By Joseph Vaile

New information from the 2002 fire season reveals that young growth and tree plantations—often the result of past clear-cutting—burn hottest of any forest vegetation. These tree plantations also increased the spread of crowning forest fire into adjacent stands of native forest. Older forests, on the other hand, tended to burn cooler. In addition to protecting communities from severe fire, we need to stop creating more tree farms and protect older trees.

Trends From the 2002 Fire Season:

Tree Farms Burn

Older Forests Cool

...continued
The community protection zone (CPZ)—a 1/2-mile buffer around a community—is top priority to start reducing fuels to protect people and homes. If we want to protect the backcountry native forests from unnatural fire, the tree farms are the first place to look. These are the thickest, most fire prone forests. Many tree farms are planted very dense, making them more inclined to burn severe. Because they are younger forests, the trees have not developed the thick bark that old-growth trees have.

The Timbered Rock Fire burned through 27,000 acres in the Elk Creek Watershed in the Upper Rogue River drainage. A damage appraisal report by the Oregon Department of Forestry found that of the forests 200 years and older that burned, only 10% burned high intensity. But 100% of the tree-farms less than 35 years burned so intense all the trees died.

One thing that the Biscuit fire taught us is that under the right conditions, fire will burn any type of vegetation. However, on the Medford BLM land in the Biscuit Fire perimeter, 81% of plantations, but only 33% of forested stands in general, experienced moderate to high burn severity, according to BLM. Of the over 400,000 acres that burned on the Siskiyou National Forest, the same is true. The older the forest was, the lower the burn severity that occurred.

On the Umpqua National Forest, two fires were evaluated for their effect on the forest. Here are some excerpts from the March 2003 Wildfire Effects Evaluation Project by the Umpqua NF:

“Plantations had a tendency to increase the rate of fire spread and increased the overall area of stand-replacement fire effects by spreading to neighboring stands.” Page 4.

“Fire burned most plantations with high intensity and spread rapidly through the canopy of these young stands. Plantation mortality is disproportionately high compared to the total area that plantations occupied within the fire perimeter.” Page 4.

KS WILD ACTION UPDATE!!!

MOVING AHEAD WITH SUIT TO STOP ILLEGAL PICKETT SNAKE TIMBER SALE!

KS Wild, along with the Siskiyou Regional Education Project, ONRC and Headwaters, are in the middle of litigation against the Medford Bureau of Land Management over its proposed Pickett Snake timber sale. Located along the Wild and Scenic Rogue River, the timber sale would cut 1000 acres of some of the last remaining old growth in the area. The lawsuit is in front of Judge Cooney, from Medford, and Plaintiffs expect a ruling on the case in early summer. Some good news: the BLM agreed not to do any logging on the sale until the case is decided.
Creating Economical Solutions for Forest Restoration: Small-Diameter Poles and the Economizer
By Dave Levine

There are many challenges in our commitment to restoring both public and private forests in the Klamath-Siskiyou Ecoregion. One that receives a lot of attention is the attempt to balance the ecology and economics of utilizing materials removed in the course of thinning previously managed, young stands on private lands near communities. There are thousands of acres of forest lands in private ownership that have been heavily managed for decades—high-graded, clearcut, converted to pasture and then allowed to revert to forest, while being fire-suppressed. Many of these areas would benefit from ecologically motivated thinning: removing some of the small and overcrowded brush and trees to protect nearby homes and communities from high intensity fire.

The Lomakatsi Restoration Project, a nonprofit group based in Ashland, has developed a strong set of ecological principles to guide this work—setting an example on private lands—and directing energy and resources where they are most needed, in the community protection zone. Unfortunately, fuel reduction projects on public lands are often commercially motivated and usually run contrary to these principles. Furthermore, Forest Service and BLM projects are generally located miles away from homes and communities. However, if hazardous fuels treatments (“hazardous fuels” are defined as brush, shrubs, and thickets of saplings) are properly done, it can bring our public forests back to a more healthy, natural state. It will also allow us to use fire as a management tool—the eventual goal.

