



The mission of the Olympic Forest Coalition is to protect and restore forest and aquatic ecosystems on the public lands of the Olympic Peninsula.

Biggest Logging Project in the History of Olympic National Forest Looms

Your Comments Needed by May 26!

May 19, 2009

Please visit our Web site for more information on other forest issues.



Another peaceful spring comes to the West Fork Humptulips River, though the Forest Service has big logging plans in store here. -photo by Jim Scarborough

The West Fork Humptulips River meanders through a quiet rainforest valley a short distance east of Lake Quinault. Moss-draped ancient trees are interspersed with younger forest gradually recovering from the clearcutting heyday between 1940 and 1990. Outdoorsy folks come to the West Fork to experience the wild river, camp at Campbell Tree Grove, and hike to the Colonel Bob high country. Herds of elk seasonally migrate through this valley as they have for centuries.

In the heart of this splendor, designated a Late Successional Reserve to protect the forest habitat, the U.S. Forest Service is planning the single largest logging project in the 102-year history of Olympic National Forest. Dubbed the "West Fork Humptulips"

project, **over 4,000 acres of the Late Successional Reserve would be commercially thinned**, with dozens of miles of logging roads constructed or reconstructed to haul the trees out.

The Forest Service claims that the recovering second-growth forest on the West Fork will become old growth again only if the chainsaws are unleashed. In reality, though, we know such rhetoric is just more greenwashing to get the cut out, much like the old days.

If allowed to implement this logging project in current form, **the Forest Service will industrialize the West Fork valley for at least five years**. The incessant whine of chainsaws, blasting of quarries for road construction, belching bulldozers tearing through vegetation, the roar of logging trucks and the danger of being anywhere in the vicinity will drive the outdoor recreating public off our own land for the logging's duration.

The Forest Service was given too long a leash during the Bush administration and has yet to be reeled in by the Obama administration. That's where you come in. Please send your comments about the West Fork Humptulips project to the Forest Service no later than **May 26**. In your own words, please hit some, or all, of the following points:

- The size and scope of such logging in a Late Successional Reserve is unprecedented, controversial and likely in violation of the Northwest Forest Plan. The Forest Service must complete a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) before proceeding.
- In developing the EIS, the Forest Service must eliminate all new logging road construction in the Late Successional Reserve, in keeping with the Forest Plan.
- To avoid severe disruptions to both wildlife (including a major elk migration corridor along the Chester Creek tributary) and the recreating public, the Forest Service must reduce the size of this project, with thinning occurring only in the youngest forest parcels subject to this activity.
- The Forest Service must not log immediately adjacent to the South Quinault Ridge roadless area. Doing so would invite unnatural wind damage, weed infestations and increased risk of poaching of old trees and wildlife.
- To make up for the inevitable damage caused by this project, the Forest Service must commit to removing large quantities of decaying logging roads in the West Fork watershed for the recovery of salmon and trout habitat, and not simply rely on uncertain timber receipts for this purpose.

Before heading out for fun with family and friends this Memorial Day weekend, **please** make your voice heard with the Forest Service. **A vociferous public response will make a difference.** [Click here](#) to send e-mail comments through May 26. Put "West Fork Humptulips" in your subject line to identify the topic of your message.

Many thanks for your participation at this crucial juncture. Questions? Please contact Jim below.

For more info, contact: [Jim Scarborough](#)