

News Release

For More Information

Kathleen Yockey

509-997-4142 | farmers16@gmail.com

Dave Werertz, Conservation Northwest

360-671-9950 x.114 | dwerertz@conservationnw.org

Tim Coleman, Kettle Range Conservation Group

509-775-2667 | tcoleman@kettlerange.org

For Immediate Release: February 16, 2015

Erosion threats prompt appeal of state timber sale in burned area

Proposed “salvage” sale undermines forest recovery and restoration

A Methow resident was joined by two conservation groups in an appeal of a large timber sale located on state lands which burned and flooded last year. The *Carlton Complex FIT Salvage* timber sale proposes to clear cut 1,200 acres of lightly to severely burned forests by operating ground-based machinery on exposed erosive soils. Research has shown this type of logging dramatically boosts soil erosion, crushes forest regrowth, and undermines forest recovery.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) proposed logging plans in Chiliwist Creek, as well as Leecher Canyon, Texas Creek, and Cow Creek, which feeds into the Methow River. The Methow River provides essential habitat for endangered bull trout, spring Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout.

“The area proposed for logging has an ongoing problem with mudslides, debris flows, and flooding,” said Kathleen Yockey, “just ask anyone living downstream. The state’s planned clearcuts would make worse an already dangerous situation.”

To address erosion concerns, DNR proposed small buffers along streams and other measures. Yet, the stream buffers applied are designed for unburned forests and assume live vegetation will filter out sediment generated upslope. Many stream-side forests in the burned area lack capacity to filter sediment and control erosion.

“It’s not hard to see how a dramatic pulse of sediment caused by logging would overwhelm these tiny buffers on streams and wetlands,” said Tim Coleman, Executive Director of Kettle Range Conservation Group.

By logging during the growing season and cutting down trees that are expected to survive the fire, appellants argue that DNR’s logging plans undermine forest recovery after the fire. Under the logging proposal, all but a handful of trees and snags from lightly burned areas and most everything in severely burned areas but small snags will be cut down. Scientific studies indicate many partially scorched green trees in the sale area are likely to survive, contribute site-adapted seeds, and facilitate forest recovery.

“DNR plans to remove the largest snags which provide essential shade and moisture to the recovering forest, and the big old seed trees which contribute to recovery,” said Dave Werntz, Science and Conservation Director at Conservation Northwest. “Seedlings already sprouting would be crushed and killed by ground-based equipment.”

A notice of appeal of the *Carlton Complex FIT Salvage* timber sale was filed with the Pollution Control Hearings Board on Friday, February 13, 2015. Kathleen Yockey, Conservation Northwest, and Kettle Range Conservation Group are represented in the appeal by Wyatt Golding and Peter Goldman of the Washington Forest Law Center.

###