

LOSTINE

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a severe fire went through the area 100-120 years ago, trees of that size are scarce anyway. For that reason, he stands by the statement that the USFS will prioritize logging the most fire resistant trees over smaller trees.

Klavins also questioned Johnston's knowledge of the area and the type of forest in general.

"I am thankful for Dr. Johnston's interest in our work and recognize his expertise in the dry forests of the Malheur, but those forests are very different from this forest," he said. "A lot of people, researchers and scientists who have visited these forest more than once, have looked at our FAQs and stand behind them."

Responses to the FAQs also included mention of spotted owls, which Klavins said do not even live in the canyon. There was also disagreement over dry forests.

"The Lostine is not a dry Ponderosa Pine forest," he said. "The Forest Service never said that, and I would be surprised that James (Johnston) would say that either. You don't turn a dry forest into a wet forest. That doesn't happen."

Klavins said that nature created the area and that its condition is a result of decades of mismanagement and overharvest.

"The idea that the only way we can solve that is by building roads and logging doesn't make sense," he said. "We've long supported res-

toration-based thinning, we support taking measures to protect homes and property and make them fire-safe, but logging 10 miles up the Lostine to protect homes isn't going to make people safer."

He added that the groups have not protested the removal of firewood or the cutting of hazardous trees

"First they say its about safety," he said. "Then they tell us its about forest health. Then they tell someone else it's always been about safety. They haven't ever gotten their story straight. If this was just about safety, we wouldn't be opposed to it."

Warnock was particularly disturbed by the USFS refusal to include either group in the collaborative process. She also said that the National Environmental Policy Act provides a framework for the public to engage with the project, which she says the USFS has circumvented, with a categorical exclusion. That has resulted in a decision made without transparency or accountability, she claims.

"In order to sidestep environmental analysis, the project needs to be developed collaboratively by diverse stakeholders, and this didn't occur," she said. "Without environmental review, without being part of the planning process, how are we to know what the impacts of the project are? I think if that had occurred, we'd have seen a very different decision."

The public dialogue indicates that her group is against management, which she says is inaccurate.

"We're not against active management; we're for smart management,

for science-based management," she said."

She added that logging several million board feet off a 425-acre parcel constitutes aggressive logging. This logging did not include the hazard trees.

Warnock compared the project to the Lower Joseph Creek Project that will remove 7.5 million board-feet from 17,000 acres.

"In an area that's basically 40 times bigger than the 450-acre Lostine, they're going to remove less than double the amount of trees," she said.

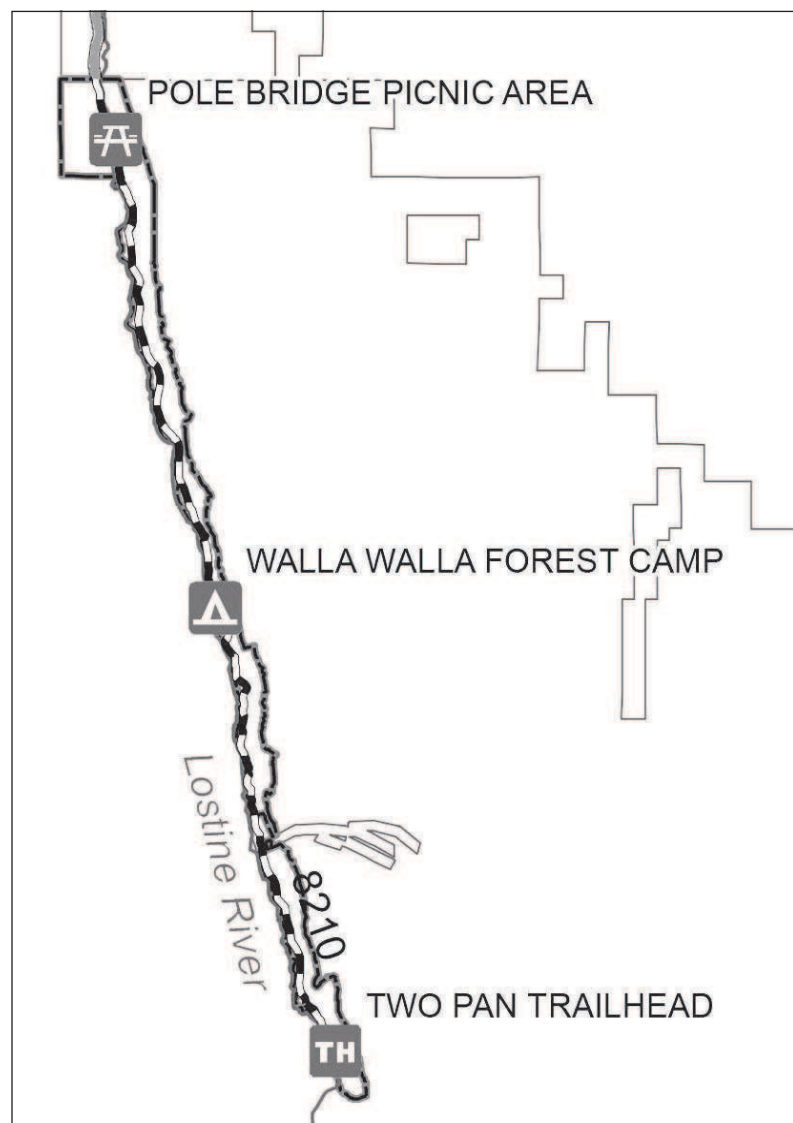
The FAQs also address the concern a half-million endangered Coho salmon released into the Lostine river downstream from the project may return from the sea to disturbed habitat.

