

KS WILD NEWS

The Journal of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center

Spring 2018



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GET OUTSIDE

For more information or to **RSVP** online, visit kswild.org.

PUBLIC LAND STEWARDSHIP TRAINING

March 3: 11am – 3pm

Join KS Wild and Southern Oregon Land Conservancy for a free hands-on volunteer stewardship training. We will begin at the Applegate Library at 11:00am to share and learn best practices for planning and funding events. Afterwards we will participate in a stewardship project on our public lands near Thompson Creek. Carpooling available. RSVP at kswild.org for more details.

PUBLIC FORESTS: PAST AND PRESENT

March 27: 7pm

Join KS Wild board member and local historian Greg Walter for a history of our public forests. Learn how our local forests came to be managed by BLM and the Forest Service, and some surprisingly scandalous stories. This talk is hosted by the Rogue Valley Audubon Society at the Medford Congregational Church.

IMPERILED FORESTS BIRD WALK

March 31: 8am – 2pm

Join Rogue Valley Audubon and KS Wild for a tour of mature conifer forests and great grey owl habitat threatened by BLM timber sales. Bring layers of clothing, hiking boots, binoculars (we'll have a few to lend), snacks, lunch, and water. Carpool leaves 8am from the Ashland Rite-Aid parking lot.

EARLY MORNING BIRD WALK

June 15: 6am – 11am

A weekday morning of early birding in and around the Griffin Half Moon Timber Sale and Howard Prairie Reservoir. Bring binoculars, scopes, field guides, snacks, water, and outdoor gear for rain or shine. Carpool leaves 6am from the Ashland Rite-Aid parking lot.

NEWS AROUND THE KS

CHETCO BAR SALVAGE LOGGING PROPOSAL

The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest is proposing to log second growth timber plantations, but the timber industry desperately wants to clearcut remote wildlands.

NORTH LANDSCAPE TIMBER SALE

The Klamath Falls BLM really likes “regeneration harvesting” which everyone else refers to as “clearcutting.”

COOK AND GREEN LOGGING PROPOSAL

The Klamath National Forest sees fire as an excuse to clearcut Old-Growth Reserves on the Siskiyou Crest. We intend to stop 'em in their tracks.

OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING ON CALIFORNIA AND OREGON COAST?

While exempting Florida from oil drilling as a political favor, Trump targets the rest of the U.S., including Oregon and California, to fill the pockets of his buddies in the oil industry.

NEW TRAILS FOR MT. SHASTA!

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest invests in sustainable recreation by proposing over 50 miles of new non-motorized trails around the city of Mt. Shasta.

Covering nearly eleven million acres, the Klamath-Siskiyou region includes the Rogue River and Klamath River watersheds of Oregon and California, from the mighty Cascades to the Pacific Ocean. The mountains and rivers of this region are refuge to world-renowned biological diversity and are some of the most spectacular in the U.S.

OR
CA

Crescent City

Orleans

Eureka

Grants Pass

Medford

Ruch

Ashland

Hayfork

Redding

COOK AND GREEN PASS TARGETED



KS Wild staff field-checking a proposed clearcutting unit.

HERE COMES THE “SALVAGE” LOGGING BONANZA

It's Groundhog Day for timber planners in the Klamath National Forest. This annual ritual takes place when the Forest Service throws out the rulebook and proposes widespread clearcutting of forests that are starting to regenerate after fire. To make matters worse, this annual ritual seems to often take place in old-growth reserves. This time the Klamath National Forest is targeting steep slopes in one of the most beloved botanical hotspots in the region, near Cook and Green Pass on the Siskiyou Crest.

Fire-scientists, ecologists, foresters and most federal timber sale planners have come to acknowledge that unlogged, post-fire forests provide significant and important wildlife habitat and watershed values. Burned dead trees, called “snags,” hold the soil together on steep slopes, allow for nutrient cycling, provide habitat for a slew of cavity nesting wildlife species, and protect the next generation of trees as they develop.

In contrast, when we clearcut recovering post-fire forests, fragile soils are further disturbed, wildlife habitat is removed, suffocating sediment increases to streams, and natural conifer establishment is stunted.

THE KLAMATH NATIONAL FOREST IS AN OUTLIER — The 2017 Abney Fire burned how wildfires have always burned on the Siskiyou Crest, with a mix of low, moderate, and stand-replacing severity. It is this variety of fire effects that has contributed to the renowned biodiversity and complexity of the Siskiyou forests that contain everything from rare Baker Cypress and Brewer Spruce to towering ancient sugar pines and Douglas firs. It is a forest ecosystem like no other on Earth.

