

Conservationists Challenge USFS Wasteful Planning

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Photos available upon request, and included below.

Contact: Olivia Schmidt, Program Director, Bark

Olivia@bark-out.org

503-331-0374

The Jazz Timber Sale, a 2,000-acre commercial timber sale in Mt. Hood National Forest, is being appealed by local Mt. Hood watchdog group Bark. Bark's appeal aims to hold the Forest Service accountable for the wasteful spending and pre-emptive work to un-do costly road decommissioning work in the drinking watershed of Clackamas County.

In September of this year, Forest Supervisor Chris Worth finalized his decision on the Jazz Timber Sale. The decision included plans to re-open 12 miles of previously decommissioned roads in Mt. Hood National Forest, dismissing more than 3,000 public comments opposing the practice of reversing costly restoration work.

Olivia Schmidt, Bark Program Director, comments: "The Jazz Timber Sale, as planned by the Forest Service, would result in outrageous waste of public dollars and reversal of watershed restoration. The Forest Service plans to spend \$250,000 to re-open 12 miles of previously decommissioned roads in the project area, making waste of the public funds already spent to decommission these roads. Adding insult to injury, the Forest Service proposes to spend an additional \$60,000 to decommission the roads again post-logging, but to a lesser degree than already achieved with past decommissioning work. Case in point is Forest Service Road 6300.185, a 0.9 mile road segment that was fully decommissioned in 2010. Just two years ago the full length of the road was de-compacted or 'ripped.' The Jazz decision calls for 6300.185 to be re-built, then closed by a berm and the first ¼-mile ripped, un-doing the work and investment made to recover the full 0.9 mile road in 2010. This is a net loss for the health of the Clackamas Watershed and for tax-payers. The public cannot afford this kind of wasteful management of our public resources."

Bark's appeal of the decision (filed Friday, October 19th), focuses on three primary issues with the sale:

- Failure to assess an alternative that would not require the re-opening of 12 miles of previously decommissioned roads
 - If the Forest Service had pursued such an alternative, only ~800 acres would become inaccessible, leaving ~1,200 acres open to logging
- Pre-decisional action taken by the Forest Service, which began the work of clearing and re-opening roads for the Jazz Timber Sale prior to a final decision on the proposed action

- Forest Service Road 6311.130 was closed and naturally recovering with trees aged 20-30 years growing in the road bed. In July of 2012, Bark discovered that the Forest Service had removed a gate on the road and logged the road alignment, despite public opposition and prior to a final decision on the Jazz Timber Sale.
- Failure of the Forest Service to sufficiently describe mitigation or to commit to implement and/or monitor Best Management Practices
 - Best Management Practices (BMPs) are designed to minimize environmental harm by logging operations, yet the Forest Service does not administer or monitor these BMPs in active logging projects. Bark has begun post-logging monitoring of BMPs and has found that in many cases BMPs are either not implemented or are insufficient to mitigate impacts. The Forest Service itself has concluded that BMPs often do not result in the desired effect of minimizing impacts on the ground.

A previously decommissioned road in Jazz unit 18, Forest Service Road 6311.150. The evident restoration of this road bed would be un-done with the Jazz Timber Sale and at the expense of tax-payers.



Forest Service Road 6311.130 was overgrown with 20-30 year old trees. The Forest Service pre-emptively logged the road in anticipation of the Jazz Timber Sale, but prior to a Final Decision on Jazz, a clear violation of the NEPA process. Logged trees are visible on right of photo.