This type of management tends to be labor-intensive. In addition to thinning saplings and brush, low-hanging dead branches (“ladder fuels”) often need to be removed. The resulting slash is piled and burned, or at least chipped or lopped and scattered when appropriate. And any usable byproducts, such as firewood or small poles, are often removed from the site. Costs can reach $800-$1,000 an acre, which brings us to the question: Is there a way to realize some return from the byproducts of restoration?

Lomakatsi has been working to answer this important question, and recently completed a demonstration project in the Applegate Valley, funded by a grant from the National Fire Plan. The project had two goals—to train new crew members in the principles of ecologically based fuels reduction, and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Economizer, a small-pole milling machine.

The trailer-mounted Economizer is a gas-powered mill that can be set up in any location. Poles are fed in one side, and the processed boards emerge from the other side. Four chipper heads square up the log, and then it passes through one or more circular saw blades that slice it into boards. The number of blades and spacing between them can be adjusted, producing lumber from 1” to 2” thick. It will process poles from 3”-10” in diameter, producing lumber from 1x2’s to 2x6’s. The machine, manufactured by Canadian Mill Systems in British Columbia, is owned by the Watershed Restoration Council in Hayfork, California. It can produce approximately 8,000 board feet of lumber per day—about enough for one house.

The Economizer was set up at my home in Williams. The poles to feed the mill were cut from an area of approximately 3 acres that is covered with a dense stand of Ponderosa pines. Growing on a former hayfield, the site was a thicket until two years ago, when I began thinning and removing ladder fuels. Most of the material removed in this initial round of thinning was chipped, since it was too small to be “economized”. This year, the Lomakatsi crew was able to focus their efforts on trees that were the perfect size for the Economizer. More than 600 poles 8’ to 12’ long were sorted and ready when the Economizer arrived. At the end of the day, more than 4,000 board feet of lumber was stacked and stickered, ready to air-dry for a year before being turned into trim, paneling, and shelving.

The thinning operation reduced fuels in this dense stand next to my house. All the large, healthy trees have been left with more space around them, the more fire resistant components of the forest. This helped create a defensible space adjacent to my house.

One area was underburned to reduce the amount of pine duff, then seeded with native grasses and wildflowers. The results of these techniques will be more apparent in a year or two, but the more open conditions provide immediate benefits in terms of reduced fuel loading and fire hazard. This is an important outcome not only for myself as the landowner, but for the entire neighborhood, by providing a defensible space that can slow the spread of wildfire.

Overall, the demonstration project was a great success. Improved forest health and fire safety, a source of sustainably produced building materials, and the potential for stable rural employment opportunities—all this points to the value of forest restoration in creating a better future for the forests and communities of southern Oregon. All of this work very much compliments KS Wild’s vision of protecting and restoring national forests and BLM lands while enhancing local contractors and small sawmills.
Treating Noxious Weeds
Without Chemicals—
Can you dig it?

By Regina Chichizola

Many national forests (the Klamath, Rogue, and Siskiyou) in the Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion are proposing to use chemical pesticides to treat noxious weeds. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is currently being prepared to propose changing the Northwest Forest Plan to “treat” weeds at an expedited rate. Agencies often brush off the public’s concerns over using chemicals known to cause major health problems in humans and animals. When non-chemical methods are suggested, they are deemed impossible. However, on the Klamath National Forest (KNF), where there are plans to spray over 27,000 acres, the community has shown that non-toxic treatments are more effective than toxins.

Background

Noxious weeds spread in a variety of ways, including fire fighting, roadwork, logging, and other management activities. Noxious weeds were first addressed in the Noxious Weed Act of 1974. However, until recently the Forest Service has done nothing to prevent their spread. In areas such as the Salmon River, logging is proposed watershed-wide, including known weed sites, yet this is rarely addressed in environmental assessments. So why spray now? One theory is corporate pressure and increased marketing. One proposed chemical, Monsanto’s Rodeo (or Roundup), has been approved to spray near waterways by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Monsanto poured $200,000 into campaigning last year and $4 million in 1997.

Do we need elbow grease or Monsanto to treat noxious weeds?

