

# KS WILD NEWS

The Journal of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center

SUMMER 2022



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## Notes From the Trailhead

Environmental defense has long been a defining characteristic in my life. The first thing I did when I graduated high school was head to Humboldt County in California to join the Earth First! defense of Headwaters—a forest of ancient redwoods threatened for clear-cut after Charles Hurwitz and his conglomerate Maxxam took control of Pacific Lumber Company. It was the summer of 1996, just prior to the agreement reached that September establishing the 7,472 acre Headwaters Forest Reserve (see the hike featured on the next page). We rallied. We marched. We got arrested. Judi Bari was there. Bonnie Raitt was there. It was the first time I was part of a movement; the first time I was part of something so much bigger than myself.

At the time, I had little understanding of the legacy of forest defenders who had preceded me—the decades of protests, tree-sits, monkey-wrenching, hunger strikes, and direct action that began in the 80s and 90s during a time known as the Timber Wars; a time when people were demanding change to the way the government and private industry were treating the last remaining stands of old-growth trees in the Pacific Northwest. All I understood at the time was that old-growth trees, and the ecosystems they support, deserved the greatest protection.

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.

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Oregon and California were at the center of some of the biggest fights over some of the biggest trees in the U.S. Old-growth forests were on the chopping block and people all along the West coast were taking a stand. The history of forest defense in the Klamath-Siskiyou stretches back to this time; a time when people put their lives on the line through civil disobedience to protect the Kalmiopsis and fight for the Siskiyou. The Bald Mountain Road Blockade in 1983 sparked a movement, which paved the way for young activists like me two decades later.

Now, forty years later, KS Wild is still fighting for permanent protection of the remaining old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest. Our old-growth campaign, which you can read more about in this issue, pushes federal agencies to enact policies that halt the logging of older forests on public lands and to recover old-growth forests that have been lost. These forests are essential to removing climate pollution and storing carbon—two factors that combat the effects of climate change. Older forests also do a better job of withstanding more frequent, more severe wildfires. We rely on older forests to provide clean water and to support a diversity of wildlife. It isn't enough to just retain a few champion trees; it is the ecosystem that is essential—the standing snags that provide habitat, the downed trees that provide soil nutrients, and system of younger trees that continue to sustain the forest.

Forest defense is climate defense. I may no longer be chaining myself to road blocks, but I will be a forest defender for my entire life.

*Jessica Klinke is Communications Director for KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper.*



## **Thank you, Rich Nawa!**

In May, KS Wild said goodbye to long-time staff ecologist, Rich Nawa, who retired after nearly 30 years defending the Klamath-Siskiyou. Prior to joining KS Wild in 2011, Rich was staff ecologist at the Siskiyou Project for 18 years. As a salmon and stream expert, Rich provided our conservation programs with aquatic science support and worked to reign in mining that often damages stream ecosystems. With a bachelors and masters degree in zoology from Southern Illinois University, Rich assisted with salmon research on the southern Oregon coast as a graduate research assistant at Oregon State University before beginning his career as a wildlife biologist with the Bureau of Land Management in Elko, Nevada. You'll continue to find Rich camping at the coast where he enjoys fishing and hiking, and I'm sure you'll still spot his name on the occasional letter to the editor in local publications. Thank you for your long-standing support of the wild lands, wild rivers, and wildlife of the Klamath-Siskiyou, Rich.



Roseburg

97

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Medford

199

Pacific Ocean

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5

5

101

6

299

Redding

# HIKING THROUGH ANCIENT FORESTS

One of the best ways to celebrate and protect mature and old-growth forests is to get out and explore them. Here is a sampler of some of the old-growth hikes in our region. Full descriptions of these hikes can be found at our website - [www.kswild.org](http://www.kswild.org). Always use caution, good planning, and check in with managing agencies before embarking on a trip. KS Wild assumes no liability if you intend to visit any of the places featured in our materials.

## 1. London Peak

### **Medford District Bureau of Land Management**

London Peak is located in the community of Wolf Creek, about 20 miles north of Grants Pass, Oregon. The out and back trail is steep, but is easily accessible from the I-5 corridor and a great way to explore the region's old-growth Douglas fir forest ecosystem.

## 2. South Fork Rogue River

### **Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest**

The South Fork Rogue River trail is about 10 miles from Butte Falls, Oregon and features old-growth Ponderosa and Sugar pine and Douglas fir trees. There are three trailheads; the entire length of trail is 12 miles.

## 3. Briggs Creek

### **Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest**

The Briggs Creek area can be accessed from Hayes Hill Summit on Highway 199 south of Grants Pass, or from the Merlin-Galice road. Some of the largest Ponderosa pines in the world are in this area.