To their credit, Forest Service timber planners in the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest on the north side of Cook and Green Pass recognize the ecosystem benefits of recovering post-fire forests. They are wisely focusing their activities on removing burned roadside hazard trees while protecting remote, recovering backcountry stands.

In contrast, the Klamath National Forest leadership sees post-fire forests as an opportunity to clearcut otherwise protected old-growth forest stands in the backcountry. In the case of Cook and Green, they hope to clearcut old-growth “Reserve” forests that are designated as critical habitat for the survival and recovery of Northern spotted owls. Worse yet, the forests proposed for clearcutting are on steep, unstable slopes in the headwaters of Seiad Creek, a major tributary to the Klamath River.

THERE IS A BETTER WAY — Unlike Klamath National Forest timber planners who come and go as they move up the career ladder depending on how much timber volume they can cut, the people of the Karuk Tribe have lived with fire in these forests for thousands of years. The Karuk Department of Natural Resources recommends that the Forest Service protect wildlife, watersheds and fisheries by retaining, rather than clearcutting, post-fire forests in the Seiad Creek headwaters.

Through the “Karuk Alternative,” roadside hazard trees would be removed, fuels around homes and communities would be treated, and prescribed fire would be utilized over time to retain forest conditions that allow for fire to play its natural role in these fire-evolved forests. Rather than clearcutting post-fire forests on steep slopes, the Karuk (like the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest) advocate for watershed and forest restoration. This can be contrasted with the intention of the Klamath National Forest to increase future fire hazard by converting post-fire forest stands into flammable tree plantations in an attempt to maximize timber volume production.

COOK AND GREEN PASS IS A SPECIAL PLACE — In their zeal to clearcut old-growth reserves, Klamath National Forest timber planners this time around may have bitten off more than they can chew. The Cook and Green Pass area is justifiably beloved by thousands of public lands advocates.

Located in a hub of botanical hotspots, the forests, lakes, meadows and creeks in this portion of the Siskiyou Crest are a recreational and biological haven. Some folks first come through the area while hiking the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada. Others first fall in love with it when seeing the Red Buttes while boating on Applegate Lake. However one first experiences Cook and Green Pass, the outcome is almost invariably the same: thankfulness that such an astoundingly beautiful and intact portion of the Siskiyou Crest remains part of our natural heritage. KS Wild is here to make sure future generations get to enjoy its glory too.



(RE)CONNECTING THE CRITICAL LINKAGES OF THE KLAMATH KNOT



Photo: Darren Campbell

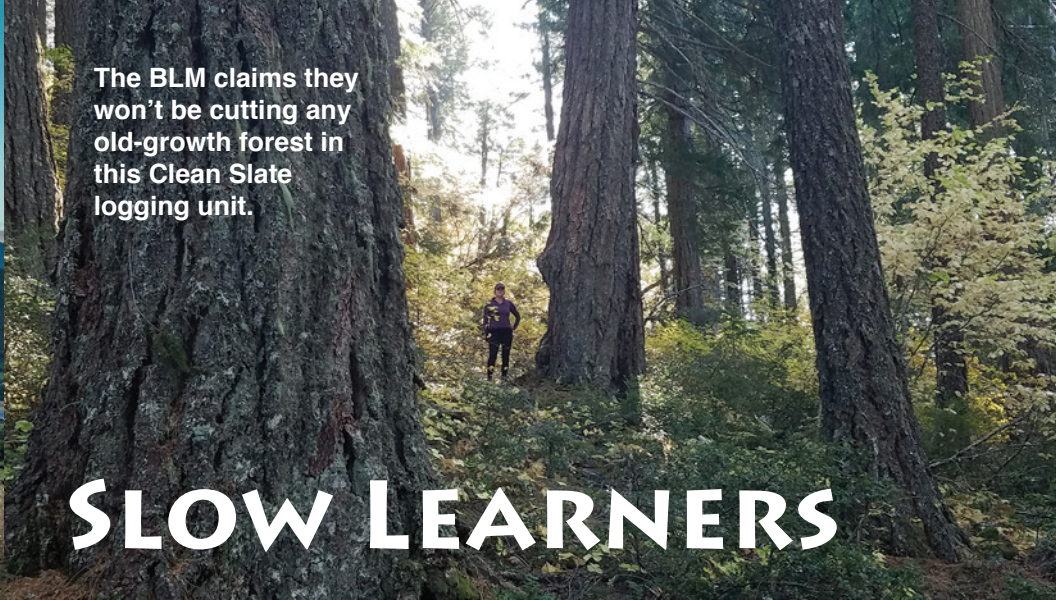
Both ancient wisdom and modern science emphasize the interconnectedness of all things. Landscapes recede from view without end, habitats merge, water flows continuously, and nutrients cycle forever. The health of all living things depends on connectivity.

