

# Judge: Logging project won't affect wolves

Judge says U.S. Forest Service sufficiently studied wolf issue

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

The U.S. Forest Service doesn't have to study the impact of logging on wolves before proceeding with a thinning project in Oregon's Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, a federal judge ruled.

The agency plans to treat about 3,200 acres as part of the Bybee project, which is aimed at reducing the risk of wildfire in overstocked forest stands.

Oregon Wild, an environmental group, filed a legal complaint claiming the Forest Service should have supplemented its environmental as-



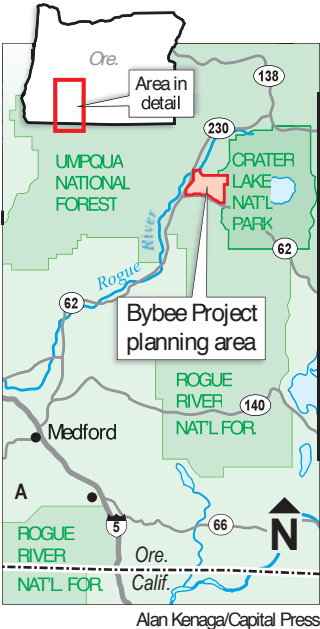
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

OR-7, the wolf that wandered to the Rogue River drainage from northeastern Oregon, is seen in this file photo. A judge has rejected an environmental group's argument that a planned forest thinning project would impact the wolf.

essment of the project due to the presence of wolves in the area.

A male radio-collared wolf

originally from Northeast Oregon, known as OR-7, sired two pups with a mate in the area last year. Gray wolves



Alan Kenagal/Capital Press

are protected as an endangered species in that part of the state.

The Forest Service conducted a "new information review" to see if logging would affect the wolves, but concluded it would not since their den was at least 15 miles away from the project site.

U.S. District Judge Owen Panner found that the agency took a sufficiently "hard look" at the issue, given the wolves' distance and the lack of designated critical wolf habitat in the area.

Panner reached a similar conclusion in regard to the northern spotted owl, a threatened species, because the Bybee project doesn't remove any of critical habitat or "take" any birds.

The Forest Service also postponed thinning some areas to preserve high value

wildlife habitat, he said.

Oregon Wild claimed that the agency should have undertaken a more comprehensive "environmental impact statement" of the project because it contains potential federally designated areas and due to its proximity to the Crater Lake National Park.

The judge rejected these arguments because the project only has a small amount of acreage eligible for wilderness designation, the strictest form of federal land protection.

Panner said the Forest Service addressed concerns about Crater Lake National Park by scaling back the project near the park's border, and he agreed that thinning will help protect the area from fire.

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## Largest annual student leadership conference in Fresno comes to a close

FRESNO, Calif. — More than 5,300 FFA members attended the 87th annual California State FFA Leadership Conference where they were challenged to "Reach Out" throughout the four-day conference.

Attendees were motivated by State FFA officers, as well as guest speakers. The workshops at California State University, Fresno intrigued students to develop their professional skills. The career show allowed students to see amusing antics from prospective colleges, as well as entertaining new ideas for their futures in the agricultural industry.

From public speaking to innovative production practices, students showcased their techniques in various competitions. Many contest winners will advance to compete at the National FFA Convention held in October.

The conference concluded with the election of the 2015–2016 State FFA officer team. Six officers will begin preparing for the upcoming year. Elected individuals were:

State FFA President – Joelle Lewis, San Luis Obispo  
State FFA Vice President – Sydnie Sousa, Tulare  
State FFA Secretary – Breanna Holbert, Lodi  
State FFA Treasurer – Trevor Autry, Nipomo  
State FFA Reporter – Danielle Diele, Merced-Golden Valley  
State FFA Sentinel – Tim Truax, Turlock-Pitman

From left to right, the California FFA State officer team is Breanna Holbert, state secretary, Lodi; Sydnie Sousa, state vice president, Tulare; Tim Truax, state sentinel, Turlock; Danielle Diele, state reporter, Merced; Joelle Lewis, state president, San Luis Obispo; and Trevor Autry, state treasurer, Nipomo.

The California FFA Association, founded in 1928, serves more than 76,000 California high school students and strives to make a difference in their lives by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through vocational education.

For full conference proceedings visit <http://www.calaged.org/events/state-convention-home>.

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