



KATE BROWN  
Governor

March 22, 2018

Curry County Commissioners  
94235 Moore Street, Suite 122  
Gold Beach, OR 97444

Dear Chair Gold, Vice-Chair Huxley, and Commissioner Boice,

Ensuring the safety of Oregonians and our communities must be considered a top priority. However, I am concerned to hear from multiple sources about the continued reduction in public safety services within your community.

Last summer, I traveled to Curry County on two occasions to support efforts to contain and recover from the Chetco Bar Fire, which threatened area property and the local economy. Albeit under unfortunate circumstances, I had the opportunity to meet with a number of local leaders and community members and heard first-hand about the adverse impacts the fire had on both tourism and safety in the region.

As wildfires continue to increase in intensity and severity, demands on law enforcement and first responders will also increase. The threats posed by wildfires present immediate challenges to local public safety, but there are also growing concerns regarding the long-term divestment in Curry County law enforcement.

But even more importantly, your tax-paying residents of Curry County deserve and expect to be safe in their community. It is impossibly challenging to provide this assurance when only eight Curry County deputies are funded, which drastically constrains local patrol hours to a limited number of hours each day. Furthermore, I am concerned the ongoing budget cuts and years of scrutiny the Curry County's public safety budget has received in recent years will have long-term effects on the Sheriff's ability to recruit and retain new officers.

To help address these issues, the Oregon State Legislature specifically designated Curry County as one of just seven counties allowed to access their road fund moneys to pay for county law enforcement when it passed Oregon Revised Statute 368.706. With a reserve balance of approximately \$30 million, Curry County's road fund could help ameliorate your immediate issues until longer-term solutions are found.



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While I suspect this is well known, it is worth repeating that the Oregon State Police cannot be a substitute for local law enforcement. It is my understanding that all three incorporated cities in Curry County support a robust Sheriff's Office, which includes the jail. Not only do each of these communities heavily rely on the ability for mutual aid, but they more importantly rely jail services to help keep Curry County safe from criminal activity.

As your Governor, I appreciate the challenges that come with deciding how to balance a budget. Setting priorities that reflect that values of your community is a key part of the work you do. Ensuring that your citizens and visitors are safe is without a doubt a key priority, and I hope that you do everything you can, including accessing your road fund, to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Brown" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Governor Kate Brown

KB:klrw

cc: John R. HuttI, Curry County Counsel  
John Hitt, Curry County Administrator  
John Ward, Curry County Sheriff

**WALLOWA COUNTY  
BOARD of COMMISSIONERS  
State of Oregon**

541-426-4543, x11  
FAX: 541-426-0582

CHAIRMAN SUSAN ROBERTS  
COMMISSIONER PAUL CASTILLEJA  
COMMISSIONER TODD NASH

March 7, 2017

To: Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Superintendent, North Cascades National Park Service Complex

To: Eric Rickerson, State Supervisor, Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

This letter responds to your request for comments on the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan DEIS.

Wallowa County has a history of collaboration with federal agencies regarding actions on public lands within our county. Our approach is grounded in the Wallowa County Salmon Habitat Recovery Plan, which is adopted into our County Land Use Plan. Your DEIS shows not only the absence of collaboration with local communities but also disregard for local concerns in the rush of releasing a DEIS before the administration changed in Washington DC.

We suggest the National Park Service and USFWS abandon the current DEIS and return to the basics of collaboratively developing issues and alternatives that respond to the concerns of local citizens, businesses, and organizations. Your future credibility as a public agency depends on it.

When you rework the analysis, we suggest you recognize how baffling your DEIS is to the reader. From the Western Wildlife Outreach website, we understand that contracts were awarded in the amount of \$550,000 to prepare this DEIS. A tremendous amount of taxpayer money was spent on a document riddled with obfuscation, conflicting information, and glossed-over concerns. We outline problems with the DEIS below.

Purpose and Need

This section provides no information that action is even needed. According to Page 3,

*Because the NCE grizzly bears are at risk of local extinction, action is needed at this time to avoid the permanent loss of grizzly bears in the NCE.*

At first glance, this might be a reasonable answer to the question that the purpose and need should answer . . . Why here? Why now? But, then the DEIS blows a hole in this argument by stating on Page 6,

*. . . there is no confirmed evidence of current grizzly bear presence within the NCE grizzly bear recovery zone in the United States.*

The paragraph continues to describe that the only confirmed sightings in the North Cascades Ecosystem in the last decade were in British Columbia, and the possibility for the meager grizzly population in Canada to emigrate to the US is negligible. How can there be an imminent threat of **extinction** of the US North Cascades grizzly population when it's already gone? The DEIS provides no information to suggest that introducing grizzlies into the North Cascades is timely.