NATURE NEEDS ROOM TO ROAM — Habitat loss and fragmentation are among the leading threats to biodiversity, both globally and in the Klamath-Siskiyou. KS Wild has been attempting to address this problem by protecting vast tracts of wildlands and waterways. Conservation of these areas preserves vital ecological processes that maintain clean water and healthy habitats, processes such as the influence of species from large predators to soil bacteria, patterns of pollination, gene flow, interactions between species, nutrient cycling, and other ecosystem services.

FROM FRAGMENTATION TO LINKED ECOSYSTEMS — KS Wild's mission to protect forests and rivers is key to preserving a connected landscape. Development, resource extraction, and habitat degradation have created enormous connectivity "barriers" on the natural landscape. It is of the utmost importance to make a geographically strategic and truly concerted effort to assess and restore critical landscape linkages for a functioning ecosystem network. We plan to work toward a more connected landscape across the KS. We are starting to envision all that this entails: partnerships between allies as unlikely as conservationists and construction workers, wildlife passages crossing major roadways, restored habitats that welcome climate refugee species.

Recently, we have been focused on the continentally significant linkage between the Cascade Range and the Siskiyou Crest. Here, ecosystems collide; Great Basin, Sierra Nevada, Siskiyou, and Cascades, creating one of the most biologically important regions of North America. We continue working at the front lines of defense for the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument--threatened by the interests of the White House.

We have immense challenges ahead. Connectivity will require widespread collaboration across federal, state, local and tribal governments, the support of information from scientists, traditional ecological practitioners and wildlife managers, and utilization of skilled engineers, transportation agencies, landowners, conservancies, and restoration experts. Despite the challenge, the implementation of this grand dream of a connected landscape is essential.



The BLM claims they won't be cutting any old-growth forest in this Clean Slate logging unit.

SLOW LEARNERS

DOES THE BLM THINK WE WILL JUST GIVE UP?

It's a good news-bad news story, but this is no joke.

With the Pickett West timber sale, the Medford Bureau of Land Management (BLM) planned to log hundreds of acres of older forests loaded with big trees. The logging units were spread throughout our rural communities in the Illinois Valley. The logging would have reduced the forest canopy to less than a third. It would have increased fire hazard, harmed wildlife, and muddied important sources of clean water.

KS Wild and allies fought it and stopped it! We rallied supporters to send letters. We held a community forum. We submitted detailed project comments and supporters submitted a record number of formal protests. We gathered a hundred people from our communities to protest a related public lands timber auction. Meanwhile, citizen-scientists with the Northwest Ecosystem Survey Team climbed into ancient trees and found numerous protected red tree vole nests that the BLM conveniently overlooked.

It worked. The BLM cancelled the project! And then a few weeks later?

Yup. The Medford BLM proposed the Clean Slate timber sale, which plans to log hundreds of acres of older forests loaded with big trees. The logging units will be spread throughout rural communities in the Illinois Valley. The logging will reduce the forest canopy to less than a third. It will increase fire hazard, harm wildlife, and muddy important sources of clean water.

The joke is going to be on BLM. People are waking up to the understanding that logging old forests with big fire-resilient trees increases fire hazard in our communities. After the summer of 2017, we aren't going to tolerate that in our backyards anymore. The Illinois Valley has rallied to fight bad logging projects for decades. They aren't going to stop now. Keep your eye on Clean Slate.

With your help, we will win that one too.



Photo: Allen Hallmark

HUNDREDS RALLY IN SALEM

On January 11, nearly 400 people rallied in Salem in response to a new Jordan Cove LNG climate pollution report, to urge Governor Kate Brown to stop the project in its tracks. Folks from Portland, Ashland, and everywhere in between came together to tell the Governor that she cannot claim to be working hard for Oregon's climate goals while not taking a stand on Jordan Cove.

