Mill Creek Timber Sale

Directions: Take I-84 East out of Portland - Exit at exit #64: Highway 35, White Salmon and Gov’t Camp - Turn Right, twice, off the exit, following signs for Hwy. 35 South, Gov’t Camp & Mt. Hood – In 0.1 mile, go straight through the 4-way stop, still following Hwy. 35 South - Follow Hwy 35 for 10 miles (note that at 9 miles is a scenic viewpoint turnout on the right (west) side of the road, which makes a good regrouping spot) – at the top of the hill, look for “Pine Mont Rd” on the left (east) – Pine Mountain Road is Forest Road 17 (1700) – The Long Prairie junctions of roads 1700, 1710 and 1711 are about 8 miles up road 17, at which point you are in the sale area.

The stats:
- Total acres: 1,436
- Commercial Thin: 704 acres
- Partial Overstory Removal: 466 acres
- Regeneration: 35 acres
- Improvement Cut: 231 acres
- .5 mile road construction: 1.25 mile road reconstruction
- 20.5 miles of road closure: Native plant restoration in 263 acres of grassland and meadow
- Pre-commercial thin: 70 acres of riparian reserves
- Pre-commercial thin: 444 acres

Scoping comments should be aimed at raising issues and questions for the Forest Service to address in the Environmental Assessment. Letters in your own words are most effective. If you have visited the area, this is even more effective – make sure to mention it and use site-specific examples. Suggested points to make in your comment letter:

1) One stated reason for the timber sale is to reduce Douglas Fir Dwarf Mistletoe, however past thinnings have failed to affect mistletoe presence. Also, mistletoe infected trees are coveted by Spotted Owls because they make good nesting sites. Will only mistletoe infected trees be removed from the sale area?
2) The meadow enhancement project sounds good, but once it is completed, will grazing in this area be stopped? If not, what is the point of spending money and resources on meadow enhancement?
3) There is already substantial blowdown associated with past logging in the area. More logging will only increase this problem.
4) The extensive road closures are a good start to addressing the high road density in the area, but road closures are not enough. There is evidence throughout the planning area of closed roads being used by motor vehicles. To stop vehicle use, roads should obliterated.
5) Reopening roads and building new roads in this highly roaded area is inexcusable. Even if these roads are later closed they will contribute to sedimentation and motor vehicle abuse in the area.
6) Trail 451 is not on the map sent out with the scoping letter. This is a significant omission. If more logging takes place along trail 451, it will essentially be yet another non-motorized recreational opportunity ruined.
7) Although many roads are proposed for closure, some are not. There are even some roads not proposed for closure that enter riparian areas. Close and obliterate more roads.
8) Do not log old growth.
9) Much of the existing deer and elk thermal cover in the area has been logged. The remaining deer and elk winter range area is already very patchy. Logging will likely remove any effective winter protection for the deer and elk.
10) Do not do any soil disturbing activities in riparian areas.
11) The scoping letter is unclear about about what is being planned in the A7 Special Old Growth area. This area should not be logged.
12) There is no justification for regeneration logging (looks like a clearcut to you & me).
13) Pre-commercial (non-commercial) thinning should result in mixed spacing and a variety of species. The goal should be to enhance biodiversity, not to enhance future timber harvest.
14) Most of the stated reasons for this timber sale relate to forest health, yet the logging and road-building proposed to treat the problems sound more harmful than any supposed benefit.

Comments are due December 15. Send comments to:
Kim Titus, Hood River Ranger District, 6780 Highway 35, Mt. Hood/Parkdale, OR 97041

Mill Creek information and letter writing meeting Wednesday, December 12 @ 7:00-8:30 pm at Billy Ray’s Neighborhood Dive, 2216 NE MLK (Parking off of NE Thompson), upstairs.

Bark: 503-331-0374, Bark@SpiritOne.com, www.Bark-out.org