



Holly Jewkes, Forest Supervisor & Kevin Larkin, Bend-Fort Rock District Ranger
U.S. Forest Service- Deschutes National Forest
63095 Deschutes Market Road
Bend, Oregon 97701

Dear Forest Supervisor Jewkes and District Ranger Larkin:

For twelve years, the diverse stakeholders of the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project (DCFP) have worked closely with the Deschutes National Forest (DNF) leadership to preserve and enhance the DNF. We appreciate your commitment to restoration and will continue ours, as well, toward the goal of:

- making our forest more resilient and resistant to climate change, wildfires, insects, and disease, while
- restoring large tree structure, sequestering sustainable carbon, restoring functional wildlife habitat and biodiversity, protecting watershed function, and
- maintaining a viable local forest products workforce,

in order to provide for the social, environmental, and economic values our community derives from our forest. *(paraphrased from the DCFP Charter)*

Over the years, we have developed and forwarded to you our recommendations for ponderosa pine, dry mixed conifer, ponderosa pine dwarf mistletoe, and lodgepole pine forest restoration as well as a forest fragmentation tool, and we appreciate your incorporating those recommendations into your management and operations.

While we remain committed to a landscape focus, as you know we are also concerned about the removal of large trees at the Euro 5 unit. A majority of the Steering Committee members believe this was not in accord with our 2012 recommendations, which recognize a deficit of late seral conditions and the need to retain and develop more late seral trees.

While a majority of the Steering Committee members agree with this point of view, as might be expected, the diverse composition of the DCFP Steering Committee has also expressed a diverse set of opinions about what happened at Euro 5.

- A few feel that no large trees should ever be taken, because there are so few of them in the forest and each one is important. Even if they die, their snags hold an important position in the ecosystem and provide vital habitat for many species of wildlife.
- A few others feel that the Forest Service may have overmarked this area, but it was a small issue in the larger landscape of the Deschutes National Forest. These members don't want perfect to be the enemy of good.

The DCFP wants to work with the Forest Service to reduce the chance that issues like this come up again. To that end, we request of the Forest Service:

- A collaborative approach to reviewing Lidar mapping of the Deschutes National Forest to identify where similar large trees are currently growing, overlaying them with upcoming



projects, and agreeing how to handle treatment in those important commercial thinning units.

- To provide marking guides and DXD (designation by description) and DXP (designation by prescription) specifications for harvest units within the DCFP landscape.
- More dialogue to discuss the dry pine recommendations and our intentions behind them, and project-specific discussions before any decisions are taken to take large trees.
- To help identify other opportunities for us to work more closely together.
- An update soon of the Forest's response to President Biden's Executive Order regarding the inventory and protection of old growth on public lands.

During our discussions, there was a diversity of opinion about a strict diameter limit rule for timber or thinning operations, and no clear majority for either of these points of view:

- Those in favor of such a limit feel that, if implemented, it would go a long way to rebuilding trust with many stakeholders, removing the basis for much conflict and delay, and allowing the pace and scale of treatment to be increased per current plans on the Forest.
- Others feel that a diameter limit does not represent the best science, that there are times when it is appropriate to remove some large trees to promote the growth and resiliency of even larger trees, and that application of such a rule may not always be the best way of achieving the long term goals of making our forest more resilient and resistant to climate change, wildfires, insects, and disease, while restoring large tree structure and sequestering sustainable carbon.

Despite these differences of opinion, all members of the Steering Committee are committed to continuing to work toward our goals under the auspices of the DCFP.

We are also grateful, Holly, that you were willing to renegotiate the contract to save the Euro 5 unit trees, and feel it is most unfortunate that the contractor felt they had to complete the treatment quickly once their equipment was vandalized.

We look forward to engaging with you in making these improvements.

Sincerely,

Phil Chang
Chair of the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project Steering Committee