When the community of the wild Salmon River watershed and Salmon River Restoration Council (SRRC) discovered the Klamath National Forest’s proposed spray plan, they remembered the health effects chemical spraying caused the community in the 80’s, and resolved to again fight chemicals in their watershed. The community united around an alternative: manual extraction (removing the plant and root), mulching, burning and mapping to deal with the problem of noxious weeds. In 1997 they decided to concentrate on spotted knapweed, as it was the most likely to be sprayed and was spreading rapidly. The community has since identified 160 populations on over 70 miles, and manages an estimated 1,500 acres. According to their data, they found 75,000 adult plants in 1998, in 1999 it was up to 140,000, in 2000 it was down to 48,000, and last year only 6,000 adult plants were found. The non-toxic approach has created jobs in the community and continues to be an important way to bring community members together.

In contrast, areas where spray has been used there is no data or accountability. Spray projects are notorious for little, if any, monitoring. As a result, we don’t know the affects on the target species or the potential affects on native plant protection and propagation. Yet, the Klamath National Forest is going ahead with their plans.

Effects on non-target species

According to the National Academy of Sciences, “Pesticides are perhaps the only toxic substance purposely applied to the environment.” Pesticides are more likely to enter waterways after the first storm, yet water testing is usually done after application. One study shows a 5-fold increase between application and the first rain. Human health dangers are lymphatic (and other) cancers, birth defects, sterility, endocrine disruption and diabetes. On the Klamath River fish are a major concern, yet proposed pesticides have been linked to major health problems and death in fish. In addition to decline in steelhead and salmon populations, reduction in diversity and number of songbirds, reduced numbers of amphibians, toxic residues in deer, and reproductive problems of native plants have been linked to pesticides.

KS Wild is working with communities, environmental groups, and Native Americans on this issue.

KS WILD ACTION UPDATE!!!

GOVERNMENT DROPS ITS APPEAL OF THE COUGAR LAWSUIT, BUTOREGON LEGISLATURE PRESSES FOR MORE HOUND HUNTING—After a District Court order stopped the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Oregon Department of Wildlife from proceeding with a “study” that would have killed up to 40 cougars, the government pushed forward with an appeal of the decision. However, they recently abandoned the appeal, and the decision protecting the cougar stands. But now the state is trying another tactic: repealing the ban on hunting cougar with hounds, even though the voters of Oregon have upheld the ban twice. Please write or call your local state representative and ask them to vote NO on HB 2436.
Glendale Bureau of Land Management: Laying Waste To The Rogue River Watershed

By George Sexton

Ancient Forests and Wild Rivers

The little-known Glendale Resource Area of the Medford BLM contains some of the most spectacular ecological gems in the Klamath-Siskiyou. Want to raft through the most rugged stretch of Rogue River? You’ll be floating through the heart of Glendale Resource Area. Care to explore the very largest forested roadless area administered by the BLM on planet Earth? You’ll find yourself in the 46,400 acre Zane Grey roadless area. Ever wondered where the last best Spotted Owl and Salmon habitat remains? Look no further than the spawning streams shaded by ancient trees on Kelsey and Mule Creeks.

Log It All

The BLM timber planners in the Glendale Resource Area are in the business of liquidating ancient forests. While nearly everyone outside of the BLM has come to the realization that it makes sense to thin the small diameter tree plantations, while protecting our few remaining native forests, the Glendale Resource Area cannot overcome its addiction to logging the biggest, oldest trees on our public lands. Rather than thinning overstocked young stands, the Glendale Resource Area prefers to clearcut forest groves that have stood for centuries.

Targeting Endangered Species

After the Northern Spotted Owl became listed as a threatened species, the US Fish and Wildlife Service identified those remaining ancient forests that it considered to be critical habitat for the continued survival of the owl. These forests were classified as “critical habitat” or “critical habitat units.” The Glendale Resource Area is currently hoping to cut down literally thousands of acres of such critical owl habitat.

Servant of the Timber Industry

During the commenting period for the controversial Kelsey Whisky timber sale, Glendale Field Manager Lynda Boody received 140 letters from her neighbors requesting that the BLM refrain from destroying the ancient forests and critical habitat of the Rogue River Watershed. She also received a mere 4 letters from the timber industry asking her to allow them to maximize the amount of old growth timber that can be cut.
logging on these public lands. Her response? To increase the amount of old growth clearcutting in the Kelsey Whisky timber sale from 355 to 531 acres.

