

## **Special Action Alert: Giant Sequoia National Monument Management Plan**

**Send your comments by May 4, 2009 on scoping for the Giant Sequoia National Monument management planning process**

It has been nine years since President Clinton created the Giant Sequoia National Monument, and to date there is no plan in place to guide how the Monument is to be managed. Sequoia National Forest is finally scoping for its second attempt to write a management plan for the Monument, after their first attempt was thrown out in court in 2004, when the judge ruled it invalid in its entirety and called it "incomprehensible."

The history of the Giant Sequoia Monument is complex; since 1979 the Kern-Kaweah Chapter of the Sierra Club has fought to protect these priceless lands that include 38 groves of Giant Sequoia. We believe the battle will continue as long as the Forest Service is in charge of the Monument's management. The Sierra Club advocates that the management of the Monument be changed from the Forest Service to Sequoia National Park.

Groves of Giant Sequoia are found only on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada. When Sequoia National Park was created over a century ago, over half the groves were not included in the Park and eventually came under the control of the Forest Service where logging became the dominant use. In the 1980's, most of the Forest Service's groves were in the timber base; lands that could be logged. But while the Forest Service was logging and building roads, Sequoia Park had a protective policy for its forests. In the 1950's the Park recognized the essential role of fire in perpetuating the ancient cycles of life in the Sierra. Today the Park's management of forests is the most scientifically sound and ecologically successful on earth. The Park only chooses tree removal as a last resort.

When former President Clinton created the Monument, his proclamation made several things very clear; Monument lands were no longer to sustain industry, the lands were to be restored from a century of destructive logging and misguided fire suppression, and no trees were to be removed except where clearly necessary for restoration or safety purposes. Our interpretation of this clause means that if there is a way to accomplish restoration and/or safety goals without relying on tree removal, that method should be used. It makes little sense to restore a forest from industrial logging by logging even more. President Clinton allowed the Monument to stay under the control of the Forest Service even though there was little indication that they could meet the challenge to switch their management paradigm from heavy handed chainsaw manipulation to protection and perpetuation, relying primarily on natural processes. To help the Forest Service change gears from treating Monument lands as a timber farm, the Proclamation required the initial plan be guided by a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB).

Over a year ago, the Forest Service began a supposed collaboration process to work with the public and environmental groups to help develop a valid plan that would be legal and

effectively follow the dictates of the Proclamation. This collaboration attempt involved many public meetings and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and yet yielded little or no product that the Forest Service can use to help it write its new Plan. And probably the most egregious flaw in their following the Proclamation is that they have decided to not create a Scientific Advisory Board to guide this plan. They say they can use the advice of the 2004 SAB, even though that SAB was restricted to commenting on the plan that the judge threw out and significant new scientific information has come to light since 2004.

While our ultimate goal is to get the Monument into the caring hands of the Park System, we also want the Plan that the Forest Service devises to be as good as possible. The scoping letter gives only general information.

### **TAKE ACTION TODAY**

We urge everyone to write a comment letter to the Supervisor of Sequoia National Forest.

The points we hope you will emphasize are: 1/ They need to give the public a full 90 day commenting time frame for scoping instead of a mere 45 days. 2/ They need to form a Scientific Advisory Board now, before they plan any further. This needs to be a newly formed SAB with a new charter that allows for majority and minority opinions. 3/ Every Alternative needs to be fully consistent with the Proclamation and at least one Alternative must rely primarily on natural processes with tree removal used only as a last resort 4/ They must protect all trails in the Monument as historical objects and not pave, bulldoze, widen, or destroy the natural character of these trails. 5/ Roadless areas must be protected so as to retain the criteria for consideration as future Wilderness areas. 6/ Until a valid Plan is approved, no irreversible actions should be planned or approved. 7/ No projects should be planned or approved inside groves until the plan is final and projects in groves should be only pursuant to a grove specific management plan and EIS that determine what strategies are needed in that specific grove. 8/ Community protection projects should only involve removal of trees less than 8" and/or mastication should be focused in the immediate 200 feet adjacent to structures; except for prescribed fire, projects miles from communities are not justified as safety projects. 9/ A clear transportation plan is required that designates certain roads for ORV use and others not for ORV use.

You should add any issues that you wish. There will be future opportunities to comment when the Forest Service gives more specific information about their intentions in this new Plan.

Send written comments to Marianne Emmendorfer, Project Leader, Sequoia National Forest Headquarters, 1839 South Newcomb Street, Porterville, CA 93257, and Attention: Monument Management Plan, or facsimile to (559) 781-4744.

The Sequoia National Forest is using the Limehouse Software website <http://gsnmconsult.limehouse.com/portal/> to enter you comments electronically. If the Limehouse system is too cumbersome, tedious, or complicated, email your comments to the Sequoia comments address at [comments-pacificsouthwest-sequoia@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificsouthwest-sequoia@fs.fed.us)