



The highlighted 160-acre tract, owned by Weyerhaeuser, has been divided into two 80-acre tracts, both of which are currently listed for sale. *Map courtesy of Klickitat County*

White brought the land sale to the attention of the Forest Service's National Scenic Area Office this summer, as he believes the sale would lead to residential development on the property, which could threaten the overall health of the Wild and Scenic River Corridor. He is hoping the Forest Service will acquire the land, and has been in contact with the agency and the Weyerhaeuser Corporation in an effort to broker some sort of deal.

"We're up against a big timber corporation that wants to sell off these lands for residential development," he says. "First you have to get the Forest Service to even consider buying it. Then you gotta get Weyerhaeuser to agree to sell it to them at fair market value. And that's a big leap."

White and Thies view residential development as the worst possible use for this land. They say that aside from impacting wildlife habitat, and affecting the aesthetics and rural character of the Wild and Scenic Corridor, the development would require a number of wells to be drilled, which could impact the water table and potentially threaten one of the river's outstandingly remarkable values: hydrology.

"This Weyerhaeuser property is full of springs that flow into the White Salmon River. Once the infrastructure is in there for housing development, each house will be on a permit-exempt well," White explains. "And all those wells will be drawing down the water table"

Pat Arnold is the executive director of Friends of the White Salmon, and she echoes White's concerns, saying, "All of this development really does damage the hydrology of the river. Everybody that drills a well drills into that shallow aquifer, and that's where all those springs and seeps are coming from. And the springs and seeps are a very important part of the life of the White Salmon."

She points to areas where wells have already been drilled close to the river, like the castle located on the east bank of the river south of Husum, and the newly constructed homes located north of Husum between the river and Highway 141.

"Trees grow back, but once the houses come in it's lost," Thies adds.

