On Sunday, November 11th there was a Bark-about hike to the Shellrock Timber Sale management area. According to the "Shellwood" executive summary this area has the following legal description: "The Shellwood area (legal description- T5S, R7E, sections 23, 25, 26, 35, 36, Willamette Meridian, surveyed, Clackamas County, Oregon) is located in the Shellrock sub-drainage of the Oak Grove Fork watershed." While the executive summary for the timber sale refers to the sale area as the "Shellwood," Jim Rice of the Clackamas River Ranger District of the Mt. Hood National Forest has more recently called it the "Shellrock" sale. We shall refer to it as the Shellrock Timber Sale. The Shellrock timber sale is in the "pre-scoping" period and comments to the Forest Service are very valuable in helping to shape the future of this forest.

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As always, your comments will have greater weight because you have been to the area so be sure to make that point. While this note may remind you of some of the points of interest we discussed during the Bark-about, this is to help you organize your thoughts and cannot possibly summarize your thoughts better than you can. The best way to help save our remaining forests is to write from YOUR heart and mind.

Quick Points:

- Surrounding Late Successional Reserves are dominated by recent clearcuts and clearcuts do not provide old-growth dependent species with the habitat they need to survive.
- Unit 4 is a healthy mature forest with structurally significant amounts of large snags and large downed woody debris. Remove Unit 4 from this sale.
- Surrounding land dominated by landslides, logging unstable land is obviously a bad idea.
- Surrounding clearcuts are having difficulty re-growing. Logging in an area where old cuts are not growing back is irresponsible.
- Unit 5 is a large and healthy grove of forest surrounded by landslides and clearcuts. Logging a healthy forest surround by clearcuts and landslides is a bad idea. Remove Unit 5 from the sale.
- The Shellrock Creek sub-drainage already has too many roads and these roads lead to unhealthy levels of sedimentation in the surrounding streams. Renewed logging will bring more roads and more fish-killing sedimentation.

We parked at the intersection of 58-160 and 58-175 (currently closed by a metal gate). We discussed how the clearcut across the road from where we parked was a Late Successional Reserve (LSR). We discussed how Late Successional Reserves were created as part of the Northwest Forest Plan to provide habit for species that depended on old-growth/mature forests. We discussed how Late Successional Reserves are only a legal designation and that the Northwest Forest Plan designated many recent clearcuts as LSRs although they are no longer forested. The Late Successional Reserves in the Oak Grove Watershed are only 50% old-growth/mature forests. The four clearcuts we walked past on the way to Unit 4 are Late

Successional Reserves that have been set aside for old-growth dependent species. As difficult as it is to imagine, in the Northwest Forest Plan a Late Successional Reserve does not require a late successional forest…it does not require any forest at all! Sadly, old-growth dependent species are being sacrificed by such officious word games.

We walked down 58-175 past two Mossback timber sale clearcuts. We noted that these blue timber sale markers act as tombstones for the forest; they give us the name of the timber sale (Mossback) and the year the forest was destroyed (1992). We discussed the importance of becoming more knowledgeable about the destruction of public forests and the role these forest tombstones can play.

We also discussed the "Desired Future Condition" as defined by the Forest Service in the Oak Grove Watershed Analysis. The Forest Service is actively creating vast "aggregated uniform-age timber plantations" by deliberately by cutting down all the groves between current clearcuts in order to link up the clearcuts into one vast clearcut. This Forest Service concept assumes that turning mature and old-growth forests into "aggregated uniform-age timber plantations" is desirable. Do you think this Forest Service concept is desirable?

As we walked along 58-175, we noted the standing muddy water being channeled along the left side of the road. It reminded us that the Oak Grove Watershed Analysis highlights the Shellrock Creek sub-drainage's unhealthy levels of sedimentation (sedimentation kills fish) and that the watershed analysis attributed this to the high concentration of roads in the area. Roads collect and channelize water that would normally be moving uniformly across the un-roaded landscape; the water collect by the filthy channels along roadways picks up speed, volume and sediment before dumping the sediment into the surrounding streams. Any new logging within the area will only act to increase road density and fish-killing sedimentation in the Shellrock Creek sub-drainage.

After passing a 4th Late Successional Reserve Clearcut we came to Unit 4 of the Shellrock timber sale. We traversed the forest and observed beautiful large standing Douglas firs and western hemlocks contained within a structurally complex multi-story canopy. After all the clearcuts we crossed, we finally come across a forest grove with large old trees and discover that this is Unit 4 of the Shellrock timber sale. We also saw an unusual concentration of large snags (standing dead trees) and large down woody debris, both of these forest structures play a pivotal and well-recognized role in providing habit. We noted that due to health and safety concerns, logging requires the felling of many snags and the killing of live trees in order to replace those snags. We wondered how such a system would make this complex and healthy grove any healthier. We wondered if the Forest Service is cynically justifying all logging as being for "forest health."

We then traversed south across old landslides intermixed with forest. We observed how the slope instability and lack of topsoil was retarding the growth of the forest. As we crossed the rocky landslide portions of the traverse we came across old down trees that were acting to stabilize the slope and create soil. We came across a HUGE old-growth Douglas fir standing alone on the rocky former landslide. This tree would stand in contrast to the large clearcut stumps we found in the former landslide area on the far side (south) of Unit 5.

We traversed Unit 5 north to south about mid-way up the grove. Though this grove is younger and less structurally developed than Unit 4, it is a healthy forest surrounded by former landslides and recent clearcuts. We wondered how more logging in this unit would provide either healthier forests or act to stabilize this unstable area. Sadly, with the surrounding clearcut Late Successional Reserves acting to provide habitat in 80+ years the Forest Service feels no need to provide any more forest habitat.

After traversing Unit 5, we struggled up a steep slope (to the South of Unit 5), picking our way across stumps amid another rocky former landslide. The environmental devastation caused by clearcut logging on such unstable slopes reminded us of the silvicultural techniques that the Forest Service wishes to restore here in the Shellrock timber sale.

After the grade of the steep slope finally became a little gentler, we transitioned from a steep landslide clearcut to a wide and gentle-sloped clearcut with only stumps and fireweed. We found no new growth other than the fireweed. Further, within this Lightning Flats clearcut, we found newly planted trees marked by the blue rectangular markers. This recent re-planting clearly demonstrated that this area is not recovering from the clearcutting that occurred 9 years ago. We wondered if the encircling grove of trees providing protection from the arid summer wind is the reason that the top of the slope has some healthy re-growth. We wondered if the exposed lower slope's lack of re-growth was due to increased weathering (aridity) from the "aggregated" surrounding clearcuts rather than the facile "frost pocket" explanation typically used by the Clackamas River Ranger District.

At the top of the Lightning Flats clearcut slope we came to Forest Road 5810-200 and we followed it to where it terminated in a third Lightning Flats clearcut (1992) that had been replanted with lodgepole pine. We then crossed through a young grove of trees before entering an older clearcut with trees 15-20' tall. We picked up the end of 58-160 and returned to our cars.