

Westside Project Brief

Background: Last summer, approximately 162,580 acres of the Klamath National Forest burned as a result of three geographically distinct fire complexes, the Whites Fire, the Beaver Fire, and the Happy Camp Fire Complex. Before the Happy Camp Complex was contained, the Forest Service began planning a post-fire timber sale, the Westside Project.

Project Details:

- 5,760 acres of clearcut-style logging. The Forest Service advertises that salvage units will generate 95 million board feet of timber. This amounts to 21,111 logging trucks worth of timber. If parked front to back, these logging trucks would stretch approximately 300 miles.
 - Salvage on 15 active landslides
 - 1,973 acres of salvage in identified “Riparian Reserves”—areas with special protection to protect water quality.
- 320 miles of roadside “hazard” treatment, including 215.5 miles of “hazard” tree removal along Level 1 (closed to public) and Level 2 (primitive, high-clearance vehicle only) roads, including removal of many green trees.
- 24,250 acres of fuels treatment
- 12,890 acres of artificial reforestation, including:
 - 6,290 acres of new plantations
- 175 new landings, including 6 in Riparian Reserves
- 5 miles of reopening decommissioned roads, 3.3 miles of new temporary roads, and 4.6 miles of temporary road on existing roadbeds.

Project Impacts

- **Forests:** Potential for delayed forest regeneration owing to ground disturbing activities; removal of coarse woody debris and snags which serve as important wildlife components.
- **Owls:** Likely to adversely affect 55 Northern Spotted Owl activity centers and may adversely affect 26 additional activity centers, these are the most important source populations for regional populations and the species as a whole.
- **Other Wildlife:**
 - Increased forest fragmentation and decreased connectivity potential for fishers and martens
 - Potential disturbance of Siskiyou Mountain Salamanders
 - Bald eagles: high risk of loss of potential nest trees, some disturbance to nest sites
- **Fire:** Potential for increased fire risk from post-salvage jackstrawed slash which has a substantial probability of being left untreated
- **Water Quality:** The rivers in the Westside project are home to some of the most productive fisheries habitat in the world outside of Alaska. There are 11 larger watersheds in the project area and 75 sub-watersheds, including 3 Wild and Scenic Rivers: the Klamath, Scott and North Fork Salmon Rivers, and three additional creeks that are eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River system (Elk, Kelsy and South Russian Creeks).
 - Models show increase in sediment in 9 watersheds, and mass-wasting increases for seventeen watersheds.
- **Salmon:** Coho salmon are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The project area contains over 101 miles of Coho Critical Habitat.
 - The Salmon River is the last stronghold for native spring Chinook salmon in the Klamath Basin.

Sequence of Events

Early September: Forest Service expects to issue its Record of Decisions (ROD). Project implementation may not begin until the Forest Service has approval from the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, and has completed consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Approval from the Water Board may occur any time after the ROD is signed but approval is not likely until the October 8th Board meeting. We expect NMFS consultation to be completed at end of September and USFWS sometime in October.

Agency Contacts for Westside Project:

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*Ask to deny take permit for Endangered Northern Spotted Owls & Endangered Coho Salmon

Jim Simondet
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California Coastal Area Office
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National Marine Fisheries Service
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Arcata, CA 95521
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Ask to deny incidental take permit for Coho Salmon

Matt St John, Executive Officer
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
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(707) 570-3762
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Ask to deny Klamath National Forest's request for enrollment of Westside into the general categorical waiver program. Instead ask them to request modified project that would protect watersheds by creating a new Waste Discharge Requirement for the Westside project.

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