

STANDARD 33: FOREST MANAGEMENT, OLD GROWTH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

Primary Objectors:

- Harold Singer
- **Center for Biological Diversity and the John Muir Project, Earth Island Institute**, Justin Augustine
- **Sierra Forest Legacy**, Craig Thomas and Michael Graf

Interested Person: Heavenly Resorts

Summary: Objectors expressed concerns that Standard 33 allowed nearly unlimited discretion to cut trees greater than 30 inches diameter breast height (dbh) which are important for wildlife habitat. Specific concerns about degradation of spotted owl habitat were expressed. Objectors propose only allowing removal of trees greater than 30 inches dbh for safety or equipment operability purposes, and utilizing project-specific forest plan amendments when removal for other purposes is needed.

FEIS version:

SG33. *Retain trees 30 inches dbh or larger. Where trees greater than 30 inches DBH need to be removed, ID Team members (e.g., vegetation management specialist, wildlife biologist, scenic specialist, recreation management specialist) will propose trees to be removed, girdled for snag creation, or felled for coarse woody debris during project development. Exceptions under which a tree 30 inches dbh or larger can be removed include the following: [Standard]*

- a) The tree(s) larger than 30 inches dbh presents a safety hazard, or prevents equipment operability.*
- b) The tree(s) larger than 30 inches dbh is a host/source of insects or disease or where stands are at a high risk of beetle outbreak and/or disease transmission*
- c) The preponderance of overstory trees within the stand are greater than 30 inches dbh and at high densities, the selection for removal or snag creation would allow competitive release for growth of the largest trees*
- d) Shade tolerant trees larger than 30 inches dbh are increasing the rate of mortality or out-competing preferred species*
- e) When necessary to support aspen, meadow or stream restoration*
- f) When managing for blister rust resistant sugar pines that require removal of competing trees within a sufficient radius to improve health of the sugar pine.*

Objectors' remedy: Eliminate the standard and utilize project-specific forest plan amendments to remove trees greater than 30 inches dbh for purposes other than safety or equipment operability.

Previous Forest Service Instruction:

- Clarify in the Record of Decision that removal of trees greater than $\geq 30''$ dbh will be the exception rather than the rule.
- Consider instructing the Regional Forester to have the LTBMU track and evaluate the impacts of removing ≥ 30 dbh on the quality and distribution of closed-canopy late seral coniferous forests for vegetation management projects such as fuels reduction and restoration. Exclude tree removals associated with special use permits such as utility lines.

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