



Portland Chapter  
Native Plant Society of Oregon



November 14, 2012

Bill Westbrook  
District Ranger  
Zig Zag Ranger District  
US Forest Service  
70220 E. Highway 26  
Zigzag, Oregon 97049

Dear District Ranger Bill Westbrook,

The Native Plant Society of Oregon (NPSO) promotes the study and education of Oregon's native flora, the conservation and preservation its native flora and habitats as well as the general enjoyment of our native flora. Our members hike, botanize and photograph in the area of the proposed Horseshoe timber sale. The NPSO has 2000 members statewide and the Portland chapter has about 250 members.

Thank you for the field trip to the proposed Horseshoe Timber Sale on October 22, 2012 and thank you for the accomplishments you and other Zigzag District staff have made to help restore watersheds and create excellent recreation opportunities in the Zigzag District. We value the Zigzag District of Mt. Hood National Forest not only for its recreational value, but because the area offers a unique treasure: a rare ecosystem truly in recovery from a century of industrial logging.

Although the future desired condition for proposed the Horseshoe Timer sale is timber emphasis according to the Northwest Forest Plan, it does not *require* you to have timber sales in this area. The unit we visited first (Unit 6?) is ideally suited as a wildlife corridor between the new wilderness area and the protected bull run watershed. Opening up the canopy to greater than 50% reduces its habitat value for old forest species and represents an unacceptable opportunity for weed infestation from adjacent areas well known for noxious weeds. Don Jacobson observed several large clusters of a mycotroph, Coralroot Orchid, *Corallorhiza sp.*, in the unit which indicates a fully functioning mycorrhizal community that will be disrupted by disturbance and increased light and temperatures. The mycorrhizal associations are essential for *long term* forest health.

The second part of the field trip involved hiking up a steep road adjacent to Lost Creek, literally just feet away from the riparian area. This road is slated for immediate decommissioning because of the deleterious effect on the fish bearing watershed. Obvious rills on the road emptying into the creek were observed during the field trip. This road should not be re-constructed for a timber sale to be decommissioned at a date that likely would be years from now. Other units will impact areas that are very heavily used for non-motorized recreation. It is this recreational use that has directed timber sales away from the Horseshoe area and the Zig Zag Ranger District in the recent past.

The Zigzag District is in a unique position: with your leadership the area could remain at the forefront of restoration efforts in the Pacific Northwest. This would benefit the fish and wildlife that depend upon

healthy watersheds as well as the many visitors to Mt. Hood National Forest who seek the solace provided by these unique intact landscapes. Your district holds a special significance in Mt. Hood National Forest as the most frequently visited district by the more than 5 million people who visit Mt. Hood every year.

We are concerned that the Horseshoe Timber Sale represents a departure from the restoration and recreation focus that has prevailed in the Zigzag District over the past decade and a half. We urge you to prevent commercial logging from entering the area once again. We understand there is increasing pressure to log in all of Mt. Hood National Forest and that your district is no exception to the rule, however we urge you to do all you can to protect recreation and restoration efforts in Zigzag. The restoration and recreation emphasis in your district should be the model for other districts to follow.

Please keep your district focused on restoring healthy ecosystems and high quality recreation, not planning timber sales. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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