

[http://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/opinions/letters\\_to\\_editor/dnrc-ignoring-the-real-costs-of-timber-proposal/article\\_4933c7ae-b1cc-56d9-9c66-58ea2454ccdc.html](http://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/opinions/letters_to_editor/dnrc-ignoring-the-real-costs-of-timber-proposal/article_4933c7ae-b1cc-56d9-9c66-58ea2454ccdc.html)

## DNRC ignoring the real costs of timber proposal

By George Wuerthner 10 hrs ago

Tired of seeing surveys on articles? Become a subscriber!

[Log In](#)

or

[Subscribe](#)

The proposed Limestone timber sale south of Bozeman is based on flawed assumptions about forest ecology.

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) suggests logging the beetle-killed trees will reduce fire hazard.

Fine fuels like needles and small branches is what drives wildfires, which is why you are left with snags after a blaze. Large tree boles remain largely unscathed, which is why beetle-killed forest are less likely to burn.

The second myth is the idea that logging will improve the health of the forest. Current ecological knowledge suggests logging impoverishes forest ecosystem health. Dead trees are the biological capital for new forest growth.

For instance, removal of dead trees will destroy one of the most important structural components of a forest. More than 2/3 of all wildlife species at some point in their life cycle depend on dead trees whether is snags for cavity nesters like bluebirds, woodpeckers and even bats, or the fallen logs used as hiding cover for everything from voles to marten.

The third myth is that DNRC makes money logging state forests. They only do this by cooking the books. In other words, by ignoring the full costs of any logging operation.

Logging roads and equipment also a major cause of weed spread, fragments wildlife habitat security cover, and is one of the major sources of stream sedimentation.

Logging roads are also one of the major places where human-ignited fires start: The more road you have, the more likely you will have a fire. With this area right on the edge of Bozeman, any new access will increase significantly the chances of a wildfire on Bozeman's fringe.

DRNC typically exaggerates the benefits, and ignores the real ecological costs to justify its timber programs.

---

George Wuerthner

Livingston

---

## Morning Opinion Page Headlines

Get the headlines from the Chronicle's opinion page delivered to you each day.

 Enter email address

**Sign up**

**Manage your lists**