

Cortney Barber



Gary Larsen
Forest Supervisor
Mt. Hood National Forest
16400 Champion Way
Sandy, OR 97055
(503) 668-1700

December 3, 2002

Dear Gary Larsen:

I am writing this letter out of concern for Mt. Hood National Forest. I am a student attending Portland State University. I have lived in Oregon for twenty-one years and feel that I have spent a significant amount of time in the Northwest's forests. However, I am specifically writing about Mt. Hood and the issue of public logging within this letter. In the last two months, I have spent many hours in the Upper Timber sale. Along with a few others, I viewed the trees, wildlife, streams, and forest bed that will be dramatically affected by logging in this area. I have many concerns about the proposed actions.

The first unit I visited was Unit #5. I was shocked to see that a road is planned to be built right through the healthiest part of the forest. By viewing the forest, it is apparent that some areas are more nourished and healthy because of the grounded riparian area. These beautiful, moist areas of the forest that contain many nurse logs and lichen will be completely obliterated if the road is built through that area. The nurse logs and lichen is a natural sign of healthy forests. As I moved away from the stream, the lichen and nurse logs became very scarce. This natural and vital necessity will be destroyed when the road is built causing the forest to suffer.

Another concern in this unit is the fact that it lies right next to an old cut, in which at least 50% was thinned from the canopy. The Upper EA does not take this into consideration when speculating on forest health issues. However, this is a major factor if acres all around the proposed cut are already cut. This greatly affects wildlife homes and many other issues such as rising stream temperatures with fewer canopies. The canopy of Unit #5 is not dense as it is. Sunlight could be seen streaming through the trees and onto the ground. Plants are growing vivaciously because of this sunlight. If the canopy was too thick and causing the forest to lack nourishment, the reason for logging the land, then the sunlight would not be shining through.

Unit #5 lies on a steep hill. This could lead to many problems after the logging occurs. The blowdown potential for the trees is great. It is obvious that many large trees are going to be cut while smaller ones are marked to leave. Many of the large trees are crucial protection for the smaller trees that will most likely blow down when this protection is lost. Though the proposed logging may appear to only reduce the canopy by a small amount, this loss will rise greatly when the blowdown factor is added into the number of cut trees. If fertilizer is used to regenerate the land, the steep hill will cause it to pour into the stream at the bottom of the hill. This will cause harmful chemicals to be added to the water causing harm to wild species and humans.

There are also concerns for Unit #1. The highest concern for this area was the fact that the canopy as it is now, before logging, is not dense at all. The forest floor contains many rhododendron bushes, while trees are somewhat scarce. If logging were to occur, it would produce a very thin canopy in an already thin canopy unit. With this, no wildlife would be able to survive and forest life would suffer. This sale also touches the Boyer Timber Sale, causing the overall acreage of forest canopy to be extremely low.

Within this unit, there are two healthy, seasonal runoff areas and a small creek at the end of a hill. The hill that lies above the creek is extremely steep, about 60-85 degrees. This extremely steep slope, that contains many trees that are planned to be logged, is a great risk factor. Trees and sediment will fall into the stream and other trees will later blowdown, also causing damage to stream. I was shocked to see that there would even be logging on such a steep slope.

Unit #3 is the unit that I have fallen most in love with. It contains beautiful old growth trees, green plants, moist surroundings, and a small creek. Just by looking at it, my breath is taken away by its beauty. Yet, my stomach grows sick, knowing that logging is being planned for this natural, gorgeous site. This unit is very moist and the trees show signs of past fires. The old trees, though they were burned years ago, are still strongly standing, protecting the rest of the forest. There is a considerable amount of moss in this unit.

Again, there is inevitable blowdown potential in this unit. The creek is at the bottom of a steep slope. There is a large clear cut right above the unit and two roads surrounding the unit. This forest is remarkable for withstanding the pressures around it and seems to be maintaining healthiness on its own. Logging will only interfere and ruin this healthiness.

While hiking within Unit #1, it was apparent that the map that was given to us, was not right. The acreage is larger and follows different paths than what the map suggested. This problem was also confronted in Unit #3. After obtaining a new map, it is clear that the units are now combined and now touch one another. Unit #6 and Unit #1 now connect, though there was a rather large space between them in the first map. While the EA reports that 194 acres within the Matrix and 35 acres within the Riparian Reserves will be logged, there must be more to be reported and assessed if the map now contains more land. This issue needs to be addressed immediately concerning this sale. Added acreage significantly affects the forest and its life.

There are many other issues that are not addressed in this letter, but are important concerning this sale. These issues hold true for the Upper Sale as well as most others on Mt. Hood. They include that logging will cause poor water quality, lower wildlife habitats, harmful effects from road construction, higher stream temperatures, and less scenic quality.

I believe that all logging on public lands on Mt. Hood National Forest should be stopped. Just from one sale, it is clear that logging does not produce good effects on the forests, or the people who suffer economically and physically from poor air and water, and should therefore be stopped. I urge you and others to address these important issues with a mind that is conscious of all of the cumulative effects for our and future generations. I urge you and others to look at these issues as a human that would not be alive if not for nature, not as a human trying to combat and gain from nature. Our forests provide us with life of numerous species while enriching our lives as humans. It is a terrible mistake to destroy these natural wonders. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Cortney Barber