Consequently, the rationale for dismissing alternatives from detailed analysis on Pages 35 to 38 is flawed. Some of these alternatives (Natural Recovery, Delayed Implementation of Washington Only) are dismissed from detailed analysis because they aren't timely enough. The DEIS dismisses these alternatives because they won't occur "in sufficient time to avoid the permanent loss of grizzly bears that are present in the NCE." How can an alternative be dismissed from analysis because it isn't timely enough in avoiding permanent loss of a population when the population no longer exists? The argument for timeliness was muted long ago, and a 20-year old recovery plan calling for action does not make a case for action right now.



**Court Boice, Commissioner**

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94235 Moore Street, Ste. 122

Gold Beach, OR 97444

Ph.: (541) 247.3229

**April 16, 2018**

**Curry Citizens;**

**I offer the following comments on recent actions by the Curry County Board of Commissioners and Administrator John Hitt. It seems once again I've been 'thrown in' with the other two Commissioners on issues we greatly disagree!**

**No one wants to be misunderstood or misrepresented, especially when the opposite is true. My longstanding support for John Hitt can be verified through CC BOC records, all Curry Elected Officials, Commissioners Staff, and Mr. Hitt himself.**

**Let me share some facts and make my position clear:**

- **Yes I was originally opposed to a County Administrator due to several factors including, but not limited to overall cost. However, I lost that vote, so rolled up my sleeves and simply looked for the best while staying true to my word in cutting my annual salary by \$20,000.**
- **I recruited John Hitt for Curry County from the beginning -- July of 2017. In my goal of uniting our County; I saw his many qualifications as an important opportunity toward that focus.**
- **Without exception I have worked very well with him since he was hired -- September of 2017.**
- **I have consistently fought to keep, support and encourage Mr. Hitt as Interim County Administrator.**
- **A month ago, I asked if he would consider applying for the permanent Administrator position. He took a few days and decided that he would submit his application.**

**One of my responsibilities as Commissioner is to ensure we hire the best people to help our County. Good County Administrators are tough to find. It is a difficult job. The data clearly shows they only stay in place an average of two years. I have publicly battled the other two Commissioners in trying to retain John Hitt and also have consistently challenged their unacceptable behavior towards him.**

**I further sense a prejudice against Mr. Hitt from both Commissioners Gold and Huxley. I can't say for sure, but believe it is due to the fact that Administrator Hitt works well with me, Sheriff Ward, and virtually everyone else he is responsible to and in building sound Curry Policy.**

Furthermore, in my opinion, the other two Commissioners are spending at a level and time we can ill-afford. I will have more to say about this in the future, however, with the apparent hire of new County Administrator Schroeder, we have the potential for another unmanageable mess. We have someone that I believe is completely unfamiliar with Curry County and apparently doesn't plan to move here -- at least in the near future. This is likely to be a costly mistake not to mention the scarce funds the County paid in flights and related expenses from Minnesota and Utah for interviews which I also opposed.

Additionally, without any input or notification to me or Administrator Hitt, Commissioners Huxley and Gold arbitrarily added the topic of labor negotiations to the Executive Session April 7th. Mr. Hitt did not know until Monday, April 9th, and I didn't learn of it until April 11th. During the meeting, they decided to contact Attorney Bruce Bischof as the lead Labor Negotiator, asking him to travel here on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Like Mr. Schroeder, he is very expensive. His hire was likewise an action I voted against. What is unfortunate and even ironic relating to our financial responsibilities is that John Hitt has tremendous background and experience in the area of Labor Negotiations. This is needless to say in addition and again to many other positive aspects and qualifications he brings. Currently John Hitt is being paid about one-fifth the amount the new L. N. Attorney will be receiving, not to mention the significant travel expenses for Mr. Bischof's trips from Bend which will also be billed to our County.

I was unable to attend the April 6 and 7 interviews and received no prior notification that there would be an addition to the Special Meeting Executive Session Agenda. I surely could have called in. Further, I was fully prepared to participate in the April 11 Special Meeting at 1:30 PM, Select Candidate and offer employment terms. Contact my office if you would like a copy. I did not know of the cancellation of that meeting until mid-morning of same day and only 3 hours prior. These tactics by Commissioners Gold and Huxley are in my view inappropriate and I believe their decisions made on April 7, 2018, intentionally in my absence, should be invalidated.

