

Glossary

Timber emphasis: designation of areas where timber harvest for producing wood products is permitted

Late successional reserves: reserves that contain old growth or have been selected to evolve into old-growth forest

Riparian reserves: areas adjacent to waterways including rivers, wetlands and seasonal streams

Sale administrator: U.S. Forest Service worker overseeing a timber contract

Silviculture: practice of managing the establishment, growth, composition, health and quality of forests and woodlands

Stand: grouping of trees

Unit: isolated section of forest designated for logging

Logging slash: piles of woody debris left over from logging

Landing: an area clear-cut to make room for logging trucks

Get involved

Collaborative groups are open to the public

There are two collaborative groups advising the U.S. Forest Service on restoration projects in Mount Hood National Forest's west side. In summer months, these groups go on field trips with the Forest Service to look at sites under proposal.

Robert Roth, facilitator of the Clackamas Stewardship Partners, recommends those interested in joining a collaborative should research beforehand to learn about Forest Service restoration and determine the values and priorities for forest management they would like to bring to the group.

Clackamas Stewardship Partners

Next meeting: 2 p.m. Nov. 3
Mount Scott Fire Station
9339 SE Causey Ave.
Happy Valley, OR 97086
For more information, email Robert Roth at robertrothcsp@gmail.com

Hood River Collaborative Stewardship Crew

Meets at various locations in Hood River.
No meeting is scheduled.
For more information or to sign up to receive updates, email Cindy Thieman at cindy@hoodriverswcd.org



To see what a "moderately thinned" patch of forest looks like, we visited this 2-acre plot in the Jazz Thin, a project that Bark sued the forest service and logging operator, Interfor, to stop. This area is blanketed in sunlight but surrounded by dark forest, visible here at the unit's edge, filled with tightly packed trees. The Forest Service opened this area up to bring in plant species that need more sunlight. The ground is covered in branches left over from logging, known as logging slash. PHOTO BY JOE GLODE

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there were 13 people in the silviculture shop," she said, but after those cuts, she was doing the job of "six or seven people."

The increase in workload stifled her ability to be as thorough as she would have liked, "but at the end of the year, you have targets to meet," she said.

Forest Service targets include reforestation, wildlife and fisheries projects – and timber sales.

According to its 2014 annual report, Mount Hood National Forest was able to fund numerous maintenance and restoration projects with money earned from selling commercial timber. Last year, timber cut from Mount Hood National Forest earned the Forest Service \$2.2 million. In 2013, timber cut yielded \$3.1 million.

"One thing we're doing is trying to make sure the communities we serve have wood so people can work," Goodwyne said. "It's not always about money, but I'm not going to lie and say that it's not, because that's what we're mandated to do, by law."

But this reliance on timber sales to pad its budget, Bark argues, is causing the Forest Service to have a bias when it comes to restoration.

"To get the restoration benefits," said Bark attorney Bell, "you pretty much always have to tie (restoration projects) to some timber revenue or timber output."

After driving southeast from the ranger station on Highway 224, and then up a series of logging roads, we arrived at the Jazz Thin, or as Bark calls it, the "Jazz Timber Sale."

Bark made headlines when it sued to stop this project in 2013. Bark lost, and now logging is underway.

We were about to explore one of the smallest units of the Jazz Thin. It's about the size of two soccer fields, and is located within a section of forest that was clear-cut then uniformly replanted, creating a tree plantation. All the fir trees are mid-size, about 30 to 60 years old.

Each "unit" in a timber sale is an isolated section of forest, selected by Goodwyne, for logging. In Jazz, the units vary greatly in size, ranging from 1 to 65 acres. Each unit is



U.S. Forest Service Silviculturist Glenda Goodwyne inspects a tree scarred during logging operations. Trees around it were harvested, but this tree was selected to stay so it would grow faster with less competition, but now that its been gouged in at its base, its growth will be slowed, Goodwyne explained. PHOTO BY JOE GLODE

surrounded by forest that will remain untouched, aside from roads running through to access scattered logging units.

"There's 82 units in Jazz spread out over about 30 square miles," Bell said. "The very nature of the sale makes it much harder to have eyes on the ground in every unit. Often it's just the timber operators, who obviously have a profit motive. Even if the Forest Service has planned for this to have a restorative impact, the people that are logging them are coming from a different mindset."

Nine of the 2,053 acres slated for thinning in Jazz are allocated for timber emphasis.

"Much of Jazz is within a reserve, either a riparian reserve or late successional reserve,"

said Bark's forest watch, Krochta.

We parked the white Forest Service Jeeps we arrived in and walked past a steel guardrail that Bark said should have been blocking the road. Our group speculated members of the public probably moved it aside, with ease, so they could access this part of the forest.

Before logging began, Bark photographed the roadway. It was closed in the 1990s and had become densely overgrown, with trees growing in its bed.

"The road was impassible," Bell said. It had to be completely rebuilt for loggers to access the unit we were visiting, and now it opens the way for people to illegally access an area of forest that used to be closed off completely

As our destination came into view, Bell was visibly distraught. It was her first time to the Jazz Thin since logging operations began.

The tree stand appeared more cleared than thinned. A few Douglas firs were sparsely scattered across the expanse. This area had been prescribed a moderate thin, meaning approximately 65 to 75 trees left standing on each acre.

This 2-acre unit was a short walk from four larger units – the largest was 51 acres – that had been thinned in a similar fashion.