Tribal representatives, youth, state representatives, climate activists and others spoke to a crowd that chanted and waved colorful banners and signs. Afterwards, folks lobbied their senators and representatives on the new climate report.

JORDAN COVE GAS PIPELINE: A CLIMATE DISASTER FOR OREGON

According to a new assessment by Oil Change International, the Jordan Cove fracked gas pipeline export project would produce nearly 15 times the greenhouse gas emissions released by the Boardman coal plant, Oregon's largest polluter. The January report is the first comprehensive analysis of the climate impacts of the fracked gas pipeline and LNG export terminal. The report looks at source pollution from the fracking fields in the U.S. and Canadian Rockies to combustion pollution from shipping to Asia.

Oregon's only coal-fired power plant is scheduled to close in 2020. If the Jordan Cove project moves forward, the massive fifteen-times increase in climate pollution would be equivalent to adding eight million passenger vehicles to the road. Oregon's current population is only four million people! Simply put, the Jordan Cove fracked gas pipeline project would make it impossible for Oregon to meet its climate goals.

With your help, we will continue to put pressure on Governor Brown to stand up for our communities as a true climate leader and oppose the Jordan Cove fracked gas project. Thanks to Rogue Climate, Deb Evans, and Oil Change International for bringing these important findings to the public. For a full copy of the report, visit: www.priceofoil.org.

for important comment periods! Rogue Riverkeeper is carefully tracking water quality implications and we will soon need your voice! We will be sending information on upcoming periods, workshops, and hearings. Stop Jordan Cove! No LNG, No Pipeline.

CELEBRATE WITH ROGUE RIVERKEEPER 50 YEARS OF THE WILD & SCENIC RIVERS ACT

This year marks the 50th anniversary of a milestone law that protects many of our remarkable rivers and streams, the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. The Rogue was designated as one of the original eight Wild & Scenic Rivers when the act was created in 1968. Since then, more sections of the Rogue have been protected under this law, as well as the Illinois River from Briggs Creek to its confluence with the Rogue.

Join us for one of the many events we have scheduled throughout 2018 to learn about and celebrate our Wild & Scenic Rogue and Illinois Rivers. Check our website and Facebook page for updates, events, and more!



A ROGUE RIVERKEEPER SPEAKER SERIES

Join us for this casual, fun, and informative speaker series. Each month we will host guest speakers throughout the valley to talk about different aspects of our Wild & Scenic Rogue & Illinois Rivers.

**3/22 Wild & Scenic Rogue River & Fish
Location TBD, Medford
5:30 - 7:30PM**

**4/25 Wild & Scenic Rivers: An American
Legacy with Tim Palmer
Ashland Outdoor Store, Ashland
6 - 9PM with Social Hour**

**5/24 Wild & Scenic Recreation
REI, Medford
5:30 - 7:30PM**

Please check our website or Facebook page for information on speakers, locations, and other details at rogueriverkeeper.org

Photos from top: Momentum River Expeditions, Rogue Canyon Adventures, and Dang Ngo



LOOMING THREATS

WISHING FOR THE GOOD OL' DAYS OF 2017?!

While Donald Trump's first year in office was no picnic at KS Wild, the damage done to the Klamath-Siskiyou was significantly tempered by our hard work and by the new administration's sheer lack of competence. In 2018 though, they are set to unleash an unprecedented attack on our region.

DESTROYING OBAMA'S LEGACY

The defining policy feature of Trump's first year in office was the notion that if Obama created it, Trump will destroy it. That's a huge problem in the KS, because President Obama created some very important protections right before he left office.

At the urging of a broad array of scientists, Obama significantly expanded the **CASCADE-SISKIYOU NATIONAL MONUMENT**, stretching from Grizzly Peak above Ashland, all the way to the edge of the Siskiyou Crest west of Pilot Rock. Last Spring, Trump and his ethically challenged Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke set up a faux public comment period where millions expressed support for continuing monument protection.

Despite the power of your collective voice, our comments were replaced with an error-ridden report calling for decimation of the Monument. Devoid of scientific or legal reasoning, the report remains on hold at the White House. But action handing the Monument's forests to the timber industry could come any day.

Enormous local support for the Monument is of no concern to the slash and burn forces currently in charge of the federal government. The same is true on the western side of the KS where Obama's withdrawal of 100,000 acres of National Forest and BLM land from nickel mining is under threat.