If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Court Boice, Curry County Commissioner

# County Administrator Schedule

**April 5, 2018**

Travel Day

**April 6, 2018**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 10:00AM to 12:00PM | Candidate # 2 BOC interview   |
| 1:00PM to 3:00PM   | Candidate # 1 BOC interview   |
| 3:00PM to 3:30PM   | Informal Meeting with Staff in Blue Room  |
| 4:00PM to 6:00PM   | <p><b>Public Meet &amp; Greet: Fair Grounds Showcase Building</b></p> <p>4P – 4:30P Candidates mingle at tables with public (hors d'oeuvres will be served)</p> <p>4:30P – 4:45P Candidate #1 presents bio and other information he may desire to present</p> <p>4:45P – 5:00P Candidate # 1 answers public's questions</p> <p>5:00P – 5:15P Candidate # 2 presents bio and other information he may desire to present</p> <p>5:15P – 5:30P Candidate # 2 answers public's questions</p> <p>5:30P – 6:00P Further mingle while public fill-out and submit candidate information/evaluation form</p> |

**April 7, 2018**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 10:00AM to 12:00 | <p><b>Special Meeting Executive Session</b></p> <p>Special Meeting</p> <p>A. Executive Session - Per ORS 192.610 (2) (a) To consider the employment of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent</p> <p>B. Public Session - Possible Decision - Offer of Employment</p> |
|------------------|--|

**April 11, 2018**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| 1:30PM | <p><b>Special Meeting</b></p> <p>Select candidate and offer employment terms</p> |
|--------|--|

# Comment on "Post-Wildfire Logging Hinders Regeneration and Increases Fire Risk"

M. Newton,<sup>1</sup> S. Fitzgerald,<sup>2</sup> R. R. Rose,<sup>1</sup> P. W. Adams,<sup>3</sup> S. D. Tesch,<sup>3</sup> J. Sessions,<sup>3\*</sup> T. Atzet,<sup>4</sup> R. F. Powers,<sup>5</sup> C. Skinner<sup>5</sup>

Donato *et al.* (Brevia, 20 January 2006, p. 352) concluded that logging after wildfire kills natural regeneration and increases fire risk. We argue that their paper lacks adequate context and supporting information to be clearly interpreted by scientists, resource managers, policy-makers, and the public.

Donato *et al.* (1) recently concluded that logging 2 to 3 years after wildfire kills natural regeneration and increases fire risk. The research may make a valuable contribution, but the study lacks adequate context and supporting information to be clearly interpreted. Here, we discuss the paper's methods and conclusions in the context of relevant management objectives and the forestry knowledge base concerning natural regeneration processes, mortality from logging, and fuel accumulations in southwestern Oregon and northwestern California.

Donato *et al.* (1) made inferences about natural regeneration processes, mortality from logging, and fuel accumulations without presenting key information regarding (i) agency post-fire management directives for reforestation or downed wood levels (2), (ii) implications of delays in postfire plan implementation, or (iii) important environmental and disturbance descriptors such as plant associations, fire intensity, seed tree proximity, and weather patterns. Results from their study cannot be readily extrapolated because it was a short-term observational study of site-specific forest operations governed by agency management objectives. Other management plans, operations, or conditions could yield different results (3). In the case of the 2002 Biscuit Fire, logging was postponed for 2 years, allowing more seeds to germinate and increasing seedling exposure to injury during logging (4).

Donato *et al.* cite a lack of scientific data regarding the management of public forests after large fires. However, it should be noted that conifer reforestation (planted and natural) and vegetation ecology have been widely studied in the region. Studies show variable responses

with plant association, competing vegetation, local climate, soils, and other factors (5, 6). Hobbs *et al.* (5) provide a synthesis of 13 years of research in southern Oregon and northern California. Fewer studies have examined reforestation after wildfire, especially over longer periods (4, 7–9), but damage to natural regeneration after delayed salvage logging was reported more than 50 years ago (4, 8).

