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First name: Courtney

Last name: Claar

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Elsysia Retzlaff,

I am writing to comment on the commercial timber sale proposed for the Ochoco National Forest Mill Creek Wilderness Area. Although the project is being referred to as a "dry forest restoration" effort, the targeted area is not in need of mature growth logging. In fact, removing mature growth from the wilderness area will make the forest more vulnerable to fires, since mature trees are more resistant to fires.

This area has remained off-limits to logging for ecologically vital reasons. Commercial logging and new road construction is not restoration. The Forest Service should pursue ecologically sound restoration without destructive timber sales and road construction. True restoration of this tract would include active riparian restoration, small tree non-commercial thinning where needed, and prescribed burning only in the dry Ponderosa pine or juniper-dominant forest types.

It is important to distinguish between these different types of forest, since diverse forest conditions create important habitat niches that support biodiversity. The entire Mill Creek area is not a single "dry forest". A large variety of wildlife rely on the diverse habitats found in the ecosystems within this proposed area, many of which are protected species.

I am strongly opposed to any logging of live trees or snags ≥ 21 " dbh and large down wood removal. Large wood structure is needed for wildlife habitat; erosion control; carbon storage; nutrient cycling in soils; and recreational natural aesthetic values. For these reasons, I implore you to support an alternative plan that prohibits commercial logging and new road development and preserves this forest area from devastation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Courtney B. Claar, BA