Surrounded by dense, dark forest, this opening was flooded with sunlight. The ground was covered in logging slash – thick piles of brittle branches and brown pine needles – that covered nearly every inch of earth. The slash snapped, giving way beneath our feet as we hiked into the clearing.

A couple dozen cut and stripped tree trunks remained stacked by the landing, an area clear-cut to make room for logging trucks. In the Jazz Thin, landings account for 27 acres. These trees, I was told, had been abandoned.

Tractors had cut grooved patterns into the compacted soil throughout the seemingly post-apocalyptic scene.

"If you look at this stand," Goodwyne said, "for the person who doesn't know what they're looking at, it can look like homemade sin – or it can look like something wonderful."

She explained the remaining live trees would grow faster and with greater girth now that they had less competition. Additionally, with the arrival of sunlight into this tightly packed area of forest would come new plant species to offer a diversity often lacking in tree plantations where Douglas and noble fir were the primary species replanted.

"The pioneer species will come, the bracken fern will come, because that's what this was created for. Not to create snags and downed wood – we've got it here, we've got it over there," Goodwyne said, pointing to areas of forest beyond the perimeter of the thin. "When I come in to do a prescription, I look at everything around it, too – otherwise, you just cut willy-nilly."

Three of the trees left standing had visible scarring. Scars are places on the tree trunk where sections of bark were ripped away during logging operations.

Email exchange with Forest Service shows timber company knew rules, but broke them

An email sent from the U.S. Forest Service in November 2013 to Canadian-based timber giant Interfor Corp. is telling.

"This is a very, very high profile sale at this time," wrote Dale Phelps, U.S. Forest Service sale administrator. "We must be careful to stay within the parameters set forth."

The high-profile sale he was referring to was the Jazz Thin, and Bark had sued the Forest Service and Interfor to stop the project because most of it lay within northern spotted owl critical habitat and along protected areas of watersheds.

Estacada-based logging operator Jon Greenup Logging was working with Interfor, the winner of the contract to log the Jazz Thin section of the Mount Hood National Forest.

The companies had obtained a waiver to cut during wet season, but under the terms of that waiver, they were implicitly required to allow the Forest Service to check soil conditions and give them the green light before they could move any equipment into the forest.

But emails and inspection reports obtained by Bark show Greenup moved in and began logging in the rain, without notifying the Forest Service.

There are many stipulations around logging in wet conditions because it can cause deep ruts in the ground and create erosion channels. Most logging in the Mount Hood National Forest happens August through early October, when it's drier.

Emails between the Forest Service and Interfor indicate operators were made aware

of the inspection requirements necessary before they could begin logging.

Phelps, who was overseeing the contract on behalf of the Forest Service, told Interfor Timber Sale Manager Jay Sandmann in an email Nov. 5: "Just a reminder to you and Chad Wheeler of Greenup, Inc. The (Forest Service) must authorize cutting to begin under this waiver Because we had cool rainy weather it may be that soils are too wet right now. If so, then no equipment in the woods until we are within the guides set forth in the waiver."

According to an email among Forest Service employees, later on that day Phelps spoke with Greenup's Wheeler on the phone. Wheeler told him that Greenup planned to start logging the following day and that some equipment had already been moved. In Phelps told him to hold off on logging.

A hand-written note attached to an inspection report written by Phelps on Nov. 6 stated, "I found out late last night that Greenup Logging moved into the Bass Sale yesterday . . . they cut timber for 'a couple of hours.'"

Roy Shelby, who oversees sale administrators in the Mount Hood National Forest, said that when operators fail to follow the rules, shutting down operations for a few days usually "gets their attention pretty fast," which is what Phelps did when he discovered logging had begun in the rain.

Shelby said the Forest Service shuts down operators about two or three times a season, and in extreme cases, it will terminate the contract. He said fines are not typically issued.

several layers of trunk, but Goodwyne said it wasn't so deep the tree wouldn't survive. But, she said, it won't grow as quickly now that it's been damaged.

"That's slightly ironic," Bell said, "because the whole point of some of this is to grow bigger trees."

Goodwyne replied: "Exactly. I don't come out here and prescribe these treatments for nothing."

"This is a leave tree – you want it to be healthy."

In many cases, cutting down trees is not Bark's biggest concern. Building roads, impacts of heavy machinery, and the repeated failure of timber companies to follow best management practices put in place to safeguard the environment are issues often cited in Bark's objections.

The timber giant contracted to log in the Jazz Thin, Canadian-based Interfor, failed to follow best management practices multiple times, as documented by both Bark and the Forest Service.

"When people think of logging," Bell said, "they think of a guy with a chainsaw in the forest. That's not how it happens in many places. You have a tractor coming in here; that's what's banged into the trees."

Goodwyne pointed to one of the scarred trees.

"See the scar on that tree? I come out, and I'm driving by, and if I see a lot of scarring – I see gouges in trees – well that's not exactly what I want to happen, so I immediately pull over, and I talk to the operator," she said.

Goodwyne said the tree in question will "grow into a beautiful tree." She said it had already compartmentalized the scar, sealing it off. "If it's at the base and it's gouged in, we're going to have problems."

I pointed to a remote tree, rooted nearby. It was scarred at the base and gouged in. "What about the scar on that tree?" I asked.

We walked over for closer look.

"When you have a small canopy on a tree and you do this," Goodwyne said, pointing up the trunk to the crown of the fir, "nine times out of 10, you're going to lose that tree. This tree right here? No problem."

The gouge cut through the bark and into