

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/20/2024 4:00:00 AM

First name: Elizabeth

Last name: Byrd

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have been living on the Central Oregon coast for about seven years, in the town of Yachats in Lincoln county. During that time I have roved far and wide through some of the magnificent forests we are fortunate to have here in the Siuslaw National Forest. This forest is unusual and special in its amazing growth and carbon sequestering potential. The section I live close to is the old Yachats Purchase Unit, also known as the Blodgett Tract. It was almost completely logged out by the mid 1930s and was a scene of total destruction. Giant slashpiles dotted the landscape, few trees were left. In 1936 a huge fire swept through the Blodgett Tract as the combination of the ground drying out due to logging, the unusual high temperatures (close to 100 F) for many days and a strong wind from the east created the perfect conditions for a devastating forest fire. In the mid 1940s the area was replanted by conscientious objectors. Now the forest has recovered to a large degree. It took about 80 years for the forest to come back, and it did come back because it was mostly left alone. The canopy has closed, groundcover is present, and there is so much life in the forest, berries, all kinds of fungi, some choice edibles, others medicinal, others just fascinating, rare plants such as the mycotrophic Hemitomes Congestum (Gnome Plant), Monotropa Uniflora (Ghost Pipe), birds such as Grey Jays, Woodpeckers, Pacific Wren, Coopers Hawks, animals Elk, deer, black bear. This forest is sequestering carbon, producing oxygen and providing habitat and shelter for all the living things listed above. It also provides some livelihood to salal pickers and other foragers.

In another beautiful area to the east, I include here a picture off East Buck Creek Rd, FR 3705 (Location Latitude:44.296803 Longitude:-123.901558) where magnificent large Doug Firs run along the ridge tops and down into the steep ravines. This tree measured 168" circumference, or about 53" in diameter. It was not alone, there were many many trees of this size as well as huge Western Red Cedars and some Hemlock.

Since the Siuslaw is a moist coastal forest, I believe it should not be treated like the dry east side forests. The fire risk here occurs when the canopy is opened up and the ground dries out. I have seen drastic thinning projects close to here that have totally altered the moist forest to be dry and vulnerable to fire and invasive weeds.

It would be great to see a plan recognizing the unique nature of this wet coastal forest. In most cases, doing nothing will allow the mature and old growth forests to develop and recover on their own.

Thank you for all that you do to keep our old and mature growth forests intact and growing. We rely on USFS to protect our valuable remaining forests because large timber corporations and REITs have ever shortening growth and harvest cycles, since they are concerned only with making money and reporting profits to their shareholders.

ATTACHED: Image of a tree referenced in comment above.