**Defending the Wild Places**

How can we protect the irreplaceable ancient forests and wild salmon runs of the Rogue River from the BLM’s desire to turn the watershed into an industrial tree-farm? Representative Peter DeFazio needs to hear from you that the ancient forests, roadless areas and salmon runs in the Glendale Resource Area deserve protection, not further exploitation. Oregonians support wilderness designation for the Zane Grey roadless area, and want to see the BLM begin to focus on fuels reduction in young plantations, rather than simply continuing to clearcut ancient forests. KS Wild will continue to serve as the last line of defense for the critters and forests of the Rogue River in the courts and in the woods. Contact us to find out how you can help defend your forests.

Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR)  
2134 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington D.C.  
(202) 225-6416

Letters mean more than phone calls. Always request a written response!

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**KS Wild Shifting Gears:**  
**Environmental Crisis and Strategies**

**By Liz Crosson**

KS Wild is the primary watchdog organization monitoring public lands in southwest Oregon and northwest California. We exist to move the Forest Service and BLM out of the business of logging, roading and otherwise degrading the public’s precious natural resources. KS Wild promotes a new vision of public land management, one based on the protection and restoration of watersheds, wilderness and wildlife. But, in a global climate that is constantly changing, our job must change to meet the needs of current times. Over the past year, KS Wild’s focus has become directed towards responding to the imminent surge of threats being unleashed on our natural systems, civil liberties and global community.

With an increase in staff working on Forest Watch activities through our Public Lands Oversight Campaign, we are more effectively able to work on egregious projects proposed throughout the Klamath-Siskiyou. More staff has allowed us more time and energy to put towards our California public land monitoring in the Klamath and Six Rivers National Forests. A full list of the projects we are working to reform, challenge and, if necessary, litigate can be found on our website, [http://www.kswild.org](http://www.kswild.org).

With a much needed focus on Public Lands Oversight, we are also directing more resources towards campaigns, outreach and education. Of course, those tactics are also used to respond to the most timely issues. This year, we have been extremely focused on fire and restoration. As a result of the 2002 fire season we found ourselves needing to further educate ourselves and others on fire ecology and behavior and other fire issues. Restoration also rises to the top of our priorities as it becomes more obvious that is the direction we need to go on degraded and heavily modified landscapes.

KS Wild will continue to bring you the most current and accurate information in this time of varied and overwhelming rhetoric. With the Bush Administration pushing forward their ‘Healthy Forest Initiative’ (HFI), it can be difficult to discern what is truly healthy for our forests and wildlands. Along with HFI, the Administration is dismantling environmental laws across the board without public involvement. By changing laws through their respective regulations, not involving Congress or the public, their method of undermining decades of environmental protection work is dishonest, at best.

We are also expecting a legislative attempt in the House of Representatives, and maybe the Senate, to push forward the Healthy Forest Initiative. We saw several attempts last fall by Republicans and Democrats to push through bills that reduced public involvement, curtailed environmental laws and used fire as a reason to increase logging and salvage logging our public lands. We are hoping, with your support, to work with an alternative proposal that truly focuses on protecting homes and communities from fire in the ‘Community Protection Zone’ in the Wildland-Urban Interface, while allowing natural processes in our wildlands to endure. This is just a brief glimpse of the inner workings of KS Wild and our immediate strategies. There are a lot of great environmental groups in the region, but KS Wild’s strategy of getting to know the places that are the most threatened, getting folks out to these places and creating a political movement against the destruction of these places is our most effective tool. Of course, none of these activities can take place without help and support from you, our members and supporters. With your continued support, we can continue to demand justice for wild places and critters.

Consider renewing your membership (see last page) and volunteering with KS Wild:

- Writing letters to editor, op-eds, articles
- Event planning
- Field work/Leading Field Trips
- Fundraising
- Phone Banking

Contact Liz Crosson, liz@kswild.org, 541-488-5789

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Cartoon—Bob Cremins

...continued from last page.
By Spencer Lennard

In Aldo Leopold’s “Thinking Like a Mountain,” he explains his experience killing a wolf. “I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters’ paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.”

