

FOREST, from page 10

standing.

"When I walk through this area," Goodwyne said as our hike took us along the base of a gentle slope, "there are a lot of little riparian areas throughout this whole stand. There are hummocks (forested ground above a marsh), flat areas, steeper areas; this particular stand offers a lot in the way of management. Because this area has all these different things going on, I thin lighter."

She said we walked through critical habitat when we entered the unit, but where we stood now was not.

"This is an area where we would extract trees to benefit the others. Case in point – you're standing here and you see the larger Doug fir in the middle ground, back there? Beautiful tree! Step to the side; look at this guy right here – that might be a tree we wouldn't keep," she said, noting its thinning crown and yellowish hue. "Immediately, you can tell something is going on in here. One of the first things I look for is root rot, and I know it's in here."

As we continued walking along the pathway, we ducked beneath fallen trees and swatted branches aside. Black bear and deer droppings were observed, and we could hear chattering and chirping as forest critters rustled through the thicket.

"Did you see the little guy?" Goodwyne said when a ground squirrel scurried across our path. "He's got a log that he lives under, and that's the beauty of having downed wood in a place."

Bark said logging leaves the forest with fewer downed trees because they are cut and removed, rather than left to be choked out by competition, which would lay them to rest naturally.

Goodwyne said that if it weren't for profit motives, there are places where "drop and leave would be fantastic," meaning the tree would be cut and then left in the forest for animals to inhabit. But the tools she uses depend on the objective: to produce lumber or to rehabilitate the forest?

As we followed along the road, Goodwyne pointed out the trees lining it were large and had greater girth because they had more light and less competition.

"We say we're thinning from below. The taller, larger trees stay; we thin the trees below that position," she said, motioning with her hands that the shorter trees get cut. The taller trees, she said, have a better chance of increasing their width, and they provide structure and canopy, so they remain standing.

In this unit, she prescribed several 5-acre gaps – or "mini-clear-cuts," Bell said. These areas serve as meadows where animals such as deer and elk can graze, and they're another point of disagreement among the members of our party.

Bell argues that if the Forest Service didn't suppress wildfire, those forage clearings would be created naturally when fires burn through.

Goodwyne said Mount Hood forest is too close to population centers to let fires burn, and there aren't that many fires; the west side of the Cascades isn't dry like on the east side, where the Forest Service thins to reduce fire fuel.

Goodwyne said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service often accompanies her into project areas and advises her on the forest's foraging



Bark's Michael Krochta talks to Forest Service employee Glenda Goodwyne about his concerns regarding Forest Service plans for building a road through the seep they're standing in. A seep is a waterway flowing just below the Earth's surface. The wide-leaved skunk cabbage seen below Krochta's backpack is an aquatic plant that thrives in seeps.

PHOTO BY JOE GLODE

needs.

"The only reason any gap is 5 to 7 acres in size," she said, is "because they're telling me that's what we need for forage openings, for species needing forage, because we don't clear-cut anymore."

"Elk don't depend on clear-cuts," Bell said. "That's not the natural way of things."

When considering a foraging meadow, Goodwyne looks to plant life already growing in the area to provide clues about what species will pop up when an area is cleared of trees. She said the presence of trailing blackberry and other favorite foods of large mammals indicate good placement. She also positions foraging areas close to heavy hiding cover and water – places the animals already frequent, she said.

But she said it's important that operators avoid sensitive areas.

"When I was in here and I saw all the riparian areas, and the hummocks, and the seeps – there are areas that I said, 'Stay clear of these,' and that was in my notes, and hopefully they did put some kind of buffer around many of them."

To this, Krochta responded that we should head up the road a little farther. There was something he wanted the group to see.

As we walked around a bend in the road, we stepped in mud, although it hadn't rained for weeks.

We were standing in what's called a seep – an area with a high water table, where water flows just below ground and is visible when an impression is made in the earth above it. Sometimes you can even hear the water running, Goodwyne said. Many animals living in the forest use seeps as a water source, and seeps provide habitat for aquatic vegetation. Here we see several thriving skunk cabbages.

This seep is wide, and it's crossing the road. This poses a problem because the forest plan dictates logging must achieve conservation objectives, which include healthy watersheds.

Krochta said he doesn't see how building a road over this seep and cutting down the trees providing cooling shade will "keep the natural hydrology of the area intact."

Goodwyne responded: "I prescribed this.

I'll take the brunt. I'll take the hit – but this right here is where that water really starts; that's why I told them to stay on this side, over there," she said, pointing behind us.

"Will the road building not come up this far? Because building a road across this would obviously have a huge impact," Bell said.

"Brenna," Goodwyne told Bell, "I'm not going to lie to you, and I'm not going to say they're not coming this far. Unless they're building a temporary bridge here, this is not a good place to come."

The contract indicates a French drain will be installed, not a bridge, Krochta said. That means a pipe will be laid beneath the road, but it's unlikely it would be wide enough for all the water to pass through.

Bell said this would lead to a washout. Bark has documented washouts under similar circumstances.

"It's one of the reasons we asked this unit be dropped specifically," Bell said.

Goodwyne didn't make excuses.

"I do hear you guys. I really do," she said, adding that if she and Bark had examined the site together during the planning process, the outcome might have been different. She said the site needed a thinning treatment, but she might have drawn the unit's boundary differently. "There's no telling," she said.

Bell said concerns about the seep were outlined in Bark's comments on the project, but Goodwyne said actually seeing it in the field makes a difference.

Ultimately, what Bark wants, Bell told Goodwyne and Groce, is for the forest plan to be followed.

"On Grove, there were forest plan exemptions. On Jazz, there were forest plan exemptions. We actually would like to see you follow the standards and guidelines and to not exempt yourself from them."

In a tone of sincerity, Goodwyne said, "Coming out and doing this, and hearing this and seeing this, seriously, is what we really need to be working on together.

"If we didn't have you guys," she said, looking at the Barkers, Bell and Krochta, "it'd be business as usual. We'd just keep on doing whatever we do – knowing that there are standards, but still.

"I can't say that we shouldn't be slapped on the hands. I can't say that sometimes we shouldn't put you guys in a room away from us," she said, eliciting laughter from everyone. "That's the nature of the beast. But I do truly believe in what we're trying to do together."

Bell and Krochta said they are eager to work with the Forest Service – even help it monitor with volunteers they already have out in the field.

But Goodwyne works at the Region 6 office now, and one of the primary Forest Service employees they communicate with at Clackamas District sports a baseball cap that reads, "More wag, less bark."

Krochta said Bark had a positive relationship with forest supervisor Gary Larsen, who's since left the station, but now all Bark hears is that the Forest Service isn't interested in what it has to say.

"Which is why we end up litigating," he said.

And what about the collaborative group process that was supposed to get all of a forest's stakeholders on the same page with these projects in the first place? Krochta said Bark disagreed with the Clackamas Stewardship Partners on both Grove and Jazz, but the majority wins, negating any attempt to reach a true consensus.

"They do a lot of green lighting, and the facilitation doesn't necessarily allow a lot of collaboration other than sort of giving a thumbs up or down," he said.

Goodwyne said she would like to see more members of the community engage with the Forest Service during the planning process.

"Look at the demographic here – Portland is so huge – who's coming out? Who really cares? Who really engages with us? Until it's objection time? We need to have dialogue before that."

In the meantime, she told Krochta to keep standing his ground, like she does.

"I'm being pulled in both directions – you have no idea how much Interfor and all the other companies jump down my throat for not thinning everything, and thinning heavier and all of that," she said. "I just look at them like I look at everyone else.

"I believe in what I've been doing, and that's why I can sleep at night."