## 4. South Kelsey Trail

### **Six Rivers National Forest/Smith National Recreation Area**

South Kelsey is an hour drive from Gasquet adjacent to Redwood National Park. An old pack route, portions of the trail are great day hikes or longer sections are phenomenal backpacking trips with large trees including Incense and Port Orford cedars.

## 5. Fen Trail

### **Klamath National Forest**

The Fen trail is about an hour drive from Fort Jones, California and is located in one of the most botanically unique areas of the Klamath National Forest. A short spur trail brings you to an old-growth forest featuring Shasta red fir, Jeffrey pine, and more!

## 6. Headwaters Forest

### **Arcata District Bureau of Land Management**

Just outside of Eureka, on the Northern California Coast is the 7,472-acre Headwaters Forest Reserve. It was established in 1999 after a decade-long grassroots effort to protect some of the last intact, old-growth redwood forests.

# PERMANENT PROTECTIONS FOR ANCIENT FORESTS

KS Wild has been advocating for mature and old-growth forest protections since its founding in 1997. Over the years, science has shown that not only are old-growth forests important for clean water and supporting a diversity of wildlife habitat, we now know these older forests are key to combating climate change. Our biggest, oldest trees are climate champions — they absorb and store carbon for centuries helping to slow down the warming of our planet.

25 years later we are still fighting to protect our remaining ancient forests. The Biden Administration recently announced an Executive Order (EO) to protect older forests, including the mature and old-growth forests here in the Pacific Northwest. This is a major step forward in KS Wild's campaign to protect forests and fight climate change!

The EO directs the US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop policies to protect federal mature and old-growth forests in the US. The process begins with these agencies mapping all the mature and old-growth forests in the nation within one year. Once the maps are completed, the USFS and BLM must analyze and develop policies that address these threats to mature and old-growth forests.

The EO is a great first step, but we need to ensure that this process leads to meaningful protections for our nation's oldest trees. The EO does not give immediate protections to mature and old-growth trees, so we must demand that agencies stop logging these climate champions. Older forests are rare; we have lost about 80% of these forests in the Pacific Northwest after decades of logging and development. Timber sale planners continue to target these old forests, especially on land managed by the Western Oregon BLM.



*This old-growth douglas fir tree is set to be logged in the Medford District BLM Poor Windy timber sale.*

We still have a lot of work to do. KS Wild will be engaging with the USFS and BLM to make sure they include all of Oregon's ancient forests in their inventory. We are also calling on the Biden Administration to adopt a permanent rule banning the logging of our mature and old-growth forests. It is past time that these public forests are protected from shortsighted policies that prioritize logging big trees over forest restoration and conservation.

Biden's Executive Order will not automatically protect old trees. Currently the USFS and BLM in southwest Oregon are planning timber sales that threaten our old-growth forests. One example is the Medford District BLM. They are about to implement Poor Windy targeting old-growth trees near Grants Pass along the I-5 corridor. Trees well over 100 years old are marked to be logged. KS Wild has been working diligently to protect these older forests, but we need your help.

**Join the hundreds of people who have taken action by signing our petition calling on the Biden Administration to adopt a permanent rule banning the logging of our mature and old-growth forests at [www.kswild.org/oldgrowth-campaign](http://www.kswild.org/oldgrowth-campaign).**

The Klamath-Siskiyou region is home to old-growth forests with the most conifer diversity in the nation (30 different species!). By protecting old trees, we are ensuring healthy ecosystems can thrive and that our communities are prepared from the future impacts of climate change. We need to protect these old forests once and for all.

*Alexi Lovechio is KS Wild's Forest & Climate Coordinator.*



## Join the Movement To Protect Old-Growth Forests

We need to ensure that decision makers understand there is widespread public support for protecting mature and old growth forests on federal lands. To participate, take a picture or short video of your favorite #ClimateForest or #ClimateTree and tell the Biden Administration these trees and forests are #WorthMoreStanding by posting it on one or more social media channels and tag @KSWild.



# STORMWATER: WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Most of us understand that a watershed is an area of land that accepts precipitation and drains it to a single point. But the path that water travels to a stream or river, determines how clean or polluted that water is. The recent petroleum product spill into Bear Creek after the fire at the Carson-Pacific Pride facility was an extreme example of how a little understood piece of our hydrologic system and urban infrastructure affects our streams and aquatic habitats.