Leopold realized that native carnivores regulate ecosystems. Recent studies show that bringing the wolf back to Yellowstone National Park, for example, resulted in more vibrant deer and elk herds. This, in turn has generated healthier plant communities where these ungulates live. Yellowstone National Park, for example, resulted in more vibrant deer and elk herds.

Not only are carnivores important for natural systems, they have inherent value—a right to exist.

Despite the importance of carnivores, state and federal agencies along with the members of the Oregon and California legislature have escalated attacks on carnivores. They have put bears and mountain lions in the sights of firearms.

Current Threats to Carnivores

- Last fall, KS Wild and a coalition of groups successfully challenged an Oregon State plan to shoot mountain lions to “study” the effects on deer and elk herds.
- This winter, Wildlife Services proposed a plan to allow the killing of black bears suspected of damaging private tree farms in western Oregon. Wildlife Services is a federal agency specializing in the killing of wildlife to subsidize private interests like the timber and livestock industries. Such killing of wildlife generally costs taxpayers more than the purported cost of damage they are “treating.”
- This March, the federal government down-listed the gray wolf from endangered to threatened, and paved the way for its eventual removal from the Endangered Species List. This may mean we will never see the return of the wolf to the Klamath-Siskiyou.
- Currently, several anti-carnivore members of the Oregon legislature are attempting to repeal the voter-approved ban on hound hunting and baiting for bears and mountain lions. Capitulating to sport-hunting lobby groups, a legislative committee approved a bill allowing dogs to be used in hunting cougars. These are a few examples of the many attacks on these majestic animals.
  “In the long run,” says conservation biologist Michael Soule “without restoration of top predators, we’ll never be able to protect most biodiversity.”

What You Can Do:

If you live in Oregon or California, please call the federal and state representatives for your district and ask them to commit to vote against any bill that removes protective measures for mountain lions, black bears or gray wolves.
Many thanks to all our supporters and volunteers including:

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KS Wild is establishing the KS Wild Endowment Fund. Tax deductible donations to KS Wild, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit, will go entirely towards protecting the wild places of the Klamath-Siskiyou Ecoregion.

KS Wild Board of Directors: Oshana Catranides, Shannon Clery, Lori Cooper, Michael Hawk, John Roach, Zach Stevenson

KS Wild News is produced by Shannon Clery & Liz Crosson (editors), Eric Grisen (layout and design) and the KS Wild staff.

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Please Join KS Wild Today!

There are two ways to support KS Wild . . .

Annual Membership or
our monthly Wildlands Stewardship Program

If you would like to join KS Wild as an annual member, please fill out the form below and send it, along with your donation, to KS Wild.

If you would like to provide KS Wild with monthly support by becoming a Wildlands Steward, your membership gifts will be transferred in convenient monthly installments from your checking account to the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center. Your gifts will go farther than ever by reducing paperwork and administrative expenses. A record of each gift will appear on your bank statement. You may increase, decrease, or suspend your gift at any time by calling KS Wild at 541-846-9273. All gifts to KS Wild originating asACH transactions comply with U.S. law. Here’s how to join:

1. Use the form below to indicate the amount you want to contribute each month to KS Wild. Indicate amount here for your records: $_______
2. Be sure to sign your name and indicate the date on the enrollment form.
3. Return the completed form with a check for your first month’s gift:

KS Wild, PO Box 303, Williams, OR 97544

Yes, I’d like to join KS Wild!

Annual Membership - prefer to join KS Wild with an annual donation of:

$20 $50 $100 Other $_______

Monthly Membership - I want to become a Wildlands Steward and support KS Wild with a monthly electronic funds transfer of $_______ per month. The minimum monthly donation is $4.00. Wildlands Stewards who give $15 or more per month will receive a free KS Wild T-Shirt. T-Shirt size:_______

Enclosed is a check for my first month’s gift. Please transfer my monthly gifts from my checking account. I understand that my future gifts will be transferred from my account and will appear on my bank statement. I can increase, decrease or suspend my gift at any time by calling KS Wild at 541-846-9273. All donations to KS Wild originating asACH transactions comply with J.S. law.

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