

GAO Shows Biscuit Logging Lost Taxpayer Dollars

author: Rolf Skar 04.Oct.2006

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report released today shows the Bush administration lost taxpayer dollars by logging remote, sensitive forests after the 2002 Biscuit fire. The report also documents that forest restoration and fire safety projects used to justify the controversial logging were not implemented. This definitive report by the government's own watchdog group deals another serious blow to Congressman Greg Walden's post-fire logging bill now pending in Congress.



The Government Accounting Office (GAO) today confirmed that logging after the Biscuit fire in southern Oregon's Siskiyou National Forest lost money. The report released by Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), ranking Democrat on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee revealed that the Biscuit logging project cost taxpayers nearly \$2 million dollars.

Logging generated \$8.8 million in receipts but expenses were \$10.7 million. Most of the receipts generated were from low-cost hazard tree removal (\$5.1 million) - meaning that the losses from the controversial salvage sale portion of the Biscuit project were approximately \$7 million.

The GAO's findings prompted a strong response from Senator Bingaman who issued the following public statements:

"This effort appears to be one of many instances where the Forest Service promised restoration and fuels reduction in conjunction with timber sales, did the logging at a cost of millions of tax dollars, and still has not started most of the restoration and other work. Taxpayers are going to have to spend millions more just cleaning up the damage from the logging than the government made from the timber sales. Meanwhile, as another recent study concluded, the logging killed 70 percent of the natural tree regeneration and elevated wildfire fuel loads. At the same time, promises of community fire protection, habitat restoration and scientific analyses remain unscheduled and unfulfilled."

Conservation groups, long critical of the Biscuit fire logging project and the flawed economics used to justify it, agree with the Senator. "The GAO report shows that the Forest Service, busy with controversial backcountry logging, failed to invest in fire safety projects that would have benefited local communities," said Rolf Skar, campaign director of the Cave Junction based Siskiyou Project. "Playing politics with our public lands comes at a high cost."

The GAO released its study as the White House and as logging proponents are trying to pass legislation that would aggressively promote logging after natural disturbances under the guise of needing to restore forests. H.R. 4200, the Walden logging bill would further weaken environmental safeguards and opportunities for public involvement. The bill waives the National Environmental Policy Act, leaves roadless areas, old growth forests, and other special areas unprotected to many logging projects, threatens endangered species habitat, and could increase the risk of wildfire.

Biscuit Logging *Continued on other Side*

why swap boxes?

author: maks 08-Oct-2006

why do the streets need swap boxes? What is art and who defines it? In these times of increased fear and privatization I wonder what the public sphere even means anymore. If the notion of public space as something we can all collectively define is to die, it will be because we as a people have put our heads down and forgot about that world outside ourselves.

In "Temporary Autonomous Zone", Hakim Bey wrote of the ability of groups and individuals to create temporary, constantly shifting zones of liberated space free from formal societal control structures and of the power that information wields when turned against its creators. What I am trying to do with the Swap Box Project and my other installation projects is to establish a temporary zone of interaction and exchange, a place where the streets are modified just a little to build something that snaps people out of their everyday routines and gets them interacting in ways they otherwise might never do, both with themselves and each other. It gets them digging into their pockets, contemplating that long-lost childhood notion of exchange, grinning for pictures with perfect strangers in front of a piece or else discussing with passers-by about what would constitute a fair swap.



You like my stuff? Well, don't just talk about it, offer me compliments and go back to typing. Do something about it. Think about ways you can turn your streets into the public space they should be. Pass on the Swap Box Manifesto (coming soon) or take up the tools in your own particular manner. We live in a stifling climate of fear, overwork and greed, and if we want to change it then it's up to us to do something. Bring people together. Brighten a few people's days and pass the inspiration on to them. It's in your hands.

Art is not the sole property of galleries. If we allow a select few to define what is and is not art, we're only fucking ourselves over in the long run. If it's going to be said that culture is dying, then we are to blame for sitting around and idly staring at our watches while it flatlines. It is up to us to think about who has defined the terms of our existence and what they get from it. Complaining about hegemony will get you nowhere. The only way to change a perspective is to toss yours out into the mix.