When rainwater falls on undeveloped land like a field or forest, the soil acts as a sponge and absorbs water. When the soil can't absorb more rain, it runs off in rivulets and then to streams. But when rain falls on impervious surfaces, like streets and roofs, it runs off the paved surface, carrying all kinds of pollutants such as particles and fluids from our vehicles or pesticide or fertilizer residues.

In urban areas, there is a network of drains and pipes throughout the city which carry stormwater away from developed areas and to a creek. Most every drain you see at a curb or in a parking lot leads to a pipe. That pipe may lead to another pipe, but eventually, they lead to the nearest stream. In Medford, there are around 50 pipes which empty stormwater



directly into Bear Creek. This type of design was a common practice implemented over decades of development in our cities. This is also a part of our infrastructure that is now regulated under the Clean Water Act. The stormwater infrastructure section of the Clean Water Act is the "Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System" permit, known as the "MS4". Several local jurisdictions (Ashland, Medford, Central Point, Talent, Phoenix, Jackson County, Eagle Point, Grants Pass, Josephine County, and the City of Rogue River) hold this permit which has many requirements, the most important one is to not add pollutants to the stream via the stormwater sewer system. Our watershed is connected, even through the storm sewer system, and Rogue Riverkeeper is on the job watching even these lesser known, but still important impacts on our rivers and streams.

*Frances Oyung is Rogue Riverkeeper's Program Director*



# HOW DO WATERWAYS GO FROM IMPAIRED TO IMPROVED?

In the wake of the Pacific Pride gas station oil spill into Bear Creek it is important to think about what policies are in place to bring our impaired waters back to health. Water bodies like Bear Creek that do not meet state water quality standards are placed on a state list of impaired water bodies called the 303(d) list. Known as the 303(d) list because of the Section 303(d) requirement of the Clean Water Act, rivers, streams or lakes that are on this list require the development of what is called a Total Maximum Daily Load Plan also known as a TMDL.

Many water bodies in Oregon do not meet water quality standards for various pollutants at certain times of the year or year round. In the Rogue Basin, bacteria, temperature, sedimentation, pH, and dissolved oxygen have been identified as water quality impairments. The TMDL for each pollutant is determined by extensive data collection and analysis by the state to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards. This means wastewater treatment facilities, federally managed dams, irrigation districts and sources of water runoff pollution such as cities, rural areas, and agricultural lands must operate within the confines of the TMDL plan so they do not further contribute to the impairment of the water way.

Per the Clean Water Act, these water quality standards are intended to protect many important uses of our waterways but especially the most sensitive uses of waterways such as providing habitat for salmon, steelhead, trout and other cold-water fishes. These temperature standards are also intended to protect fish during their different life stages including spawning, rearing, and migration. Water temperature is greatly affected by a variety of human activities like forestry, agricultural, residential, urban and industrial operations. Cold water sources like streams and wetlands help lower the temperatures of our waterways that have been listed as impaired for temperature. Many of the streams and rivers in the Rogue basin are currently listed as impaired for one or several water quality standards. It is our duty to help our waterways like Bear Creek so they continue to improve by enforcing the water quality standards provided by the Clean Water Act.

*Emily Bowes is Rogue Riverkeeper's Conservation Director*

# REGIONAL TIMBER SALE ROUNDUP

On thousands of acres of public lands in southern Oregon and northern California KS Wild works with federal land managers to encourage restoration practices such as the thinning of existing second growth timber plantations and the utilization of prescribed fire. But when the Forest Service and BLM propose timber sales on public lands that will harm wildlife habitat and watersheds we step in and advocate for forest conservation.

Three timber sales that we are especially focused on in the summer of 2022 include:

## **1. The River Complex Post-Fire “Salvage” Logging Timber Sale on the Klamath National Forest**

The Klamath National Forest has a long and notorious history of exploiting wildfire as a mechanism to throw out the rulebook and open up “Late Successional Reserves” to clearcut logging. The entire purpose of these old-growth reserves is to provide habitat for wildlife species of concern. Yet Klamath timber planners routinely target the LSRs for salvage logging such that they are “reserves” in name only. In the past decade the vast majority of old-growth logging on the Klamath has been located in the Late Successional Reserve land use allocation.

The River Complex fire salvage timber sale would continue this trend by logging post-fire forests in the headwaters of the Salmon Mountains just north of the Trinity-Alps Wilderness Area. We need your help to get the Forest Service to focus on fuels and treatments near homes and communities instead of targeting backcountry old-growth reserves for clearcutting.

