

# Members comment on Sugar Pine 2008 timber sale

By Bill Rhoades  
For the Spilyay

An interdisciplinary team of the Forestry and Natural Resources branches has been collecting tribal member comments on a timber sale being proposed for 2008 and other ongoing projects involving timber harvest.

Responses to a number of comments and concerns are included with this article.

The Sugar Pine 2008 timber sale will target approximately 13 million board feet of timber primarily near Twin Buttes.

The harvest approximates the annual allowable cut (recalculated every five years) for this planning unit, which is based on long-term sustainability.

The process for planning this sale officially began on August 1 when the project interdisciplinary team (PIDT) completed its second and final scoping meeting with the tribal public. Meetings were held for Agency and Seekseequa districts at Agency Longhouse, and Simnasho District at Simnasho Longhouse, initiating the process to complete a draft plan.

A slide show and maps were used to identify potential treatment areas, which were described by project leader John Arena and other members of the technical staff. A field review of the proposed project area, and other recent projects, was conducted during the annual Timber Tour on September 20.

The PIDT, which plans the sale and makes presentations to interested tribal members, is comprised of individuals from the Natural Resources and Forestry technical staffs and committees. The team includes a fish biologist, forester, wildlife ecologist, hydrologist, fuels manager, forest engineer, silviculturist, archeologist, range conservationist, soil scientist, writer/editor, representatives from three tribal committees, and a representative from Warm Springs Forest Products Industries (WSFPI).

Comments from the scoping meetings are used to develop a planning document known as a project assessment. The assessment contains alternatives for implementing the sale, a strategy to monitor the sale after it has been implemented, and mitigation measures to offset negative impacts. After considering input from the tribal public, the PIDT will develop at least two action alternatives, each emphasizing a balanced approach to resource management.

The team will present their assessment and recommended alternative to the Resource Management Interdisciplinary Team (RMIDT) this fall and they in turn release the assessment for public review. Following a 30-day review, RMIDT approves one of the alternatives and attaches a decision document to the project assessment, which is then forwarded to the BIA superintendent for concurrence. Tribal member comments are accepted throughout the process at the main office of the Forestry Branch.

The entire process and all management activities related to the forested area must adhere to goals, standards and best management practices adopted under the Integrated Resources Management Plan (IRMP) for the Forested Area. The plan, which strikes a balance between resource utilization and protection, is reviewed and updated every five years.

The Sugar Pine 2008 timber sale is being proposed because it will generate revenue for the Confederated Tribes. The size and type of trees harvested will determine the value of stump-



Bill Rhoades for the Spilyay

The Sugar Pine 2008 timber sale will address forest health issues and generate income for the Confederated Tribes.

age. These sales are designed to provide options for the WSFPI mill by creating a pantry of timber. Yearly harvests typically meet the allowable annual cut established by Tribal Council and provide jobs for tribal loggers and mill workers.

### Timber

The Sugar pine timber sale is named after sugar pine trees located primarily on Twin Buttes. The volume projected from this sale is 13.1 million board feet, which will be harvested from throughout the project area. There may be some treatments in the ponderosa pine ground mostly to thin overstocked stands and reduce the number of dwarf mistletoe-infected trees.

All of the harvested timber will come from the commercial forest. There are no plans to harvest conditional use ground under this sale, although there is a fuel hazard in Whitewater canyon.

There are several tree species found in the area including lodgepole pine, western white pine and white fir. Lodgepole pine is at the very western edge of the sale area where frost is common.

Western white pine and white fir are found mostly in the central portion of the sale area. White pine is susceptible to mistletoe, but is considered more resistant to diseases than the white fir.

Dwarf mistletoe is a plant whose spores enters the host tree through its needles and develops a root system in the tree's cambium. The prescription to treat mistletoe is to eradicate the plant through harvest or pruning. Spraying is not effective.

The quantity of timber cut in any given year is determined by the allowable cut, a volume determined by calculating the total growth of the forest. The allowable cut is equal to the forest's annual growth. This calculation is the responsibility of the Forestry Planning Department and their calculations are presented to Tribal Council for their approval. There is very little information about what the growth was 50-years ago. However, forests of the past were older and generally slower growing.

Timeframes for entering watersheds or forest planning units were originally established as once in a ten-year planning period. Entries depend on harvesting the projected volume. If the projected volume is not harvested during the first entry, another sale will have to be planned to get the remaining volume.

There are research plots in the sale area that were established in 1984. Their purpose is to determine the number and size of trees needed to optimize growth and value in the ponderosa pine ground.

The quality of trees being harvested has changed somewhat over the years. The logs being processed today are

smaller than they used to be, which results in lower quality lumber. There are also fewer trees being cut than there were historically, so the mill operates just one shift, processing 47 million board feet of logs and producing 70 million board feet of lumber.

### Cultural Resources

During the scoping process there was a great deal of tribal member interest in huckleberries and how they are being managed. Ultimately, with any federal undertaking on the reservation the federal agency, in this case the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), has the responsibility to protect Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs), such as a huckleberry patch.

