

KS WILD NEWS

The Journal of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center

Winter 2018



GET OUTSIDE

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Executive Director

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Bookkeeper



Visit kswild.org to learn more and register for hikes.

SNOWSHOE HIKE, MT. ASHLAND

January 20, 10am-2pm

Join KS Wild development director Michael Dotson for a snowshoe hike in the Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest, near Mt. Ashland (subject to change with snow conditions). Great for all skill levels. Enjoy this 2-3 mile snowshoe hike along groomed trails. Carpool from Ashland Outdoor Store at 9am.

KELSEY CREEK HIKE, MARBLE MOUNTAINS

January 27, 9:30am-3pm

Moderate difficulty hike along Kelsey creek through old-growth forest on a historic trail. Approximate 1 hour and 45 min. drive to trailhead. Expect a gorgeous uphill hike into the Marble Mountains. Carpool from Ashland Outdoor Store at 9:30am.

ROGUE RIVERKEEPER

Robyn Janssen
Rogue Riverkeeper

Stacey Detwiler
Conservation Director

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16TH ANNUAL SISKIYOU FILM FEST

Grants Pass Performing Arts Center

February 10th, 2018. Doors open at 3pm. Films 4-9pm.

The largest conservation event in southwest Oregon and our most popular event of the year is back! Join us for an inspiring night of film, fun, and local food. Tickets go on sale Jan. 4th! To volunteer, become a sponsor, or for more information, go to: SiskiyouFilmFest.org.

NEWS AROUND THE KS

PICKETT WEST VICTORY

Community pressure protects much of the old-growth in the Picket West timber sale area from BLM logging plans.

WOLVES SHOT

While most of us are thrilled to see the return of wolves to the region, poachers are threatening to undo recovery efforts by illegally gunning down this apex predator.

SMITH RIVER AT RISK

Congressional mining advocates in DC propose unraveling a mining moratorium that protects salmon and steelhead from nickel strip mining.

NORTH LANDSCAPE TIMBER SALE

Klamath Falls Resource Area proposes 8,000 acres of logging near the eastern edge of the Cascades-Siskiyou National Monument. The BLM hopes to “regenerate” (clearcut) public forestlands.

ELK CREEK RESTORATION

South of Happy Camp the Klamath National Forest is proposing the Elk Creek Project. Will they help imperiled salmon and wildlife? Or will they just try to “get the cut out”? Time will tell.

Covering nearly 11 million acres, the Klamath-Siskiyou region stretches from the Umpqua in the north to California’s wine country in the south, from the Pacific Ocean to the mighty Cascades. The mountain ranges and river valleys that define this region harbor renowned biological diversity and are some of the most spectacular in America.

OR
CA

Crescent City

Orleans

Eureka

Hayfork

Redding

Grants Pass

Medford

Ruch

Ashland

SMOKE (AND MIRRORS)



THE ILLUSION THAT LOGGING STOPS FOREST FIRES

Smoke. Thick, brown, choking smoke. During the summer of 2017 in the Klamath-Siskiyou, it was an inescapable fact of life and far worse than in anyone's recent memory.

Naturally, none of us want to live through that again. And unsurprisingly, the timber industry is peddling the scientifically discredited idea that we can simply log our way free from fire. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It is important to understand how we got here. Fire has always been a part of western forests, long before humans arrived. Our forests, both conifer and hardwood, are well-adapted to fire, from light underburns to raging canopy fires. The evidence is always apparent just a year after a fire, when oaks, madrones, and manzanitas sprout from stumps and conifer snags are suddenly surrounded by thousands of tiny seedlings. Fire doesn't destroy a forest. In fact, our forests need fire as much as they need rain to maintain their incredible biological diversity.

For tens of thousands of years, Native people in this area regularly employed fire to sculpt the landscape to better suit their needs for hunting and gathering. Lightning fires maintained forest undergrowth. After other peoples arrived, fires became less intentional and more accidental. About a century ago, the Forest Service in Washington, D.C. with their mascot Smokey the Bear stepped in to take control, attempting to douse every flame as soon as it ignited. Firefighting left western forests in an unnatural and increasingly serious fire deficit. But as the old saying goes, you can pay me now, or you'll pay me later.