Nez Perce tribe has not joined the lawsuit.

"In working with them, they often don't challenge projects even if they don't like them," Warnock said. "That's not how they address concerns, I guess."

Her other concern with the project was where the 450 acres is situated in the corridor. She noted that the USFS had already sent out a notice they had made an accidental incursion into the Eagle Cap Wilderness and caused some damage.

"I think for me, in plain and simple terms, there wasn't enough environmental analysis done to make a sound decision here," Warnock said. "It's important to get right. This is the Lostine Canyon."



Submitted graphic

Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project lies south of the city of Lostine between two camping areas.

LAND

Continued from Page A1

including the acquisition of hundreds of acres belonging to the Ronald C. Yanke Trust. The land will be actively managed as working timberland.

The plan was unveiled at an open house at Hurricane Creek Grange Feb. 21. Around three dozen people attended.

The mission of the trust is to preserve the rural nature of the county's land through conservation easements.

Eric Greenwell, the group's conservation program manager, said the plan was part of being strategic about the decisions the trust is making. The plan was two years in the making.

"It's a way for us to intersect

with the community," added executive director Kathleen Ackley said. "We needed to make sure that the work we're doing is important to the community. We want to be a community organization, and we can't be that unless we know what our community wants."

The bulk of the input was garnered through an online survey, meetings with the community and one-on-one interviews. Nearly 200 participated.

The trust distilled the input of Wallowa County citizens into four conservation priorities: Conserve Working Lands, Conserve Ecological and geological integrity, Preserve Community Values and Promote Spatial Integrity.

The trust's priorities lie in lands that have high economic

value and provide important conservation benefits. These include working farm, ranch and timber lands in the Wallowa River Corridor from Joseph to Minam Canyon.

The trust works to support community values by preserving lands with scenic views and historical significance, all the while maintaining access to recreational areas. Part of the plan is to keep the county's towns distinct from one another with open space and working lands between. They also plan to work with the native tribes to protect their sacred lands.

In promoting spatial integrity, the trust hopes to prioritize land adjoining existing conservation areas as well as restored areas for future conservation. These can include lands adja-

cent to wild and scenic rivers, collaboration with tribes, government agencies and other community organizations. Also included are landscape-scale conservation efforts across multiple owners.

"A big part of the conservation plan is transparency about what we're doing," Greenwell said. "The plan communicates our work to the public."

Both Ackley and Greenwell spoke to misconceptions in the community about the trust's mission.

"I'd like to hammer home that everything we do is voluntary," Ackley said. "We work with willing landowners. We're trying to find solutions, options and opportunities. I think when we've talked to people and they get that, their attitudes change."

She's also found that many people are under the assumption that the trust doesn't pay property taxes for the land donated to it.

"We do pay property taxes," she said. "We don't have to. We

can easily apply for exemption as a nonprofit. We're not removing land from the tax base."

She added that the trust actually prefers working with private landowners and have the land continue to be privately owned. It rarely receives outright land donations.

Ackley also said the trust does not take farmland out of production.

"In many cases, the land continues to be in active production," she said. "We're looking at ways to help farmers and ranchers continue to stay on their land and pass it on to the next generation."

Greenwell says residents may not understand the easement process.

"A lot of people think that once you put an easement in, the land's locked up forever, and that's just not the case," he said.

All agreements are negotiated between the trust and the land owner before being signed. Greenwell added that

the agreement is hard to amend after that point.

"It can be flexible enough to run a business, and flexible enough to do restoration work," he said.

At the moment, and for the near future, the trust is working hard to obtain several moraine easements while also getting the word of its mission out to the public.

"We have this mission, so how does it speak to the values of the community," Greenwell said. "What's the confluence of our community's values and the mission? I think there's a lot of work that our mission speaks to that the community finds valuable."

A copy of the document is available at wallowalandtrust.org or call the office to have a copy sent. Copies are also at the office 116 S. River St. in Enterprise.

The trust is planning an additional open house on March 7 in Lostine at the South Fork Grange.

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We would also like to thank everyone who attended and those who may have been inadvertently left off the above list.

I'm for protecting our rural lifestyle and I will fight for our grandkids future.

My family line is six generations deep. Like those family members before me, I've worked the land and let me tell you the land has worked me. I understand the challenges ranchers, farmers, and foresters face and that's why I'll support our natural resource producers, help ensure access to our public lands, and protect our water.

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