## **2. The “Integrated Vegetation Management” Project Late Mungers Timber Sale on the Medford District Bureau of Land Management**

What the heck is “integrated vegetation management” you may ask. It’s the new BLM term for downgrading and removing existing late-successional habitat from the Late Successional Reserves. The BLM has also invented a new logging term called “open seral habitat” which is a more pleasant way to refer to a clearcut in which existing forests are removed from the so-called reserves.

The first commercial timber sale emerging from the integrated vegetation management program is the Late Mungers logging project located in the Late Successional Reserves near Williams, Oregon. The timber sale involves the downgrading and removal of old-growth forests providing both foraging and dispersal habitat for owls and other species that utilize late-successional forest habitat. Please stand with us to protect these old-growth forests from being turned into “open seral habitat.”

## **3. The Stella Timber Sale on the Rogue-River Siskiyou National Forest**

The Stella timber sale, located along the Upper Rogue River, includes a number of proposals that will actually aid forest health and resiliency. In particular, the project would thin a number of existing timber plantations, close a handful of logging roads that are dumping sediment into streams, and reintroduce prescribed fire to the landscape.



Unfortunately, the Stella timber sale also contains some proposals that would harm wildlife and watershed values. In particular, the project calls for logging Riparian Reserves that are older than 80 years of age, building a slew of new logging roads and log landings in the backcountry, and downgrading ancient forests that provide spotted owl nesting, roosting and foraging habitat.

KS Wild and our allies filed a formal “objection” to the Stella project in which we encouraged the Forest Service to move ahead with the legitimate restoration treatments and asked them to refrain from logging that damages wildlife habitat and watershed values. We remain in negotiations with the Forest Service to attempt to resolve those issues.

*George Sexton is KS Wild's Conservation Director.*

**If it seems like public lands managers are targeting riparian and late-successional reserves for logging across the region that's because they are. Let's work together to encourage real restoration instead of destructive logging.**

# Report Back: Connectivity Symposium



In 2018, our partners at the Selberg Institute and Wildwood Consulting published the Cascade-Siskiyou Ecological Connectivity Assessment as a resource to identify high-priority conservation areas in the region, helping launch conversations and collaborative efforts in southwest Oregon and northern California. In that same year, KS Wild had the pleasure of being a part of one of the first Connectivity Symposiums in the region, and we once again had the opportunity this spring to convene with the Selberg Institute, Center for Large Landscape Conservation, Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, and Wildlands Network.

In early May KS Wild co-hosted the Symposium at Southern Oregon University with more than 55 participating individuals, where our objectives supported existing connectivity efforts in the region, including the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project and the Oregon Connectivity Assessment and Mapping Project. Along with presentations from Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife on the roughly 60 focal species associated with Oregon's mapping project, participants at the Symposium also heard about research, monitoring, restoration, and connectivity projects from a slew of organizations, including: Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossings Coalition, California and Oregon Departments of Transportation, Wildlands Network, the Yurok Tribe, as well as research-students and professors from Southern Oregon University and Oregon State University.

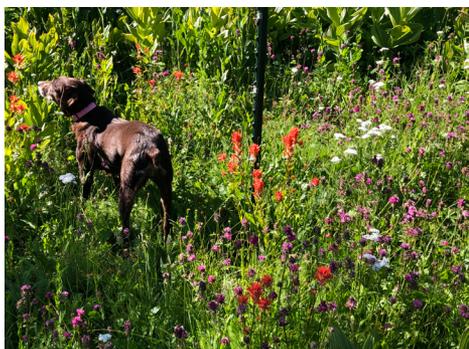
We welcomed partners and participants from as far away as Sacramento and Seattle, many of which see this region between the Central Valley of California and Willamette Valley of Oregon as a vital connectivity corridor between coastal mountain habitat and drier inland regions. Later in the day, participants in small subgroups focused on various topics related to Land Use Policy & Planning, Conservation Easements, Research & Monitoring, Stewardship & Outreach, as well as Transportation & Infrastructure. A highlight for many was hearing from restoration planners and specialists from Resource Environmental Solutions (RES) regarding the four Klamath River dam removals, which are slated to begin in 2023.

You can catch a glimpse of some of the research on connectivity in the region by viewing the online presentation from Wildwood Consulting and Evan Frost at [www.selberginstitute.org/connectivity-assessments](http://www.selberginstitute.org/connectivity-assessments). The organization is looking forward to building off the success of the symposium to help influence forest and wildlife management in the greater Cascade-Siskiyou linkage area. We believe working across public and private lands and influencing transportation, policy, and research is so important, with the Siskiyou Crest and Cascade-Siskiyou being critical for regional connectivity.

