

THE SISKIYOU MOUNTAIN ADVOCATE

Worth more standing: Applegate timber sale receives national attention

BY LUKE RUEDIGER

In the last few issues of the *Applegater* I have written about the various threats of the BLM's Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) Project. Unfortunately that threat has not gone away, and the Climate-Forests campaign has now deemed the IVM one of the 10 worst timber sales in the country ("Worth More Standing," Climate-Forests.org). Fortunately for the forests of the region, the project's opposition has also stubbornly persisted and steadily grown. Climate and forest activists from across the country are actively opposing this project alongside residents of the region.

As mentioned in previous articles, the IVM Project proposes to implement heavy commercial logging in conservation areas throughout southwestern Oregon while eliminating numerous important public-involvement opportunities and reducing the public's voice in the federal land-management planning process.

Yet, as Applegaters often do when our beautiful valley is threatened and we are denied opportunities to provide official comment on the management of the federal lands in our community, we have used other means to make our point. Recently, a coalition of Applegate Valley residents and conservation organizations, including Applegate Siskiyou Alliance, Williams Community Forest Project, and the Siskiyou Crest Coalition, has held protests against the IVM Project and its first two timber sales: the Late Mungers and Penn Butte timber sales near Williams and Murphy.

Dozens of people attended these protests, which took place along Highway 238 at the BLM's Provolt Recreation Site and at the Grants Pass Courthouse. Leaders of opposition to these sales also led numerous hikes and field trips into proposed old-forest logging units, both with the public and with a local news reporter who highlighted our concerns. Additionally, videographer Alex Gaylon, from Karmalize Productions, created two excellent short videos about the campaign to stop the Late Mungers and Penn Butte timber sales. His videos feature interviews with local residents from the Applegate Valley, Grants Pass, and the Illinois Valley who oppose these old-forest timber sales proposed on BLM lands near their homes and communities.

We have also worked with national climate and conservation organizations to raise awareness of the threats the IVM Project poses to our local forests and watersheds and to the global climate. According to recent research, the wood products industry is the largest producer of carbon emissions in the state of Oregon.

Our region is important for its globally significant biodiversity and for our forests' contribution to climate mitigation. With the most diverse conifer forests in the west and among the most diverse in the world, the Siskiyou Mountains have world-class conservation values, but they also support relatively productive mature and old-growth forests which can naturally store large amounts of carbon and provide free, effective, nature-based



A Stop Late Mungers Rally at the Grants Pass Courthouse.

climate solutions. These same forests provide important wildlife habitat, shade our streams, and beautify our skyline. They also provide important opportunities for outdoor recreation and support many of the "ecosystem services" that make our quality of life in the Applegate Valley so spectacularly unique.

According to climate scientists, the amount of carbon removed during commercial "thinning" (i.e., logging) operations is much larger than the amount that might be saved from being burned in a wildfire (Campbell 2011, Rhodes et al. 2009). Other studies show that commercial thinning creates a multi-decade carbon deficit following the type of moderate to heavy commercial logging proposed in the IVM Project (Zhou et al. 2013). Additionally, recent research in northern California showed that thinned stands resulted in less canopy retention, less tree cover, and more total tree mortality following a

large wildfire than in adjacent unthinned stands (Hanson 2022). The forests of our watershed are indeed "worth more standing," and as a community we are both blessed to live among them and blessed to be responsible for their stewardship. Stop Late Mungers!

Want more information?

- Read the whole *Worth More Standing* report: climate-forests.org/worth-more-standing.
- Sign the petition to Stop the Penn Butte and Late Mungers Timber Sale: ann.secure.force.com/petition?pid=Penn+Butte.
- Watch the Karmalize Production films: (1) "Stop the Penn Butte and Late Mungers Timber Sale": youtube.com/watch?v=DxU3XpcpK4Y, (2) "Protest at Grants Pass Courthouse to Stop Late Mungers and Penn Butte BLM Logging Plan": youtube.com/watch?v=7JrJdJmArFE.

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