

OPINIONS

Let's keep the public in public lands

BY LUKE RUEDIGER

Both the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Forest Service (USFS) are proposing to limit public input and eliminate environmental review by making significant changes to their public involvement processes. The proposed changes encourage land managers both to increase the pace and scale of public land logging, mining, and road construction and to cut the public out of the process. In many cases, this means the agencies will notify the public when decisions are made, but the public will no longer be allowed to meaningfully participate in the land-management planning process.

This summer the BLM proposed a large "programmatically" environmental assessment, which proposes to log 14,000 acres and build 20 miles of new roads each year on Medford District BLM land, with no further public involvement, no public comment period, and no site-specific environmental review or analysis. The proposal, called the Integrated Vegetation Management for Resilient Lands Programmatic Environmental Assessment (Programmatic EA), would allow logging to occur in any land-management designation, but would specifically target late-successional reserves intended to protect high quality northern spotted owl habitat and other conservation-based land-management designations, including riparian reserves, "District Defined Reserves" such as lands with wilderness characteristics, the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, and many others. Projects would be approved for sale and subject to a mere 15-day administrative protest period.

Although the Programmatic EA has not been fully analyzed or approved, the BLM has already begun designing and surveying a large project in the Williams area—the Late Mungers Project, between Powell Creek and Mungers Creek. According to BLM staff, this project will be "tiered" to the still unapproved Programmatic EA and is dependent on its approval for implementation.

Additionally, this summer the USFS proposed nationwide changes to the land-management planning process through revisions to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). If approved, these

changes will undermine the public process, reduce transparency, and avoid scientific accountability, making timber sales, pipelines, mines, and other industrial land-management projects easier to approve.

Internal USFS reviews are being proposed as a replacement for the currently more open and transparent process of environmental analysis and public comment. Collaboration and community engagement would be largely eliminated, and nearly all projects would be approved even without disclosure of their impacts, analysis of environmental effects, or public input.

For example, individual commercial logging projects of 4,200 acres (or 6.6 square miles), and up to five miles of new road could be approved without environmental review or public comment. The agency would simply approve projects with "Decision Records" and allow a 15-day objection period. Barring an administrative objection or lawsuit, whole watersheds could then be auctioned off to the highest bidder. The proposed changes do not appear to limit the number of large logging projects that can be approved in this way. They also allow projects to be approved in inventoried roadless areas, riparian reserves, late-successional reserves, and other conservation areas.

Without public outcry, the BLM and USFS will continue to undermine the public engagement process, eliminate transparency, and limit environmental review. Yet these are public lands and decision-making should be accomplished in an open and transparent manner.

Applegate Neighborhood Network (ANN) is working to provide both the land and the people of the Applegate Watershed a voice in the federal land-management process. We believe these beautiful public lands define our region and make us who we are as Applegaters. We also believe they should be managed for public benefit, which requires an open public process. Let's keep the public in public lands.

Contact ANN for information about how you can help.

Luke Ruediger
Program Coordinator
Applegate Neighborhood Network
luke@applegateneighborhood.network

Enough climate alarmism

BY ALAN VOETSCH

In the spring 2019 *Applegater*, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was mentioned in two separate opinion articles. So let's learn a little more about the IPCC, okay?

The IPCC is part of the United Nations (UN). In other words, it is made up of unelected bureaucrats from countries all over the world. You may think that gives it more importance. Far from it. The IPCC was formed with one purpose and one purpose only: to find a human fingerprint in Earth's climate patterns. Everything it says and does has that one goal in mind. It could care less about the numerous ice ages that come and go all on their own due to well-known naturally variable forces that I have listed in previous *Applegater* articles. If you want to know more, check out past opinion articles by me and read the books I always mention. Everyone should do their own research instead of listening to political propaganda.

Canadian Maurice Strong, a force behind Agenda 21, the "United Nations blueprint for the 21st Century" (greenagenda.com/agenda21.html), blended the IPCC from two separate organizations: the United Nations Environment Program and the World Meteorological Organization. His purpose was twofold: advance the political agenda and produce the scientific evidence to provide legitimacy. The end purpose was to create a new world order by bringing about the collapse of industrialized nations. If that is what folks here in Ruch and Applegate want, then by all means sit back and watch it happen. If you don't want UN bureaucrats running your lives, then it's time to wise up and understand what's going on. The problem with politicians dealing with this issue is that they have zero knowledge of our natural climate system and believe they can regulate the planet's temperature by increasing the cost of doing business for fossil fuel companies. Plus, they get to create and put in place new systems of taxation and decide what to do with all the extra millions they steal from you and me. And that is what this is really all about. Cheap energy has elevated our standard of living, and the socialist dreamers want to spread western wealth around

the globe and shut down industrialized democratic nations.

There are also students who believe that irreversible climate change will occur in the next decade. This is sad and, in my humble opinion, criminal. Climate change is always happening, as I have documented before. How else do you explain numerous ice ages and a sea level rise of over 400 feet in the last 10,000 years? Indoctrinated children across the country are being urged to use our courts and legal system to attack fossil fuel companies and the government. This is a time honored "sue-and-settle" strategy that hopes to punish companies that provide products and services we all use simply because they have deep pockets. From my point of view, we, the consumers, are their enemy, not the companies we willingly do business with. This is the kind of nonsense that increases costs because, in the long run, it all gets passed down to each and every one of us here in the Applegate Valley.

The IPCC is more concerned with the gender, diversity, and regional representation of their so-called experts than with using top-notch scientists. This is the way the UN does business. They are only concerned with appearances and consensus. Make no mistake, these have no place in science. Think about it—those folks from the Middle East, Africa, Asia, etc., do not have our best interests in mind, only theirs.

And again, every study, for every duration, shows that temperatures rise *before* CO₂ rises. The lag time is several hundred years.

Did you know that Mars, Jupiter, Pluto, and a few other solar system objects have warmed in recent decades?

I will again recommend these two books, which are IPCC specific: (1) *The Deliberate Corruption of Climate Science* by Tim Ball, PhD, and (2) *The Delinquent Teenager who was Mistaken for the World's Top Climate Expert* by Donna Laframboise. As with all my recommendations, these include footnotes. Both are currently available on eBay (used) and Amazon. I also have copies.

Alan Voetsch
alan_voetsch@yahoo.com

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