Twentieth-century fire fighting had a single purpose. Keep those trees standing until a logger could get there to take them out. Once industrial-scale logging began to work through vast swaths of forest, it created an unnatural, heavily logged condition in our

public forests. Contrary to what industry suggests, numerous studies show that logging large trees increases forest fire severity. Tree plantations are twice as likely to experience severe fire than older forests. Forests with higher levels of protection from logging burn less severely while heavily managed forests experience more severity.

Why? Common sense supports the science. After all, it's the big old trees, with thick bark that are more resilient to fire. Imagine fire on the move near your home surrounded by big, old trees. Contrast that cool, moist, shaded forest with hot, dry clearcuts and even-age tree plantations. Even when older forests burn, the large tree trunks are not carrying the fire – it is the branches, needles, and twigs that make fire move.

Or go further and think about the scrublands surrounding many California communities that offer no fire protection whatsoever. As we've recently seen, that situation is deadly. That is what logging big trees leaves us with – tree plantations and brushfields that carry faster-moving and more severe fires.

The latest unnatural condition affecting our forests is climate change. Most scientists agree that increased heat and lower snowpack have led to decreased moisture in the soil and that in turn has led to larger fires that burn longer through the season.

So what can we do in the face of these unnatural conditions? First and foremost, we can't let the situation get worse by logging more old and mature forests. There are already several million acres of tree plantations in western Oregon and California. By all means, we must create defensible space around homes that are anywhere near fire-prone forests. They are our best line of defense. And of course, we must fight climate change with everything we've got.

We should support public lands managers that propose right-sized thinning in plantations and dense growth near homes and communities. We need to get fire back into the forest in the fall when the smoke will go up and away from our communities. Our public lands managers need support when they propose controlled burns.

Let's leave our old and mature forests standing. They are the best insurance policy we have when it comes to wildfire in this era of climate change.

HOTTER, DRIER, NO LESS WILD: THE NEW KS WILD CLIMATE REPORT

KS Wild is proud to present "Hotter, Drier, No Less Wild: Protecting Public Land and Biodiversity in the Klamath-Siskiyou in the Era of Climate Change." This report cites 170 peer-reviewed studies to predict how climate change will impact our public forests and rivers, and to guide how we can manage landscapes to protect them in the face of this growing threat. In a nutshell, two simple messages are evident. First, we have to ensure that landscapes threatened by climate change are not further stressed by other impacts, like logging, grazing, mining, road building, and dams. Second, we have to identify the places in the KS that will fare best as refuges from climate impacts. Old and mature forests, roadless areas, and cold rivers and streams are among them. These places need extra protection to ensure a home to species escaping from the worst of climate change.

You can read the new report at www.kswild.org/s/climatechange.pdf.



TAXES FUND LOGGING PROPAGANDA AND EXECUTING WILDLIFE

The Oregonian newspaper recently reported that local politicians in Douglas County have been funneling tax dollars from the "Secure Rural Schools" program into pet projects that include expensive propaganda films promoting logging and the killing of bears and porcupines. It's an ugly situation.

Imagine spending \$650,000 of taxpayer dollars that were intended to support rural economies to instead kill wildlife, create pro-logging videos, and fund cross-country political lobbying junkets. It sounds like the script of a Simpsons episode featuring comically greedy arch-villain Mr. Burns. But in fact it is the sad reality of Douglas County politics where the line between politicians and Big Timber has been blurred into non-existence.

At the same time that Douglas County was shuttering libraries, underfunding schools, and cutting public services to the bone, commissioners were racing to give their buddies hundreds of thousands of tax dollars to promote logging. The primary recipient of this financial windfall was a lobbying group with the cheery sounding name "Communities for Healthy Forests." That group is associated with the timber industry advocacy organization "American Forest Resources Council." Indeed the two organizations are so connected as to share a mailing address.

Can it get any dirtier? Yes it can! "Communities for Healthy Forests" has employed former county commissioners to help push its publically financed logging agenda.