The **KALMIOPSIS MINERAL WITHDRAWAL** includes large sections located south and west of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness. It's an area characterized by some of the world's most beautiful and pristine waters. Salmon desperately depend on them. Nickel mining would devastate these places and that's why the withdrawal had overwhelming support from local citizens, businesses, and political leaders.

Now, an out-of-state Congressperson has called on Trump to reverse the Obama withdrawal and open the area up for exploitation. Trump has yet to take action, but this campaign could go from a 2017 win to a 2018 red alert overnight.

MORE OF THE SAME, A LOT MORE

Proposed logging projects, both Forest Service and BLM, Oregon and California, green tree and salvage, are piling up on our desks. With eight million acres to watchdog and a staff of ten who do a lot more than just stop bad timber sales, we are in triage. We screen for the projects that are the biggest threats to biodiversity, large roadless areas, and impacts to member communities. Two articles this issue detail priority logging proposals we are fighting: "Cook and Green Pass Targeted" – page 4 and "Slow Learners" – page 7.

This private lands “salvage” logging near the Kalmiopsis Wilderness is what happens when public lands laws don’t apply.



Photo: Heidi Martin

Unfortunately, logging isn’t the only threat we regularly address. Just one summer of public lands grazing can reduce fragile mountain meadows on the Siskiyou Crest, in the Marble Mountains, and in the Rogue-Umpqua Divide Wilderness to bare dirt. In 2018, we expect to see Forest Service proposals to dramatically increase public lands grazing in portions of the Siskiyou Crest and the Marble Mountains.

A DARK FUTURE ENVISIONED

As hyperbolic as it sounds, one additional looming threat could outdo all of the above in its potential for liquidating public lands for private profit. We will need 41 Senators to stop it, and that is never a given.

Congress has failed to properly fund forest firefighting efforts for decades. Timber interests and their political allies have a “solution” and it is, of course, massive increases in logging. Science showing increased fire hazard from cutting big trees and old forests doesn’t concern them. Congress has rhetoric and hysteria instead.

The “**WESTERMAN BILL**,” H.R. 2936, has already passed the House. The damage it would do to public lands coast to coast is too extensive to list here. But there is a special section targeted at the KS that is almost too hideous to imagine. The section on “O&C” lands could mean the unraveling of the Monument, Wild and Scenic protections, and even Wilderness. We expect action in the Senate on a similar free-for-all logging law perhaps as early as the next omnibus spending bill.

DON’T DESPAIR. We’ve been successfully facing down threats for 20 years together. But remember, in many cases, the only thing stopping Trump’s actions in our region is KS Wild and its members taking action. Please renew your commitment to read those emails we send and take action when we ask. It matters and it is going to matter more in 2018 than ever before.

“Early seral habitat creation” on private timber lands in the Cow Creek Watershed.

A CLEARCUT BY ANY OTHER NAME...

Q: What do most people call removal of 85% of the trees within a timber sale unit?

A: Clearcut

Q: What does the BLM call removal of 85% of the trees within a timber sale unit?

A: A Light Intensity Timber Area.

While the term “clearcutting” is a forbidden word among commercial logging advocates, the truth is that anyone who has ever flown over southern Oregon or climbed any of the region’s mountain peaks knows that our forests and watersheds are riddled with clearcuts. Millions upon millions of acres of native forests on public and private lands have been slicked off and converted into even-age timber plantations designed to maximize economic profits while increasing fire danger and minimizing wildlife, watershed, and recreational forest values.

Having largely abandoned the small-diameter dry forest restoration thinning that showed such promise, the Medford and Klamath Falls BLM are rushing to get as many clearcut timber sales out the door as possible under their new Resource Management Plan. But you’ll never see the word “clearcut” in their proposals. Instead, the removal of ancient forest canopy and the establishment of fire-prone tree plantations is referred to by timber sale planners as “regeneration harvesting” within a “Light Intensity Timber Area.”

Similarly, the anti-environmental legislation currently promoted by Congressman Walden (R-OR) would exempt projects on public lands that “create early seral habitat” from all public comment and environmental review. Guess what “creating early seral habitat” is a euphemism for...you guessed it--clearcutting!

The timber industry has long resented progressive public lands managers focusing on thinning dense, previously logged second-growth stands. With the new administration, their dreams of a return to clearcutting native forests are becoming an all-to-real nightmare. Just don’t look for the BLM (or Congressman Walden or the timber industry) to say the “C” word--its almost as if they are embarrassed by it.