*Michael Dotson is KS Wild's Executive Director.*

# ALEX HOLE: A BIOLOGICAL GEM

The Siskiyou Crest holds many gems, and one particular biological treasure dear to our hearts is a high elevation wetland meadow called Alex Hole, a Forest Service Botanical Area candidate. It's located on the southern tip of the Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest within California. A dramatic cirque basin and an expansive meadow with untouched forests of the Condrey Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area are what make Alex Hole such a special place in the Klamath-Siskiyou.



As a watchdog organization, KS Wild identified Alex Hole as an area in need of protection from unauthorized cattle drifting over from the adjacent Klamath National Forest. Every year trespassing cattle trampled the Alex Hole meadow, destroying fragile plant habitats. Since 2018 KS Wild has partnered with the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest twice a year to put up and take down a barbed fence to keep out the illegally trespassing cows during the grazing allotment period from June through October.

During the summer months you'll find vibrant blooms of *Lewisia leana* on the cliffsides and rocky outcrops, and in the meadow below are the fragrant orange blossoms of the Volmer's lily. The meadow is also home to giant larkspurs, monkshoods, false bugbane, asters, alpine shooting stars, and checkermallows.

This is the 5th successive year of this stewardship project with the help of KS Wild land steward volunteers and the direction of Forest Service staff who work together to mend the barbed wire fence and repair damaged T-posts.

## What can you do to help protect this gem?

Please join us at our next stewardship day at Alex Hole, where you will enjoy breathtaking views as you work together with other supporters and KS Wild staff! Although the fence is holding strong, the vegetation just outside the fence is not doing so great. Overgrazing and trespassing cows are still a threat to this fragile ecosystem, but photo monitoring and on-the-ground efforts to keep the fence repaired and in working order are saving this area from complete destruction while KS Wild continues to legally challenge any resulting unauthorized damage to the area. We hope you can join us on a project soon! Visit [kswild.org/events](https://kswild.org/events) for more information and to sign up.

*Allee Gustafson is KS Wild's Community Organizer*

# LEGACY GIVING

Annual donations from supporters like you help the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center address threats and opportunities that pop up on short notice. Besides making a charitable contribution each year to KS Wild, our community can help sustain the organization and our mission to protect the wildlands and wildlife of the Klamath-Siskiyou through planned giving opportunities.

The charitable gifts you make, and plan for, today will make an impact for non-profits in times of uncertainty. The non-profit sector has been impacted by the economic struggles associated with a prolonged public health crisis. A simple, but highly-effective way to start with planned giving is to sign up for recurring programs like monthly giving. KS Wild and its Rogue Riverkeeper program provide opportunities to sign up for monthly giving in our two seasonal appeals, and online at [www.kswild.org/donate](http://www.kswild.org/donate).

In addition to monthly or recurring giving, individuals and families can support the long-term sustainability of the organization through:

- **Donation of stock or other mutual funds:** If you have shares in a brokerage account, you can instruct your broker to electronically transfer securities from your account into KS Wild's Calvert brokerage account.
- **Bequests or gifts from one's will/estate:** There are various types of bequests and options for donating real estate, and other types of personal property can also be included in your bequest.

You can contact KS Wild's development team at 541-488-5789 x 1010 to talk about planned giving, or you can look up any number of financial advisors or legal professionals to help you with large bequests. We highly recommend the services of our long-time business supporters at Siskiyou Law, who specialize in estate planning. You can learn more from them at [www.siskiyoulaw.net](http://www.siskiyoulaw.net).



# GET OUTSIDE WITH KS WILD



## **Silver Fork Basin to Dutchman Peak**

**Saturday, July 9th, 2022, 10:00am-3:00pm**

Join Rogue Riverkeeper's Frances Oyung on this Siskiyou Crest hike, approximately 5.5 mile round trip, rated moderately difficult. See a variety of wildflowers and old-growth trees and enjoy lunch at the Dutchman Peak Fire Lookout.

## **Hike to Takelma Gorge in the Upper Rogue**

**Saturday, August 6th, 2022, 11:00am-3:00pm**

This easy out and back walk is around 4 miles round trip on a mostly level trail suitable for hikers of all abilities. Hike along the Upper Rogue River from the Woodruff Bridge Day Use area to the very scenic Takelma Gorge while listening to the peaceful flows of the Rogue River while identifying plants and birds along the way!

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**Sign-up on our website to receive more details including meeting locations and what to bring. Summer hikes may be canceled if smoke levels reach an "unhealthy" range. Registered hikers will receive email notifications the week of the event.**

**More events and information at [www.kswild.org/events](http://www.kswild.org/events)**





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Cover: Bigelow Lakes Vista, photo credit KS Wild Staff