



## ACTION ALERT: WEIGH IN ON THE YELLOWJACKET TIMBER SALE

### ACTION ALERT:

Habitats in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest could use your help. The Forest Service is seeking public comments by JULY 22, 2022, on plans and Environmental Assessment relating to the upcoming Yellowjacket Timber Sale. There are aspects of the plan Cascade Forest Conservancy supports because they will help lead to long-term forest health. However, there are other parts of the project we oppose as we believe they will have negative impacts on species and habitats in the region.

Join CFC in speaking up by JULY 22, 2022

### SUMMARY OF THE YELLOWJACKET TIMBER SALE PROPOSAL:

The Forest Service is proposing a timber harvest and road management [project](#) in the Yellowjacket Creek and Cispus River-Camp Creek subwatersheds within the northern section of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. This project area is experiencing stress from climate change and impacts from past land management.

The project includes timber harvest on approximately 4,809 acres including:

- Thinning at varying levels of intensity—*selective removal of trees to allow residual trees to grow larger*—on 3,765 acres,
- heavy thinning for huckleberry enhancement—*selective removal of trees to help promote growth and production of huckleberry plants*—on 863 acres, and
- regeneration harvest—*a high-intensity management technique similar to a clearcut*—on 181 acres

In addition to timber harvest, the Yellowjacket plan includes:

- Road work including maintenance on 123 miles of forest roads, decommissioning of 33 miles of forest roads, closing and stabilizing of 11 miles of forest roads, and rerouting Forest Road 2801 away from the Cispus River floodplain
- Adding access for ATVs on two loops, and a connector, on existing Forest Service roads; the northern loop adds 20.7 miles of access and the southern loop adds 36.6 miles of access
- Redesigning the North Fork Campground
- Habitat improvement projects including creation of an artificial beaver dam at Beetree Pond

There are many aspects of the proposal Cascade Forest Conservancy supports, including instream restoration, the decommissioning of 33 miles of roads, and huckleberry enhancement. We still have several concerns.

## OUR CONCERNS:

- **Regeneration Harvests:** CFC is opposed to planned regeneration harvests in 181 acres of forests. Regeneration harvests are similar to clear cuts and are designed to create more early seral habitat (forests characterized by the early stages of regrowth following stand-replacing disturbances). These early seral habitat areas are important for supporting wildlife like deer and elk. However, CFC does not believe clear cutting is an appropriate way to create early seral habitat—especially since impacts from wildfires and other disturbances will likely create more of this habitat naturally.
- **Impacts to threatened or endangered species:** CFC is concerned about regeneration harvest near units where northern spotted owl have been observed nesting in the past. We are also concerned that the current plans do not do enough to protect [fisher](#)—a mid-sized carnivore recently reintroduced to these forests after becoming locally extinct due to trapping and habitat loss. CFC has observed reintroduced fisher within Yellowjacket stands using wildlife cameras. The northern spotted owl is federally protected as an endangered species. Fishers are listed as endangered by Washington state.
- **Inadequate protections for mature trees in some stands:** Treatments described in the Yellowjacket plans differentiate based on whether a stand regenerated naturally or was replanted following an earlier timber harvest. Cascade Forest Conservancy believes the Forest Service should take steps to protect mature trees and encourage the development of old-growth characteristics, regardless of stand history.
- **Increased access for ATV without adequate study, education or enforcement:** CFC believes the Forest Service has proposed increasing ATV access in the forest without adequately studying the impacts of adding more ATVs in this area and without planning to provide education, signage, and enforcement capacity. Enforcement and signage are particularly important for ensuring existing rules are followed so riders' impacts to other forms of recreation, wildlife, and sensitive habitat areas are minimized.

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

*Provide feedback by submitting written comments to the Forest Service by July 22nd at 4:30 pm.*

*Comments must be submitted to the District Ranger along with “ATTN: Yellowjacket”.*

*Electronic comments must be emailed in a common digital format to:*

*[comments-pacificnorthwest-giffordpinchot-cowlitzvalley@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificnorthwest-giffordpinchot-cowlitzvalley@fs.fed.us)*

Below we've provided some suggested talking points to include in your comments. We also encourage you to voice support for elements of the proposal you personally agree with, like habitat improvement projects and/or road decommissioning.

### Suggested Talking Points:

- Ask for the preservation of quiet recreational opportunities (such as hiking, camping, photography, mushroom picking, and huckleberry picking) by limiting noise impacts and habitat disruptions that come from increased ATV use in new areas of the forest.
- Ask for the protection of mature and old-growth forest characteristics regardless of stand origin. Specifically, you can request that large mature trees be protected in every unit of harvest.
- Ask for the protection of important species, i.e. northern spotted owls and fishers. Specifically, you can request that no regeneration harvest be done in units with northern spotted owl circles and ask that extra precautions be taken to protect fishers beyond what is proposed in the Environmental Assessment.

## QUESTIONS:

Email your questions about the Yellowjacket Timber Sale or submitting your comments to CFC's Policy Manager, Ashley Short ([ashley@cascadeforest.org](mailto:ashley@cascadeforest.org)).