So the next time a timber industry front group tells you that the best way to protect forests is to cut them all down while trapping the animals, be sure to follow the money--it just may be coming from your pocket.



2017 FIRE SEASON

Photo: Share Stiles Photography

The Klamath-Siskiyou forests are adapted to fire. They need fire as much as they need rain. And this was a big fire year! While over 500,000 acres burned inside the fire lines, all together the fire burn area is less than 5% of the Klamath-Siskiyou eleven-million-acre landscape. Firefighters often helped back fires down slopes in a controlled manner, saving homes and restoring fire to the forest. We are thankful to the firefighters who spent the season putting themselves at risk to help others.

Young forests and tree plantations tended to burn most severe. Only a fraction of the forests burned so hot that larger trees died. Initial reviews show that many fires burned at very low severity, removing the build up of underbrush and small trees, leaving behind the large, fire resistant trees. Other forests, even some with large trees, burned so severe that in swaths of forest nearly all trees were killed, as is common in extreme weather conditions.

LARGE FIRES IN THE KLAMATH-SISKIYOU IN 2017

Klamath National Forest

Eclipse Complex: 78,698 Acres
 Salmon August Complex: 65,888 Acres

Six Rivers National Forest

Orleans Complex: 27,276 Acres
 Young Fire: 2,500 Acres
 Ruth Complex: 4,736 Acres

Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest

Miller Complex: 39,715 Acres
 Chetco Bar Fire: 191,125 Acres
 High Cascades Complex: 27,476 Acres

Shasta Trinity National Forest

Helena: Fork Fire, 21,846 Acres
 Buck Fire: 13,417



Photo: Bureau of Land Management

THE WILD & SCENIC ROGUE



Stair Creek Falls, Wild & Scenic Rogue River. Photo: Momentum River Expeditions.

On October 2, 1968, Congress created the national Wild & Scenic Rivers system and included the Rogue as one of the eight original Wild & Scenic rivers. This fall at our annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival, Rogue Riverkeeper kicked off our year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act.

The Wild & Scenic Rivers Act grew out of the mid-20th-century dam construction boom that dramatically changed many of our rivers. The goal of the Act is to protect the free-flowing condition of outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values for present and future generations. Under the Act, a river or section of a river can be designated by Congress or by the Secretary of the Interior as a Wild & Scenic River. The designated river is categorized as a wild, scenic, or recreational river and the managing agency works to allow for public uses that protect and enhance its unique scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife, historic, or cultural values. Wild & Scenic designation helps to safeguard the unique characteristics of a river and involve local landowners and other community members in management decisions.

Fifty years ago, Congress designated 84 miles of the lower Rogue, from the mouth of the Applegate River downstream to the Lobster Creek Bridge, as a Wild & Scenic River.

This is the most well-known stretch of the Rogue River, loved by boaters, anglers, and hikers. In 1984, 50 miles of the Illinois River from the boundary of the Siskiyou National Forest to its confluence with the Rogue were designated as Wild & Scenic. Four years later, a 40-mile stretch of the Upper Rogue, from the Crater Lake National Park boundary downstream to Prospect, OR was also designated as Wild & Scenic.



As we look to the next 50 years of Wild & Scenic Rivers, pressures on our rivers will continue to increase. Increased

development, dams and infrastructure projects, and overuse threaten fish and wildlife, recreational, cultural, and scenic values. Just like our National Park System, the Wild and Scenic Rivers System works to protect these special places in coordination with local landowners.

Right now, we are working with a broad coalition of community members, local businesses, conservation groups, and others to protect smaller streams that flow into the Rogue River. The Oregon Wildlands bill (S. 1548) introduced by Senators Wyden and Merkley would include these streams as part of the Wild & Scenic Rogue River. As we celebrate the history of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, your help will strengthen protections for the Wild Rogue!

Visit www.rogueriverkeeper.org to learn more.



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THE ANNUAL WILD & SCENIC FILM FEST

What an event! On Friday November 10th, Rogue Riverkeeper hosted our 5th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival at the Historic Ashland Armory to a SOLD OUT crowd. Thank you for helping make this year's film festival the best yet. This amazing crowd helped kicked off a year of celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act and our Wild Rogue River. Stay tuned for more events and ways you can support this milestone anniversary with Rogue Riverkeeper in 2018.

