

Letter # 005

Carolyn Wisdom  
Fremont-Winema NF  
Silver Lake Ranger District  
P.O. Box 129  
Silver Lake, OR 97638

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Dear Carolyn,

I would like to submit comments on the Toolbox Fire Recovery Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), and ask that you re-consider Alternative F, the "Restoration Only" alternative. A century of intensive logging and fire suppression created the conditions for the Toolbox Fire, and more of the same will not fix it. Now is time for the Forest Service to give serious consideration to a "Restoration Only" alternative, and begin working with nature, instead of against nature.

Alternative D, the "limited-intervention approach", should have been chosen as the "preferred alternative", as it meets the minimum agency objectives with the least amount of watershed disturbance. All other management alternatives leave excess road miles open and create new temporary roads, and propose salvage logging which elevates the risk of "short term" discharge of sediment into streams and riparian areas. Alternative F, the "Restoration Only" alternative, would have even less watershed disturbance than either the "no action" or "limited-intervention approach", and is the most logical choice in terms of long-term watershed health and restoration.

There are numerous opportunities to work with the natural results of the Toolbox Fire including thinning plantations and underburning to further reduce fuel loads. Pre-commercial thinning, hand thinning in the Northern Goshawk, Bald Eagle, and Peregrine Falcon areas, road decommissioning, aspen enhancement, livestock fencing, bank stabilization planting, deciduous planting, stream placement of large woody debris and road stabilization are good examples.

Salvage logging removes the majority of large trees and snags for hazard and commercial purposes, yet these are the best sources of future soil conditioning and are the least likely fuels to burn in the future. According to the DEIS, "there are thousands of large trees over 200 years old in the project area", most of these large trees should be saved for wildlife habitat and soils.

By leaving the small non-commercial trees behind in some units, including limbs and branches, flammable logging slash will increase the risk of a future fire. Large logs and snags act as moisture sinks, provide shelter for small animals and cavity nesters, and large falling snags naturally thin dense stands. All live trees, especially all green trees over 21" dbh must be protected to provide for wildlife habitat for threatened, endangered and sensitive species. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

*Nancy Bailey*

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