



August 15, 2019

Letter to the Editor:

Congress designated the White Salmon River "Wild and Scenic" thirty three years ago and it's management was handed over to the Forest Service. Since then - to our knowledge - they have only purchased about 150 acres of the approximately 1,800 acres within the management boundary. Furthermore, the Forest Service has failed to complete a land exchange that they admit was central to their river management plan, and as a result, most of the forests within the Wild and Scenic boundaries were clearcut. The Forest Service has likewise done little or nothing to prevent the short platting of properties within the management area, leading to inconsistent residential development. For these reasons - and others too numerous to list - the Forest Service deserves a failing grade for their management of this river.

Weyerhaeuser Corporation - a company that is "Certified Green" - is now offering for sale 240 acres that are sensitively located within and along the boundaries of the White Salmon River. Weyerhaeuser acquired this land from Longview Fiber, who early on had apparently asked that their land be excluded from the Wild and Scenic boundary based on a handshake agreement that the land would continue to be used for forest resource. At that time, this deal was criticized as short sighted at best, but the Forest Service went with it anyway. Now Weyerhaeuser appears to be offering this land for sale, and the Forest Service's ill-conceived deal has come back to haunt us.

Copper West real estate company is now accepting offers on Weyerhaeuser's land along the White Salmon Wild and Scenic River. Copper West is offering this land with lot size options and for "highest and best use," two trademarks of forest lands soon to be converted to residential development.

The White Salmon Wild and Scenic River has suffered enough indignity and harm. We are asking Weyerhaeuser and Copper West to stop this sale, and to work with us and the Forest Service (and possibly other agencies) to bring this land into public ownership. No doubt there will be "issues" and "complications," but if a billion dollar corporation, the US Forest Service and Copper West all genuinely try, how can we not get this job done?

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Copies to Senator Cantwell, Senator Murray and Representative Herrera Butler.