

Laurel Sutherlin dangles from a bridge to prevent logging trucks from crossing.



ROLF SKLAR

RALLY FOR ROADLESS

Activists rallied for the protection of public roadless forests in front of the Siskiyou-Rogue River National Forest headquarters in Medford on Aug. 7, the day that Silver Creek Timber Co. began logging the Mike's Gulch roadless area bordering the Kalmiopsis Wilderness. About 100 protesters attended the rally, many of them holding Oregon state flags to symbolize their feeling that the federal government is running over the state.

"The crowd was really energetic," said Chandra LeGue of the Oregon Natural Resources Council. "It was a great mixture of old and young, showing the cross-section of people who care about the issue from all over the state."

The logging of Mike's Gulch marks the first roadless area cutting since the adoption of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which protected the nation's 58.5 million roadless public acres. In 2005, the Bush Administration repealed that rule and replaced it with one that leaves logging and mining decisions up to Forest Service administrators who, environmentalists complain, are notoriously eager to "get the cut out."

In allowing the logging of Mike's Gulch and the nearby Blackberry roadless area, the Forest Service is breaking its pledge to give governors time to file petitions to prevent roadless logging. Kulongoski's staff is working on such a petition, due in November, and he has joined with the governors of Washington, California and New Mexico in a lawsuit challenging the repeal of the 2001 roadless rule.

Rally Speaker Lesley Adams recounted a conversation with U.S. Agriculture Undersecretary Mark Rey, a primary architect of forest policy for the Bush administration. She asked what happened to the promise that logging would not begin while the governors' petitions moved forward. His reported response: "There are always exceptions to the rule."

Rally attendees wore T-shirts saying "Roadless is Priceless" and held potted trees to represent the natural regeneration already occurring in the Biscuit fire areas. After a short march, several activists sat down on the road in front of the Forest Service office in an act of nonviolent civil disobedience. Police arrested eleven people and charged them with disorderly conduct.

One of those arrested was Kate Ritley, who said, "I have been working to stop this day from coming by talking to the public. The last thing left I can do is to sit in front of this door and send a direct message to the American people." Also arrested was Tony Silvaggio, who added: "This is just the start of something bigger."

On the morning of Aug. 8, protesters blockaded the bridge that logging trucks must pass over to get to Mike's Gulch. Laurel Sutherlin, an activist with The Oxygen Collective, dangled for seven hours from a small tree lashed horizontally to the bridge so that if vehicles passed over, his platform would fall into the rocky river. Around 10:30 am police arrested Sutherlin, charging him with disorderly conduct and interfering with an agricultural operation.

The federal judge hearing the four-state joint lawsuit has not yet issued an injunction to temporarily halt the roadless logging, but protestors said they are still hoping it will happen.

Spruce Houser and Samantha Chirillo, with additional reporting by Kera Abraham



Activists are arrested at a rally for roadless protections in Medford Aug. 7

LESLEY ADAMS

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

WELCOME TO THE RIGHTWINGOVERSE



TOM TOMORROW

news Briefs

SECRET JUSTICE

After six alleged eco-arsonists pleaded guilty last month, the judge in the case took the unusual step of quickly ordering all the documents and transcripts of the public hearings sealed.

On Aug. 2 attorneys for one of the seven remaining defendants headed for trial told the judge, "not so fast." In a motion, the attorneys for Daniel McGowan asked federal Judge Ann Aiken to unseal the documents, citing the Constitution and centuries of tradition and precedent for open trials.

"Our nation inherited England's ancient tradition of open, public proceedings," attorneys Amanda Lee and Jeff Robinson wrote. "Among the many justifications for ensuring public access to court records are maintaining the public's confidence in the fairness and independence of the judiciary and the criminal justice system."

While select reporters at *The Oregonian* and *The Register-Guard* were tipped off to the plea hearings, the attorneys said they were not notified by the court or prosecutors, weren't able to attend and were denied the transcripts and documents.

The attorneys cited numerous case precedents to support their argument that sealing

the court records violates constitutional rights to open information and a fair and open trial under the First and Sixth Amendments. Many of the cases cited were brought by newspapers seeking public information.

Judge Aiken sealed the documents without stating her reasons. The attorneys for McGowan argued that the judge should have held a hearing on sealing the documents and sealed them only if she could find a compelling, factual and unavoidable need to do so.

"There is neither logic nor fairness" in effectively closing a proceeding to other defense attorneys that was open to the media and public, the attorneys argue. In some cases, prosecutors move to seal plea agreements to protect witnesses and ongoing investigations, the attorneys noted. But the government made no such argument in these cases, and it's already widely known through the media and prosecutor statements that the plea agreements required defendants to testify against other defendants, according to the motion.

The media reported on what was said at the plea hearings, but, the attorneys note, "The documents may contain material that was not revealed in open court."

— Alan Pittman

DEATH TO UO NUTRIA

A string of emails circulating this week complain that UO employees are trapping and killing nutria at the Urban Garden near Millrace Drive. And while some residents might say "good riddance" to the large and snarling rodents, animal lovers are decrying the practice as appalling and outrageous.

An email sent by Kerry

