would notice.

2. Another obvious flaw in the latest revision, one which is immediately apparent to anyone who keeps up with the latest research and developments in regard to creating more resilient forests, is the lack of information consulted in the ongoing struggle to combat fire and its effects on and involvement in creating fire-resistant forests. In addition to the obvious ignoring of that recent information – showing that research is supporting the suspicion that logging as a tool for creating fire-resistant landscapes is one of the worst tools available; that logging our forests to reduce the risk of catastrophic fires is only increasing that risk, especially when the logging is focused on "harvesting" old growth and larger trees!
3. While reading some of the information available re this plan revision, I've noticed what I consider to be the fatal flaw: there's very little even mentioned about the largest challenge life on this planet has ever faced, that of global warming and the climate change that results. Where have you folks been for the past 50 years, even the past 20 years? Climate change simply has to be the foremost issue to be addressed in all future planning. We've run out of time and there are

no more “silver bullets” we can pull out of our gun belts to save us. We – all of us – ignore the increasingly dire signals at our – and all future generations of life – peril. All future decisions re our national forests must have, as a central, all-important focus the question: How can we manage our forests to maximize the ways to stop global warming/climate change?

Thanks for the opportunity to offer these comments. I look forward to more opportunities in the future to offer input.

Sincerely,

Mike Higgins

