

Jim Bunker asked us why your property along the White Salmon River is important to us.

First and foremost, your land straddles a National Wild and Scenic River, a river of national significance. You need to respect that. Jim and Scott told us that they had not anticipated any complications from the Wild and Scenic designation of this river, and when asked if they even knew that this was a National Wild and Scenic River when they put the property up for sale, they seemed to hesitate when they said they did know, and this made us wonder when they found this out. We think it may have been later rather than early on. This would explain why they anticipated no problems when the property was placed on the market for the highest bidder.

When the Forest Service created a range of boundary alternatives for the river in 1991, Alternative 2 would have included most of your 240 acres within the management corridor. But, the previous owner, Longview Fiber, asked that the 240 acres be left out of the corridor, and promised to retain the forest management use of the land if granted this concession. The Forest Service decided to accept Longview Fiber's request and adopted Boundary Alternative 6, which only kept 30 acres of the 240 acres in the management corridor. The problem with this "understanding" is that apparently Longview Fiber's promise did not transfer to Weyerhaeuser when you purchased the property. Now, because of Forest Service mismanagement, we are dealing with this issue again, only this time it is worse, because of the threat of impending residential development. Furthermore, the Forest Service failed to do timely reviews of this diminished boundary (and of other related issues) as their Management Plan requires. Twenty eight years have now passed without a review of past decisions, and it remains unanswered whether or not those decisions protected and enhanced, or damaged, the Outstanding Remarkable Values for which the river was designated. This severely weakens any Forest Service claims that the portion of your property within boundary Alternative 2 is not a rightful matter of their concern. How can they know the effects of their 1991 boundary decision without proper review of how that decision has impacted the management corridors ORVs? We believe that they have neglected the review process because they know that Boundary Alternative 6 was not the best way to manage the river and protect and enhance its Outstandingly Remarkable Values. Now, to prevent even more damage (due to a marketing scheme that targets developers), the Forest Service should be proactive in acquiring, at least, the portion of your property within the Alternative 2 boundary.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Washington Department of Fish Wildlife (WDFW) and the Yakama Nation did not believe that the diminished boundaries of Alternative 6 would protect and enhance the rivers ORVs, and that is why they endorsed Boundary Alternative 2, which would have extended the boundary to include most of your property. In short, the Forest Service ignored the science in their choice of the Alternative 6 boundary. We believe this provides compelling evidence that the Forest Service made a huge error when they adopted the reduced boundary, which left most of your land out of the management corridor.