FEATURED HIKE:

BAKER CYPRESS BOTANICAL AREA

KLAMATH NATIONAL FOREST

Located on the gorgeous West Fork of Seiad Creek, the Baker Cypress Botanical Area is a seldom-visited gem. The steep, rugged ridges and watersheds make for strenuous hiking. Add in numerous creek crossings and a trail that gets very faint as it ascends to Lilypad Lake and the Siskiyou Crest, and you have a trail that is not for beginners. But for those seeking wildness and adventure this route is a wonder.

Even finding the “trailhead” would be difficult without a good map. Located about 6 miles up the Seiad Creek road (48N20) from the turn-off of Highway 96, the trailhead consists of a short unsigned spur road to the left (west) just before 48N20 reaches a bridge crossing

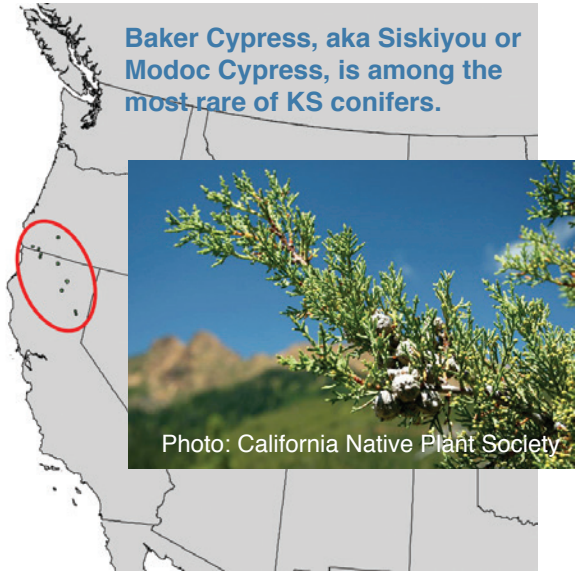
Seiad Creek. The short steep spur road ends at a turnaround suitable for parking and the route begins with an immediate ford of the West Fork of Seiad Creek.

After a steep switchback up an old mining road, the actual hiking trail splits off west following the creek into the heart of the impressive and intact Kangaroo Roadless Area, eventually reaching the Pacific Crest Trail on the Siskiyou Crest near Lily Pad Lake, after thousands of feet of elevation gain through some of the most remote country in the region.

The elusive Baker Cypress, for which the area gets its name, is an extremely rare, diminutive conifer found in a small handful of areas in southern Oregon and northern California. Also known as Siskiyou Cypress or Modoc Cypress, it may be the most difficult conifer to locate in the Klamath-Siskiyou, and yet here it is found in abundance.

The West Fork of Seiad Creek is one of those special places that have become something of a rarity: an intact watershed in which natural processes, including fire, have been allowed to occur free of significant logging and road building. In other words, it is a wild place in a wild mountain range.

While the Klamath National Forest is busy proposing post-fire clearcutting in the East Fork of Seiad Creek below Cook and Green Pass, the West Fork shows what nature can do when left to its own devices, with stunningly beautiful results.



CREATURES OF THE KLAMATH-SISKIYOU

Portland-based artist Zoe Keller consulted with KS Wild for a masterpiece highlighting some of the rare, endemic, and iconic species that make their home in the Klamath-Siskiyou.



HOW MANY CAN YOU IDENTIFY? HAVE YOU SEEN THEM IN THE WILD?

FLORA

Siskiyou mariposa lily
Port Orford cedar
California cobra lily
Gentner's fritillary
Siskiyou fritillary
Siskiyou lewisia
Yreka phlox
Douglas fir
Brewer's spruce
Siskiyou fireweed

FAUNA

Red tree vole
Coastal tailed frog
Olive-sided flycatcher
Siskiyou salamander
Sierra Nevada blue
Lewis's woodpecker
Pacific sideband
Coho salmon
Pacific fisher
Painted lady
Mardon skipper
Vesper Sparrow
Sphinx moth

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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.



SAVE THE DATE
2018 ANNUAL DINNER
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6

—NEW LOCATION—
THE ASHLAND HILLS HOTEL

www.kswild.org

www.rogueriverkeeper.org

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Cover: Oak tree in Upper Bear Creek watershed near Ashland, Oregon. Photo by Dairren Campbell.

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