Thank you for your support at this year's film fest and for your love of the Rogue.



Special thanks to our generous and talented event photographer, Allen Hallmark.

FIRE DRIVES KLAMATH-SISKIYOU WORLD-RENOWNED DIVERSITY

Deeper understanding of fire enables us to see that our forests are reborn by fire. Fires wash through forested lands like other natural processes, greatly affecting some areas, and some barely at all. A decade and a half after the 2002 Biscuit fire in the Kalmiopsis region, there are many pockets of old, lush forest thriving on north- or east-facing slopes and in drainages wet with ferns, mosses, and the rare Port Orford Cedar. Some slopes and basins have benefitted from moderate burns, rejuvenating Cobra lily fens and conifer stands. Other places that characteristically burn hotter, like dry ridges, resprout with fire-loving species like manzanita, knobcone pine, and wild lilac.

In the higher reaches of the canopy, fire creates hollowed-out tree cavities for nesting birds and encourages insect life that provides forage. The opening of forest canopy allows sunlight to enliven plants growing lower down. Fallen trees and ground hollows where roots have burned create habitat for fungi, new plants, and mammals.

Old-growth trees have thick and corky bark, a fire-resistant adaptation. Surviving trees create biological legacies by broadcasting seeds to regrow new trees, and by providing shade for seedling growth. They support water quality by moderating stream temperatures, preventing soil erosion, and by providing vital salmon spawning habitat.



Above: The 2017 Chetco Bar burn on the Kalmiopsis rim at the edge of the Wilderness Area. This fire rapidly grew due to wind patterns, yet only 7% of the burn area was described as severe (Inciweb). Below: Black-backed woodpecker depends on burned forest habitats for tree cavities and insects (© 2007 Ron Wolf).

Opposite page, clockwise from top: KS Wild supports BLM staff in pine plantation restoration (Shane Stiles); Old mature trees that have survived logging have withstood many fire cycles (Diane Newell-Meyer); Fireweed, *Epilobium angustifolium*, grows vigorously in the several years following a burn (Creative Commons); Knobcone pine cones open with the heat of fire to release seeds and re-vegetate mountain slopes (KS Wild).



Fire “jump starts” nutrient flow in the forest through ash additions, changes to microclimates, and changed vegetation dynamics. Nutrient cycling is important for soil restoration and stimulating growth of plants, insects, bacteria, and fungi in the soil. Specific soil and nutrient flow dynamics vary with specific locations. Today’s forest fires provide a great opportunity to study these effects at a finer scale.

Biodiversity is an inextricable link between the survival of our forests, and the human species. Since fire is paramount to creating biodiversity in our forests, it is our human responsibility to learn how to live with fire. The most important question has become; how do we adapt our forests, our communities, and policy to be ‘fire-wise’ relative to a changing climate. Guided by rigorous science and sustainable community values we must act within this framework of stewardship.



BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND...

4-NIGHT ROGUE RIVER TRAIL ADVENTURE

May 21 – 25, 2018

Celebrate the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act in 2018 with a hike along the 40-mile Rogue River Trail. ARTA will carry all of your gear, and KS Wild Staff will accompany you along the trail for birding, botanizing and tons of fun!

There is limited space, register online:
www.arta.org/specials/hike.htm



*“Truly a wonderful lifetime memory.
Thank you KS Wild for making the
support of sustainability so much fun.”*

– Jim Bronson

ALEX HOLE:

MOUNTAIN MEADOW IS COW-FREE

Q: What's better than a high elevation wet meadow surrounded by old-growth forests in the Siskiyou Crest Mountains?

A: Finally getting the cows out of the heart of this special place!

Alex Hole is a botanical wonderland. It contains such an astounding profusion of rare and endemic plants that Forest Service botanists attempted to gain protection for the meadows as a designated "botanical area" under the Rogue River National Forest Plan. Unfortunately the efforts of the botanists came up just short and the meadows have been subject to irresponsible cattle grazing for decades.

