

# Greens protest new logging in Washington



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By Susan Gordon

Loggers have begun to remove trees from an area near the Carbon River entrance to Mount Rainier National Park in Washington that environmentalists say deserves special treatment.

The Plum Creek Timber Co. put loggers on the job after a state appeals board on April 9 refused an emergency request to prevent logging on the 28 acres of commercial timberland.

The property is about a mile from the park, within what two Wilkeson-area women believe is a scenic corridor worthy of protection.

Joan Miller and her friend, Mardel Chowen, asked the state Forest Practice Appeals Board to suspend Plum Creek's permit to log the property. The permit was issued in December by the state Department of Natural Resources

The appeals board voted 2-1 to deny the women's request, which was supported by The Mountaineers, a 15,000-member Washington outdoor recreation and conservation group. The Washington Forest Law Center, a Seattle-based nonprofit group that fights for forest preservation, did the legal work.

Bob Jirsa, Plum Creek's director of corporate and environmental affairs, said company officials were pleased with the outcome. He pointed out that the cut was designed with the help of a University of Washington professor known as an expert in landscape planning.

Previously, David Crooker, general manager of Plum Creek's Cascades region, has said the company is not obliged to protect scenery because state logging regulations don't require it. Even so, the company modified its cutting plan and spent months trying to negotiate a compromise with the two women before the appeal was filed.

Toby Thaler, a Forest Law Center attorney, said his group will pursue further appeals, even though the logging probably will be finished before a hearing could be held. "A major issue is the relationship between this small clearcut and the many other clearcuts in the same area, past and future," he said.

Miller said she was disappointed but not disheartened by the board's decision. She took heart in the fact that one out of the three appeals board members was swayed by the

environmentalists' argument. "They really put some serious consideration in on this," she said.

Chowen said she believes the complaint has successfully focused public attention on the importance of scenic corridors such as the Carbon River valley. "We will still be watching every single move that the timber companies make in that valley," said Chowen, who is active in Friends of the Carbon Canyon, a watchdog group. "Plum Creek is a poor land steward. It's going to be obvious as people drive up there," she said.

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