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September Iraq War Demonstrations and more 06-Oct-2006

author: D. Burbeck

A Peace Camp in England held a month long demonstration against the movement of American arms to Israel, and "Camps" in Crawford, Tx and Wash. DC staged many actions along with workshops and conferences where many prominent anti-war activists gave inspiring speeches. Bush was pronounced "Guilty" at Camp Democracy in DC of War crimes and crimes against Humanity by "The International Commission of Inquiry on Crimes Against Humanity Committed by the Bush Administration." Rohrbacher, Negroponte, Feinstein, Pelosi, and Boxer were greeted by protesters at their offices or homes or clubs.



Activists marched through the state of Vermont for five days - 'Forming a line that stretched nearly half a mile, more than 600 people marched into Burlington Monday in what organizers said was the country's largest global warming demonstration to date. Carrying signs and banners, marchers called for political action to address climate change.'

Nashville, Boston, Flint, Ground Zero, and London held demonstrations against visits by the Bush and Blair administrations.

Sept. 11 brought thousands of people into the streets all around the world.

Counter-protesters are making weak showings at anti-war demonstrations saying the troops need to stay in Iraq till the job is finished, as happened in New Jersey - believe it or not.

Declaration of Peace Day demonstrations were held in over 350 cities around the world on Sept. 21 - the International Day of Peace.

Several military recruiting stations saw protesters and more military conscientious objectors stood up and spoke out about the war in Iraq.

Last but not least, activists in DC served an official of the Bechtel Corporation with an eviction notice.....evicted off of the entire planet!

<http://www.angelfire.com/nb2/www.dissentam.org/Sep6.html>

Fouad, we have not forgotten

author: LN 10-Oct-2006

As the months role by, and the police killings continue, it may appear that we have forgotten you, and the fact that the cops flatly murdered you, without provocation, without cause, and without sanction.

We remember, and wait, quietly, for the slow wheels of justice to grind your killers to dust. You were not armed, you were gravely injured, badly (perhaps terminally) burned, alone, naked, and seated, "cata-tonic," the officers say, and those called to your aid chose instead to kill you. We will not let them rest, I promise you.



Biscuit Logging Continued from other Side

"This report debunks supporters of H.R. 4200 who claim we need to scrap our environmental laws to speed logging," said Michael Francis, The Wilderness Society. "Staff cuts, an overly large project targeting sensitive areas, and agency mistakes delayed logging at Biscuit - not litigation."

The GAO report confirms what conservation groups earlier had claimed -- that Biscuit logging was losing millions in below-cost timber sales. According to Dominick DellaSala, Executive Director of the National Center for Conservation Science & Policy and an author of an earlier study on Biscuit logging, the Forest Service claimed that the purpose of the Biscuit logging project was to generate moderate to high levels of economic return but the agency lost millions when it accepted bid values far below what was anticipated due to low demand for burned trees and high cost of getting them in remote areas.

"The Forest Service continues to treat post-fire logging sales as if the laws of economics are suspended using flawed accounting methods to justify below-cost sales," said DellaSala. "This is precisely why we don't need sweeping legislation to authorize more below-cost logging projects that set back recovery when forests are most vulnerable to logging after wildfires."

Other studies by the GAO during the 1990s found that most timber sales on the National Forests lose money. From 1992-1997 the GAO estimated the Forest Service timber sale program lost over \$300 million each year. A more recent independent analysis estimates losses from the timber sale program are now much higher -- \$860 million in 2004.

"This study confirms what many have known all along; that logging after fires is a lose-lose proposition," said Randi Spivak, Executive Director for American Lands Alliance. "Not only is the sale a money loser, but roadless areas and old growth forests have been damaged and the Forest Service doesn't have the money to complete promised restoration work."

The Report found:

-- Delays in the project were caused by an extreme downsizing of Forest Service staff that saw one-third of the forest's personnel eliminated - dropping from 619 staff in 2002 to 400 staff in 2005.

-- The size of the proposed logging and changes in roadless area management authorities contributed to delays in producing alternatives and a final decision.

-- Litigation played no role in delaying implementation of the logging project.

-- Other recovery worked promised under the Biscuit project to reduce hazardous fuels, and rehabilitate wildlife habitat is unlikely to occur unless additional funds are appropriated.

The full report is available for free at:
link to energy.senate.gov <http://www.siskiyou.org>