

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/8/2024 6:33:28 AM

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Comments: RE: the Siuslaw Integrated Invasive Species Project I notice in many of the photographs of areas with thriving "invasives" that they are located on edges of forest stands or along roads. The photos reveal that sunlight and 'disturbed ground' are a common denominator. How does ground become "disturbed in a forest remotely located? Is it by hikers or a mountain bike or even a cadre of mountain bikers riding by? Or is it by heavy machinery used to log trees and knock down understory, log trucks turning around on a small spur at the end of the road? No one cleaned mud from their boots nor from tires or tracked machines. Where do you find invasive plants growing? Where you and your industrial logger friends disturb a standing forest ecosystem disturbing habitat for species who play a role in a balanced system. With every scheduled "thinning" and what a joyous term you use to describe what is a messy, invasive, destructive process of removing not the skinny tall small -crowned trees so that the older ones have room to expand but you remove the mature trees (value and profit comes first after all when you see forests as commodities...) and leave the skinny destabilized trees that look like they've been through a war.

And what happens next? Sunlight finally penetrates to the forest floor and dries out canopies, trunks and what little remains of the understory. Wind blows through making sure the survivors are well dried out as well as the slash that is left behind. Plantation crowding and dried out clear cut locations and thinned stands burn like a stand of fire works given a hot easterly wind and low humidity.

You mention PREVENTION! What a concept! What seems like a no brainer to me is to suggest you stop planning commercial or any other form of thinning unless it's a plantation with trees competing with their neighbors for moisture, sunlight and nourishment. Timber managers are so very concerned about "competition" with hardwoods, grasses or other plants that act as ground cover post clear cut, sheltering the top soil from baking in the summer sun and keeping microbiome and fungi alive at least until the spraying kills those essential organisms. Now is a very important time to leave mature, diverse, closed canopied stands of the Siuslaw standing and PROTECTED from harm as they are the most effective, efficient, patient allies humanity has in this time of climate disruption and severe storms, sea level rise, draught, water competition, and increasing species heading toward extinction.

So why is it you are so eager to thin and open up the canopy of this National Forest? Surely you're familiar with the specific needs of marbled murrelet chicks for old growth tree branches on which to stand/grow and you might even know that a closed canopy reduces corvid ability to enter the deep forest to eat the vulnerable chick. I care that these chicks are safe, do you care? I'm sure the parent birds would appreciate humans protecting them and their young.

It was mentioned that there are "partnership opportunities you might miss and I am curious who that might be and doing what together? Is it your industrial timber cutting friends? Do you recall the teaching that if you consult with a surgeon they are likely to recommend a surgical process for your healing, and that may not be the only choice there is? If you have a hammer everything looks like a nail? Does the USFS envy the use of tools that seem easier to use - I notice that in nearly all the descriptions of your tools for dealing with invasive plants "herbicides" are named first as if they were more important or glamorous instead of being a last ditch option and a toxic poison that causes harm. Have you read Jim Furnish' autobiography that explains how he came to understand the experiences of rural Oregonians who were being sprayed by your agency with assurances this is as "safe as salt?" In the 70's it was Agent Orange that congress had decreed as "too harmful" to be used in the Vietnam War which left storage areas full of barrels of toxic chemicals without a market. OSU's Forestry staff imported barrels from an Air Force Base (illegally) and those living ones in Five Rivers and beyond became the guinea pigs who were sprayed repeatedly making people sick, hemorrhage, skin eruptions, bloody diarrhea in

children, pet and farm animals dying along with gardens, surface water sources polluted. Dead wildlife, aborted fawns and women's babies, and anencephalic (without a brain) babies were born here in the county - we were NIH's "Hot spot" for birth defects. The people sued the federal government and won with 1/2 of Agent Orange (2,4,5,T) being removed from the market. EPA also was sued for unprofessional live animal studies on which "safety" of toxins were to be based. Today's products remain toxic, cause harm of various kinds in living beings - cancer, endocrine (hormonal) disruptions and metabolic dysregulation (diabetes and obesity), neurologic degenerative diseases - Parkinson's, Frontal lobe dementias, ALS (Lou Gehrig Disease), ADHD and ADD are just a few. There is no shortage of peer reviewed studies done internationally and some unbiased studies in the US that document toxic chemicals in the food chain from stream clams to food animals and crops that are treated with toxic chemicals. A review of chronic illness in ALL ages of people is an indicator that there is something very wrong in our diet and food system and farming practices. We need to challenge all users of pesticides to revert to non-chemical means of accomplishing brush control - hire laborers, engage public volunteers or neighborhood teams. Jim Furnish as he was promoted to national leadership of USFS, put policy in place to use non-chemical means of caring for National Forest Lands. I commend the USFS for developing so many options and strategies feeling like you were leading the way on the "High Road" ethically for the benefit of humans but also our wildlife, aquatic species, food animals, water protection and healthy understory.