In the case of a timber sale, and in particular Pathfinder Block No. 19 that tribal members have been talking about, it is the responsibility of the federal agency to ensure that all contractors are aware of how the contract should be conducted, including the removal of all limbs, treetops and debris from the immediate area during snow pack logging.

If the contractor does not fulfill his or her obligation it is up to the BIA to take the appropriate action. It is also the responsibility of the federal agency to rectify the situation. This includes the removal of all logging debris from the understory as soon as possible so that the Culture and Heritage Committee can assess the site to determine if the plants will remain viable or not. If it is determined that too much damage has occurred to the huckleberry plants, mitigation negotiations will have to take place to determine the next steps.

The BIA needs to work closely with the Culture and Heritage Committee, Cultural Resources Department, and the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer to ensure a speedy outcome. The annual Timber Tour was scheduled in September, but the site in question was not included on the agenda.

Regarding other impacts to huckleberries, research has shown that while huckleberry plants are shade tolerant, berry production is greatly reduced when plants are shaded out by a dense overstory. The removal of part of the overstory, with minimal huckleberry disturbance, by logging over at least two feet of snow, may be necessary for increased berry production.

### Badger Butte Salvage

Dead trees and living lodgepole larger than eight inches in diameter will be salvaged under a project assessment being developed for Badger Butte. The lodgepole on Badger Butte died because bark beetles bored into the trees. The trees were already stressed due to overstocking and competition for light, nutrients and water, which makes them susceptible to infestation. The bark beetle population is low

when trees are healthy, but numbers increase when the trees get older and become stressed.

The volume of merchantable trees salvaged under the Badger Butte sale will be counted against the allowable cut. However, if the trees have decayed and are no longer merchantable, they will not be charged against the cut.

Burning will be avoided to minimize lodgepole pine regeneration and fire damage or mortality to leave trees such as the hemlock and true fir. The goal is to advance natural succession in the area while reducing the fuel loads that lead to explosive wildfires.

There will be some initial ground disturbance that is unavoidable, but a series of 2-8 acre habitat clumps will be left to provide undisturbed vegetation within the salvage area. Designating skid trails and keeping the trails away from leave settings will minimize potential logging damage.

Approximately 40 to 50 percent of the tree cover will be retained, because only species affected by the bug kill are being harvested. Douglas-fir, hemlock and true fir will be left, in

addition to the undisturbed areas within habitat clumps. Hiding cover will be provided by the abundant regeneration within the area.

In answer to a question regarding the analysis process and why public comment isn't sought for all salvage activities, it should be noted the Metolius Bench or Peter Springs Salvage was done under the categorical exclusion process because it was a small project and had to be completed in a timely manner. IRMP guidelines are used to determine which process to follow and RMIDT determines the extent of project analysis.

The categorical exclusion (CATX) process covers small projects that are not considered significant enough to warrant a full project assessment (PA). The CATX document is distributed for comment amongst natural resources staff with copies provided to the various tribal committees. If the natural resources managers agree that project impacts are minimal, the proposal and any attached mitigation goes to RMIDT for their final determination. RMIDT decisions are made public through the tribal newspaper

### Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR)/Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

Another treatment that has drawn interest from the public involves the thinning of overstocked stands to reduce hazardous fuel loads and protection of rural homesites and communities through the Wildland Urban Interface program. Some of the trees are used for biomass, which produces electricity through a cogeneration plant at Warm Springs Forest Products Industries. The HFR and WUI projects are subsidized by federal funding and that makes them economically viable to some degree.

There are costs for road maintenance, cultural surveys, monitoring and other activities that must be considered when tabulating the economics of biomass removal, but there are also benefits, not the least of which is a healthier forest.

(Note: comments regarding wild-life aspects of the sale will be in the next edition of the paper.)

Next deadline to submit items to the Spilyay Tymoo is Friday, Oct. 20.

# CTS TIRES

915 SOUTH HWY 97, SUITE B

*Thank you.*

Warm Springs for your support!  
We've been serving you for one year,  
and hope to serve you for many more.

Compare Great Prices, Great Service	<b>BFG, Pro-Comp, and many more</b> <h2 style="margin: 0;">475-9111</h2>	 <b>COOPERTIRES</b>
<b>We are proud that 90% of all our tires are produced in the U.S. of A.</b>		
Monday-Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.		

## Great AMERICAN Home Furnishings

732 SW 6th St., at the "Y" in Redmond

Desks, Living Room, Dining Room, Tables, Lamps, Recliners, Mattresses, Bedroom, Daybeds, Sleepers, Bunk Beds, Leather, Entertainment Centers, and MORE!		<b>FREE DELIVERY to MOST Central Oregon areas.</b>
Major credit cards accepted		Open 7 Days a week 10-6 Mon.-Sat. 11-5 Sun.
HOME FURNISHINGS - REDMOND Locally Owned & Operated since 1980		
<h2 style="font-family: cursive;">Your Favorite Home Furnishings For Less</h2>		