

Weyerhaeuser's decisions have long term consequences for the forests, and for all of us. If Weyerhaeuser continues marketing their forest lands for "highest and best use" and with optionally sized lots, the resulting conversions from forest management to residential development will decrease the forests ability to uptake carbon, which will add to global warming. Weyerhaeuser has a lot of land, and the eventual fate of their land will have a real impact on global warming. When other timber management companies are ready to move on, they will likely follow the example of Weyerhaeuser, for good or for bad.

Columbia Gorge Audubon Society has asked Weyerhaeuser and Copper West to withdraw this 240 acres from the open market and to work with us, the Forest Service and possibly wildlife agencies, to bring this property into public ownership. The decision on this property is bound to have a major impact on the White Salmon National Wild and Scenic River.

There are always difficulties and complications in trying to preserve land. One complication is that only a portion of the 240 acres in question are within the river corridor, and a boundary change is needed to bring the balance of the land within the river management area. This land had been included in one of the original boundary alternatives, but we heard that the previous owner - Longview Fiber - had promised to keep the land in forest management if they were excluded from the river corridor. We are told that a handshake deal with the Forest Service included only 40 acres within the boundaries and excluded 200 acres. For 33 years that deal worked, but now that decision has come back to haunt the Forest Service and the river.

We are asking Weyerhaeuser Corporation to join with us in asking the Forest Service and their Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area office to finally take some action that will benefit the White Salmon Wild and Scenic River. The money has been sitting in the Land and Water Conservation Fund waiting and waiting, but the Forest Service has not requested it, even when faced with drastic consequences to the values of the river that made designation possible in the first place. If a billion dollar timber corporation owning land along this river, and the US Forest Service charged with keeping this river wild and scenic, cannot resolve a few complications and difficulties involving proper river management, who can? We believe the answer is that they can do it, if they want to.

We hope that Weyerhaeuser Corporation recognizes the impact that eventual conversion would have on their 240 acres along this nationally significant river. And, we hope that they will think about the legacy that they will be leaving behind.

Copies: The Seattle Times, The Oregonian, The Columbian, The Hood River News, The Dalles Chronicle, The Enterprise, US Senators Cantwell and Murray, and Representative Herrera Butler.