Donato *et al.* (1) reported that natural conifer regeneration on sites affected by the Biscuit Fire was common, without also describing proximity to recent seed crops, weather, and competing vegetation, and further suggested that planting may be unnecessary to achieve some reforestation goals. Caution is urged when projecting forest development from such early conifer survival results. Competing vegetation can develop rapidly after disturbance in this region and can dramatically affect small conifer seedling survival and growth (5–7). Agency reforestation objectives were to establish a minimum number of suitable conifer trees in "free to grow" condition (2). Given the documented competitiveness of shrubs and hardwoods, as well as the historical variability in natural regeneration success, federal managers specified tree planting after salvage to better ensure the desired density and distribution of conifers (2). Artificial reforestation practices are science-based and well tested in southwestern Oregon and northwestern California (3, 5, 7). Performance of planted seedlings also commonly exceeds that of natural seedlings, which will assist in achieving some objectives (5, 7, 10).

It is also inappropriate to compare the 1- to 2-year-old seedling density measured in (1) with "free to grow" stocking standards prescribed under state regulations (11) and federal fire-recovery goals (2). Such standards are always defined at an older age or larger size after early seedling mortality stabilizes. Related protocols for conducting stocking surveys are designed to estimate both seedling density and distribution (12). The belt transects used by Donato *et al.* (1) also differ from systematic plot grids widely

used in forestry stocking surveys to determine the "number of well-distributed trees per unit area." Therefore, their reported results cannot be directly compared with regional stocking standards (2, 11, 12), because there is no indication of spatial distribution.

We also note that the term "logging" used in (1) is not adequately descriptive (13). Logging prescriptions provide a flexible silvicultural tool with capabilities and impacts that vary by equipment, management objectives, and site-specific conditions (4, 5). Seedling protection was not prescribed in the postfire harvests studied in (1) because prompt salvage and subsequent planting were planned (2). Logging plans can be designed to limit damage to seedlings when desirable (4, 5). Notably, the seedling damage reported by Donato *et al.* cannot be extrapolated without improved descriptions of the logging or follow-up slash treatments (5, 7, 13).

Turning to the data presented on fuel loads after the Biscuit Fire, Donato *et al.* reported increased "fire risk" as a consequence of increased downed woody fuels. However, what they actually assessed was fuel quantity in two fuel size classes. Moreover, they did not describe fuel continuity, a major factor contributing to fire behavior, nor did they present approximate differences in projected fire behavior, which can be determined using standard fire models (14, 15). Conclusions suggesting that future fire hazard is less from deteriorating standing trees than from observed postlogging slash are unsupported speculation as presented. Management directives specifically included leaving logging slash for soil protection and wildlife habitat in areas deficient in downed wood as a function of plant association, topographic aspect, and fire intensity (2). On some sites, the observed increases in slash after logging may have been an intended result of the prescriptions, but Donato *et al.* provide insufficient information to discern this.

We believe the Donato *et al.* paper (1) could have better informed the discussion of this complex topic for all audiences with a more accurate title, use of standard forestry protocols, more complete disclosures of methods and management objectives, and less speculation beyond the presented data. If the authors were constrained by print space limitations, we urge them to use alternative mechanisms to disclose details critical to understanding and interpreting their results.

## References

1. D. C. Donato *et al.*, *Science* **311**, 352 (2006).
2. USDA Forest Service. *Biscuit Fire Final Environmental Impact Statement*, Appendix D (reforestation), Appendix G (dead wood management) (USDA Forest Service, Grants Pass, OR, 2004) [www.fs.fed.us/r6/rogue-siskiyou/biscuit-fire/feis](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/rogue-siskiyou/biscuit-fire/feis).
3. J. Sessions, P. Bettinger, R. Buckman, M. Newton, J. Hamann, *J. Forestry* **102**, 38 (2004).
4. D. F. Roy, *Salvage Logging May Destroy Douglas-Fir Reproduction: USFS California Forest and Range Exp. Stn. Research Note 107* (U.S. Forest Service, Berkeley, CA, 1956).

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## CLR Timber Holdings -- USFS Volume Analysis

| Year | MBF Purchased | MBF Harvested | MBF Balance Years End |
|------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 2009 |               |               | 52,715                |
| 2010 | 0             | 3,276         | 49,439                |
| 2011 | 14,465        | 10,962        | 52,942                |
| 2012 | 14,451        | 16,351        | 51,042                |
| 2013 | 3,048         | 6,976         | 47,114                |
| 2014 | 2,457         | 15,393        | 34,178                |
| 2015 | 0             | 8,273         | 25,905                |
| 2016 | 6,200         | 14,731        | 17,374                |
| 2017 | 0             | 6,813         | 10,561                |