Ah, watersheds and clean abundant source water that by state statute ODF is supposed to enforce. Truly the fox inside the hen house offering Roundup shakes or tea for the hens. * Julia Jones, OSU HJ Lawrence forest research 2016 compared in a single creek watershed with 3 distinct branches, one plot of forest was control, one was combo burning/thinning, the last was clear cut. Parcels 2 and 3 had 50% less stream flow in dry season than the intact forest. Intact standing forest in a watershed is essential for robust quantities and quality of water to be used by a neighborhood or municipal water system.

* OSU research from ecology dept. did a study measuring stream flow on a replanted 50 year old forest to assess if the watershed was working 50 years after the clear cut disturbance. It was still diminished at 50 years.

Waldport's municipal source water is from Weist and South Weist creeks with Eckman Creek a back up but of poorer quality as the creek runs through actively logged and sprayed private timber land, and is said to be "warmer" with more sediment in the water. The source of these creeks is on Siuslaw NF land to the east of Mt. Eckman and crosses BLM land before flowing across Weyerhaeuser property known as "Pankey Pit." just east of Eckman Lake road. South Weist and Eckman Creeks flow from higher country on Siuslaw NF. Intakes are on BLM and Siuslaw land and I would assume those agencies are aware that Weist and So. Weist are source water for the city of Waldport. Weyerhaeuser hurried to cut 80-90% grade lands on Mt. Eckman last winter, and denuded all but the buffers around feeder creeks. Siuslaw NF has "thinned" a huge chunk of land off NF 53 with the road end at the riparian buffer of South Weist Creek. I cannot understand WHY Siuslaw would thin right up to South Weist Creek in a swath that moves toward the riparian buffers of the confluence of Weist and South Weist Creeks. This seems damaging to the water supply of Waldport given the research of harms to watersheds and this was done recently, amidst the annual drought and active fire season even here on the coast. What were decision makers THINKING? Or are they unaware or don't give a damn? Weyerhaeuser plans to spray the denuded Mt. Eckman between now and year's end. I call that insult to injury and certainly disrespectful of the health and safety of the people of Waldport. There are other homes along Hwy 34 to the NE of Mt. Eckman whose domestic water is surface water from small creeks flowing off Mt. Eckman. No one involved seems to give a damn about private water systems as city manager put it, "it's outside the city limits." It's time Siuslaw tracked Watersheds used by humans and making sure that they are undisturbed, working well to provide water for stream health, aquatic species needs, wildlife watering holes, and human use.

Conclusions:

STOP THINNING and opening up the forest to encroachment of invasives and drying out the land, raising fire hazard.

If you're budget is not fully funded for keeping the lights on or making payroll, for heaven's sake get in the faces of the law makers who can fund your programs, retain staff and STOP THINNING. Let these standing forests do

he work they do daily - hold water and release it in dry season, making oxygen and nutrients for microbiome and fungi to keep the forest healthy and sequestering carbon.

Use the tools you have to respond to invasives, monitor progress, perhaps engage citizen teams to take on a chunk of forest as people do for roadside trash. Leave WILDERNESS, Wild Rivers chemical free. Shut down roads instead of the continuous road building loggers seem to love to do.

Remember as you read our comments that we the People own the public lands and your role is to be Steward/Protectors not to make money off the tree harvesting!

For everyone's sake, STOP SPRAYING toxins by ground or by drone or helicopter. Mow roadsides to keep fire ladder fuels down. Give staff/volunteers protective clothing/masks when applying toxic chemicals.

Model for your industrial logging peers what forest stewardship looks like and how 'doing the right thing' like not adding any further chemicals into the environment and by teaching the public to recognize invasives and how to safely pull and disable them. FYI: I am submitting this at 11:30pm PDT on 8/7/2024