



We urgently need your help! Protect the last 25 Yaak grizzlies and defend the lungs of the northern Rockies' inland rainforest; write a letter protesting the Kootenai National Forests' proposed damaging activities in the Black Ram project area. **Please act by August 8th—next week!**

The Yaak Valley, Montana's northwestern-most watershed, is uniquely positioned between the maritime Pacific Northwest, governed by rot, and the dryer northern Rockies, governed by fire. It is a linchpin to successfully weathering the rising tide of global warming and home to an isolated and endangered population of 25 grizzly bears. Because it holds so much water in the landscape, a rarity in the American Rockies, it already serves as a climate refuge for species escaping their fragmenting habitats, and may one day play an ark-like role in repopulation. It was once comprised of as much as fifty percent old growth. While that number is significantly diminished, it still **contains an extraordinary band of forest in which no fire scars can be found, indicating at least a thousand years without fire.** Fens, marshes, springs, and creeks lace these high elevation woods. The Yaak is a grand biological experiment, 97% of which is public land—the Kootenai National Forest.

It is within this context that the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is proposing a string of regeneration harvests—modern forestry’s clearcut—of over 2600 acres for the Black Ram timber project. While some of these cuts are needed near roads and towns, many are deep in the woods away from communities, some in the heart of the unique old-growth spruce forests. Most disturbingly, the USFS is using the language of global warming to justify the vast majority of proposed treatments in the area, claiming that cutting these ancient forests will make them more “resilient.”

The USFS could not be more wrong. Old spruce and subalpine forests in boreal regions hold up to 80% more carbon than other forests. These forests have been the key to withstanding climate cycles across the ages and should be preserved for research, not erased from the public and scientific treasury.

This is an opportunity to send a message to the Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service about the need to be mindful of the benefits of passive firefighting measures. Recent studies have indicated that planning is more effective than cuts in preventing wildfire. There is no need to turn this ancient sub-boreal band of never-burned forest into a biological desert. And there is a way to stop it. If the USFS conducts an Environmental Impact Statement, they will be forced to acknowledge the delicate landscape, and rewrite their prescriptions.

Please, write a letter to the Kootenai National Forest at comments-northern-kootenai-three-rivers@fs.fed.us with a copy to info@yaakvalley.org *Demand that the USFS complete an EIS to address the environmental consequences of such proposed actions in high elevation wet forests, core grizzly bear habitat, critical wildlife corridors, and to better protect the wildland urban interface. A project of this size must have a true landscape-level assessment.*

Again – send your comments to:
comments-northern-kootenai-three-rivers@fs.fed.us
with a copy to info@yaakvalley.org

Thank you!

Jane Jacoby
Conservation Director