Some of the harmful grazing was authorized by the Rogue River National Forest, which is currently reviewing the grazing allotment that covers Alex Hole.

KS Wild is keeping a close eye on that process. The meadows have also seen ongoing chronic grazing that originates in the Klamath National Forest from which unmanaged cattle trespass into areas not authorized for grazing. KS Wild has repeatedly challenged this illegal trespass and worked to reverse the damage to wetlands and wildflowers.

This summer we decided to go "hands on" and help Forest Service range managers build a fence to exclude cattle from the heart of Alex Hole. While the fence isn't a perfect solution and doesn't prevent all of the cattle damage on the Siskiyou Crest, it is an important step forward for a fragile and wonderful botanical hotspot.

KS Wild volunteers did what the ranchers and the Forest Service had been unable or unwilling to do, get the cattle out of a meadow that provides world-class botanical, hydrological and wildlife values. Way to go Team Wildflower!



FEATURED HIKE: STUNNING STEWART FALLS

How cruel would it be to feature a high elevation mountain hike that starts in Crater Lake National Park and ends at a hidden waterfall in the Sky Lakes Wilderness in our Winter Newsletter?

Yes it will likely be many long months before the trail to Stuart Falls is snow-free and can be hiked. But no, we're not sorry.

We offer the promise of Spring; its warmth, its blooms, its melting snow and rushing creeks, which make the dark days of winter a little less gloomy.

It is a little over six miles from the "Pumice Flat" trailhead in the Crater Lake National Park to Stuart Falls. The first three miles are a somewhat dry climb through lodgepole pine as the trail winds up the east slope of the Cascade Mountains.



Upon reaching the Crest, a short, signed, jaunt north on the Pacific Crest Trail leads through meadows to the signed Stuart Falls trail. The Falls Trail drops the last three miles through increasingly beautiful westside native forests down to the falls. One can hear the Stuart Falls before it comes into view, shortly past the Sky Lakes Wilderness Boundary.

The route is gentle with no huge elevation gains or losses. The first three miles of lodgepole hiking might be best done in the morning or the evening. The three Westside miles are gorgeous any time of day.

Should you want to make it a camping trip, please stop at the Crater Lake Park "Ranger Station" which is behind and below the visitors center and get a free backcountry hiking permit. The starting point for the hike at the Pumice Flat trailhead is unsigned from the highway. Find it by going to the "Lodgepole Picnic Area" and park there.

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

In 2017, KS Wild welcomed two new board members to the family!

JESSE BROWNE

Jesse is a senior web developer for the national Sierra Club and has been active in campaigns to protect biodiversity, wild places, and community health for decades, including working on the campaign to protect the Kakadu World Heritage National Park in Australia from a proposed uranium mine.

At the Sierra Club he is engaged in helping address important issues with clean energy, social and environmental justice, and equity work. He lives in Ashland with his wife and son and enjoys exploring the wild Klamath-Siskiyou.



GREG WALTER

Greg sits on the Board of the Crater Lake and Oregon Caves Natural History Associations, is an active member of the the Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce, and works closely with the Illinois Valley Community Development Organization.

Greg is an avid hiker and historian with a private collection of over 6,000 maps, 2,000 photos, and a textural reference library pertaining to public lands history in the Pacific Northwest.



JOIN AND SUPPORT

TO HELP DEFEND YOUR PUBLIC LANDS

As a donor to the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, you are helping protect the wild places and wildlife of the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion. Your donation helps build a grass-roots movement to protect backyard forests and rivers, not only for wildlife, but for future generations. Membership benefits include:

- A subscription to our quarterly *KS Wild News*
- Invitations to members-only hikes and lectures
- Discount tickets to special events

Visit www.kswild.org/donate to contribute and help defend our public lands.



Photo: Shane Stiles Photography

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KS WILD MISSION

KS Wild's mission is to protect and restore wild nature in the Klamath-Siskiyou region of southwest Oregon and northwest California. We promote science-based land and water conservation through policy and community action.

KSWILD.ORG

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Cover: Milky Way rising above Wizard Island in Crater Lake National Park. Shane Stiles Photography.