



Satellite imagery of the area shows that Weyerhaeuser's property has already been clearcut. The timber company did leave some Oregon white oaks on the property.

Weyerhaeuser declined to comment for this story, as did the listing agent for Copper West who is representing Weyerhaeuser in the sale.

Rachel Pawlitz, the Public Affairs Officer for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA), says, "We have the authority to acquire some more lands within the Wild and Scenic Corridor, and were asked to potentially intervene in that [land sale]. So we entered into talks with the seller, and at the last update that I got, we were still in conversation."

"Essentially," Pawlitz says, "we have some tentative interest in acquiring particularly the part that's inside the river boundary. However, it's highly unlikely that we would acquire and in any long-term way maintain the full parcel."

White sees this "tentative interest" as a positive development, but says that due to the troubled history of federal land acquisition within the Wild and Scenic Corridor, he's not holding his breath.

The pitfalls of private land

Almost all of the Wild and Scenic Rivers in the American West are located on public land. Rivers like the Rogue, the Deschutes, the Flathead, the John Day and the Salmon are all surrounded by federally owned lands, with most of these lands falling under the purview of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). So when the Management Plans for these rivers were drafted, the BLM became the de-facto agency responsible for implementing the plans and enforcing the protections that were, essentially, put in place by Congress.

The White Salmon, on the other hand, was surrounded entirely by private lands when the 7.7 mile stretch of the lower river was originally designated in '86. This made drafting a Management Plan for the river significantly more challenging and complex.

It was decided early on that because of the river's proximity to the Columbia River Gorge National