

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/19/2026 4:21:08 AM

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Comments: I am a retired biologist concerned about the lack of public input allowed by the shortened comment period and the proposed excessive size of the USFS salvage logging project for the 2026 Akawa Wildfire near Sisters, Oregon.

The forest habitat in the Eastern Cascades ecosystem has many species on the Oregon Species of Conservation Concern. Several are dependent on wildfire as they use cavities and insect larvae in trees that remain, or move into dead trees after a wildfire. This includes many local woodpecker species, a few owl species, and the western and mountain bluebird. These species of conservation concern are adapted to utilizing this post-fire habitat. Each acre of land should retain the minimum number of trees necessary for sustaining habitat for these species of conservation concern, and trees of suitable diameters for those species should be retained. Prescriptions for numbers and sizes of trees to retain should be based on habitat criteria already published by USFS wildlife research scientists.

Lightening strike caused wildfire is a natural process of the eastern Cascades ecosystem. Forests have evolved to regenerate quickly. Massive amounts of timber harvest would contribute to the aridification of the Akawa landscape as well as adjacent landscapes, slowing the natural regenerative process and perhaps even removing trees which would eventually recover from the burn if left standing. Keeping burned trees and their root and fungal mycelium systems present is important to hold moisture and provide habitat for establishment of new growth, supporting the future stages of regrowth in the post-fire forest.

Why is the USFS skipping NEPA and NFMPA and hurrying forward to push through an unnecessary logging project?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Gail Sabbadini

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