

Comments on Native Fish Society Testimony - March 20 2018

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48 years of Fish Conservation Efforts on the Rogue River and Southern Oregon

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NATIVE FISH SOCIETY Advancing the Recovery of Native, Wild Fish in Their Homewaters

March 20, 2018

TO: Curry County Board of Commissioners Court Boice, Thomas Huxley, Sue Gold & County Administrator John Hitt

FROM: Mark Sherwood, Executive Director & Curry County Resident

RE: Agenda Item 6B Proposed Letter To Supervisor Of Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest Re: Timber Salvage

Dear Board of Commissioners and County Administrator,

The Native Fish Society is a conservation non-profit organization that utilizes the best-available science to advocate for the protection and recovery of wild, native fish and promote the stewardship of the habitats that sustain them.

The best science would include other opinions not just ones that support Native Fish Society's position of no logging. I always have issue with a one directional look claiming this is **The Science no other opinions as in this case.**

Today I'm writing you on behalf of our 3,700 members and supporters across the Northwest and our Curry County based River Stewards to strongly oppose Commissioner Boice's proposed letter to Supervisor of Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest requesting additional post fire logging.

How many of these members are from Curry County and not from their base in Lake Oswego or the Willamette Valley. Realize rules from the Willamette Valley have ham strung our county and caused great amounts of economic harm in reduced or non-existent timber harvest and state zoning regulations that don't fit here. Look at address on this testimony.

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The Chetco River is among the Pacific Northwest's last bastions for wild salmon and steelhead populations. These remarkable fish depend on the Chetco's clean water and intact habitats for their continued survival. It's no coincidence that this stronghold for salmon is Oregon's wildest river – nearly 40% of the Chetco River is within the Kalmiopsis Wilderness. Public lands anchor habitats for the remarkable fish that sustain the ecosystem and support significant local sport and commercial fisheries. In fact, the 2009 Dean Runyan report for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife found that sport fisheries in Curry County alone bring millions of dollars annually into our communities – real economic value that supports local families and businesses.

All the streams of Curry County have healthy runs of Winter Steelhead and Fall Chinook Salmon. The Rogue River is likely the largest producer of Wild Winter Steelhead and Wild Fall Chinook, so dry your eyes Curry County river's and streams are doing fine.

According to the best available science post-fire logging provides no ecosystem benefits and the associated road building increases negative impacts to fish from increased erosion and soil disturbance (Beschta et al., 2004, Lindenmayer et al. 2008).

In steep slide prone areas, burned trees left standing will fall and slide into streams where they increase habitat complexity and recruit spawning gravels (Roering et al., 2013). An estimated 50% of the large woody debris that creates and maintains complex fish habitats comes from landslides, which carry trees and other large woody debris into the river. These logjams protect juvenile fish from predators, offer shade during the summer when water temperatures spike, provide critical spawning habitat by trapping gravel, and maintain floodplain connection. However, instead of creating logjams like forested slides, clear-cut landslides unleash a torrent of sediment that smothers spawning gravel with fine particulates. Occurring at a rate 24 times more often than the background rate, landslides on clear-cut slopes reduce water quality and cause torrents, which rip spawning gravel from the streambed.

Most all of the 191,000 acres burned has no fish bearing habitat. No logging in riparian areas of fish bearing streams is proposed and to ring this alarm is disingenuous and it is my hope the Board of Commissioners sees this clearly. Commissioner Boice is asking for increased logging of burned timber not only for economic reasons but for the greater reason USFS does not intend to reseed any areas not logged. This non-seeding would have a disastrous effect on erosion and forest health as brush would soon dominate the forest. Fire Danger would sky rocket.