

1

Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs
Approved, August 28, 2005

MANAGEMENT OF THE GIANT SEQUOIA NATIONAL MONUMENT

On April 15, 2000 former President Clinton signed a proclamation creating the 328,000 acre Giant Sequoia National Monument in the Sequoia National Forest, to be managed by the Forest Service, in the southern Sierra Nevada mountains of California. The proclamation stated that the purpose of the monument was to protect the giant sequoia groves, as well as the other objects of interest found therein. Included were the forests surrounding the sequoia groves, as well as endangered and sensitive wildlife such as the California spotted owl and the Pacific fisher.

Except for a few timber sales which were already under contract or for which final decisions had been made, commercial logging was to end. The Forest Service was directed to restore the forests to a healthy, resilient condition to counteract the effects of poor logging practices over 100 years and the exclusion of fire.

The Forest Service adopted a management plan that called for continued logging, up to 7.5 million board-feet per year, to reduce fuels and the danger of wildfire. The National Park Service has used prescribed fire alone with excellent results for the past 30 years to restore exactly the same kind of forest containing giant sequoia groves. The forests and the sequoia groves in Sequoia National Park are in excellent natural condition, and the giant sequoias are vigorously regenerating.

In spite of the success of the Park Service, the Sequoia National Forest insists on moving ahead with logging, using the excuse of reducing dangerous fuels. The Sierra Club and the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs have called for the management of the Giant Sequoia National Monument to be transferred to the National Park Service.

The state of California, the Sierra Club, and several other conservation organizations have filed lawsuits claiming the management plan for the monument violates the provisions of the proclamation that created the monument. Court action is pending on these lawsuits. The lawsuit filed by the state of California included a provision claiming that the fire management plan of Sequoia National Forest was adopted without meeting the requirements of the National Environmental Protection Act. The court agreed and the fire management plan was declared unlawful.

The timber sales that were grandfathered by the proclamation were inactive until July 2005, when logging commenced in parts of the monument. All timber sale contracts are only in effect for five years from the date when they were signed. That period has expired. However, with no public notice, the Sequoia National Forest has granted an extension of the contracts. The Sierra Club went to court and was granted a temporary restraining order (TRO) until the case could be dealt with by the court. One of the main grounds for the TRO is that new information has surfaced about the serious threat to the Pacific fisher population that is isolated in the southern Sierra Nevada. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently considering listing the Pacific fisher in the southern Sierra Nevada under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs is alarmed by the management plan adopted by the Forest Service for the Giant Sequoia National Monument. It is particularly concerned with continued logging in the monument and the threat that logging poses to sensitive wildlife such as the Pacific fisher. It repeats its position that the management of the monument should be transferred to the National Park Service for the reasons stated in its previous resolution.

Furthermore, it calls upon the Forest Service to rescind its extension of timber sale contracts that were allowed to continue when the proclamation was signed. Those sales should have been allowed to sunset. New information indicates that continued logging constitutes a serious threat to Pacific fisher populations found in the monument.

It further calls upon the Forest Service to withdraw its fire management plan for the Sequoia National Forest and to rewrite it with public input, as required by court order in response to the lawsuit filed by the state of California.