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Comments: As a former resident of southwest Oregon, I urge you to withdraw your idea for misnamed, post-fire 'salvage logging' in the headwaters of the Salmon River Watershed. This latest iteration in an unhappily indefinite series of 'salvage logging' projects is bound to inflict just as much damage as prior comparable projects. The reality of post-fire ecology, and the gross impropriety of these projects, has been well understood to the Forest Service for decades, yet has apparently yet to influence the agency's actual decisions.

The designation of 'Late Successional Reserve' for the Taylor Creek area was not meant to be discarded upon occurrence of a fire. The proposed road construction and clearcutting on steep slopes will grossly exacerbate and transmute the effect of the fire from a disturbance event within historical ranges of variation, into a catastrophic event that sterilizes and strips the land of its capacity to regenerate. The already fragile soils would be lacerated, destabilized, and primed to wash downstream, smothering the Salmon River and leaving the land a desiccated, dusty moonscape. This brutally unethical and scientifically informed treatment of the Orleans Inventoried Roadless Area up to the boundary of the Trinity-Alps Wilderness adds a poignant social insult to this ecological injury.

The conceptual and ideological framework around 'salvage logging' is antiquated and should no longer influence Forest Service decisions. First, it implies that all trees are intended or destined to be 'harvested' at some point, and that the Forest Service must 'capture' this value before it is lost to the elements and to decomposers. Such an implication would blatantly contradict the letter and spirit of the Forest Service charter. Second, this statement ignores the immense value of the remaining 'dead, dying, and/or damaged trees' for the forest's regeneration. These are critical as reservoirs for moisture, nutrients, and recolonizing animals. In designating entire stands of trees for "salvage" logging, a term that negates these ecological values by "salvaging" monetary value as the only extant one, the Forest Service confuses and undermines the public understanding of forest ecology that it attempts to communicate elsewhere.

The Forest Service should have learned from its own studies that post-fire forest regeneration is only impaired by post-fire 'salvage' logging. If it does not, a future awaits of an endless dystopian serialized drama of summer fires amid a heating climate, seconded by 'salvage;' projects that kneecap the land and leave a spreading, permanent quilt of barrens and scrubland. Forest Service could instead allow the River Complex fire to set a demonstrative model of the capacity for intact old-growth forests to regenerate without intervention. The Forest Service should confine any post-fire removal of dead trees to where there is an imminent, actual risk to human safety, and any deliberate tree planting should emulate normal primary forest succession, not establish plantations to better suit the appetites of timber companies.