

Siuslaw National Forest Ground-Truthing

The Forest Visit

(Updated August 15: We made things easier)

Information, Materials & Tools



Coast Range Association

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Project Goal

Documenting Siuslaw National Forest mature and old growth forest as comments into the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) amendment process and the Land Management Plan Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System. The information gathered in this project will prove highly valuable in shaping future Siuslaw National Forest management direction and protecting the remaining mature and old growth forest.

Section I. Forest Visit Form & Instructions

The forest visit form is a concise way to record forest visit information for submittal into the NWFP amendment process and the old growth amendment process. A few key pieces of information are the goal of a forest visit. Please read the instructions before heading into the forest.



Sample Completed Forest Visit Form

Siuslaw National Forest

Forest Visit ID Name: Pen-3462-1

GPS DM or DMs location: Latitude 44° 21.7977

Longitude 123° 55.2746

Elevation: 891ft

Compass Direction from Road (Check One)

N ___ NE ___ E ___ SE ___ S ___ SW ___ W X NW ___

Road Number from Siuslaw Road Map: FS-3462

(Optional) Stand Photograph ID/Name: Stand-3462 Road-1

(Optional) Typical Tallest Tree Photograph ID/Name: Doug fir-3462 Road-1

Measured Tree Circumference: 16' 4" = Diameter: 62"

Estimated diameter of Typical Dominant (tallest) Trees (inches): 50"+

Tree species present: Doug fir X Hemlock X Cedar X

Sitka Spruce _____ Alder X Big Leaf Maple _____

Is a shade tolerant understory of Hemlock or Cedar present? Yes X No _____

Plants Identified

Huckleberry X Salmonberry X Thimbleberry X Blackberry _____

Elderberry X Vine Maple X Dogwood _____ Cascara _____

Salal X Ferns _____ Moss X Lichen _____ Fungi X

Animals observed:

Birds Present: *Catharususulatis*

Notes: Observed a large herd of elk in a thinned area.

Your Name: Penelope Kaczmarek

City: Siletz State: OR



Optional Photo of Measured Tree: **Doug fir-3462 Road-1**



You may download blank forms as a Microsoft Word document or an Apple Pages document at this page on the CRA website.

[The Page is Here](#)

If you use a paper copy during the forest visit, you will need to fill in a copy at home on your computer so you can upload the document to the Forest Service's comment portal/website

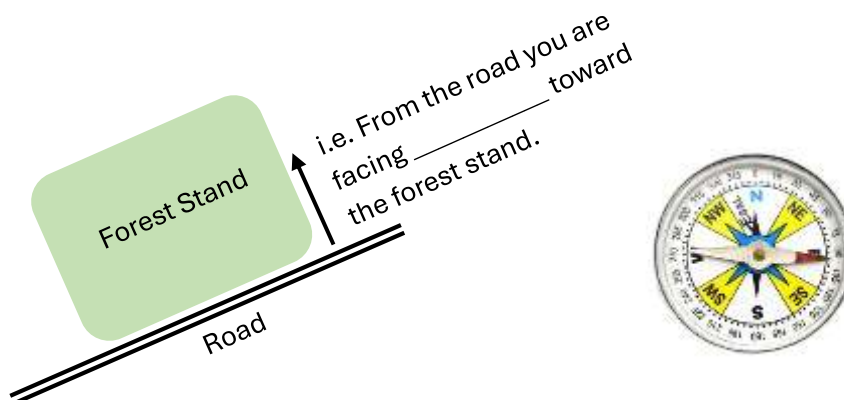
Form Instructions

Site Name: A unique word (i.e. your name or any name) followed by the Forest Service (FS) road number. If you visit multiple sites along the same FS road add 1, 2, 3 etc. (i.e. Carol Jones-FS 5870-site1)

GPS location: GPS location is easy and important. Your GPS position is available using an app on your I-phone or Android phone. Your I-phone compass also provides latitude and longitude location. (See page 14 for more information about GPS)

Stand Compass Direction: Using the phone's compass, note the stand direction looking out from the road.

For example:



Road Numbers: All Forest Service roads are numbered by two or more digits. Main roads are generally numbered with two digits i.e. the 58 road. Roads that spur off a main road will likely have an additional two or more digits i.e. 5870. Some roads will have six or more numbers.



While all Forest Service roads have a number, many roads in the forest may not be marked. It's a good idea to carefully plan your route. Note the general distance between road junctions and whether the upcoming road will be to your right or left. Consult the Siuslaw NF website for a list of road closures.

Forest Service roads are divided between roads usable by higher riding vehicles and roads recommended only for very high-riding vehicles (the clearance between the bottom of the vehicle and the ground). **Avoid doing your forest visit in a low riding vehicle such as a typical sedan passenger car.**

Many FS roads are closed or not properly maintained or overgrown with vegetation. According to the Forest Service, the roads indicated on the three Siuslaw road maps are usable by an appropriate vehicle. Some usable roads may be behind closed gates or temporarily blocked. Such roads are not closed to people hiking in to visit the forest.

Carefully read the information on the Forest Service Road Map. Check the Siuslaw National Forest website for current road closures and more here:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/siuslaw/alerts-notice>

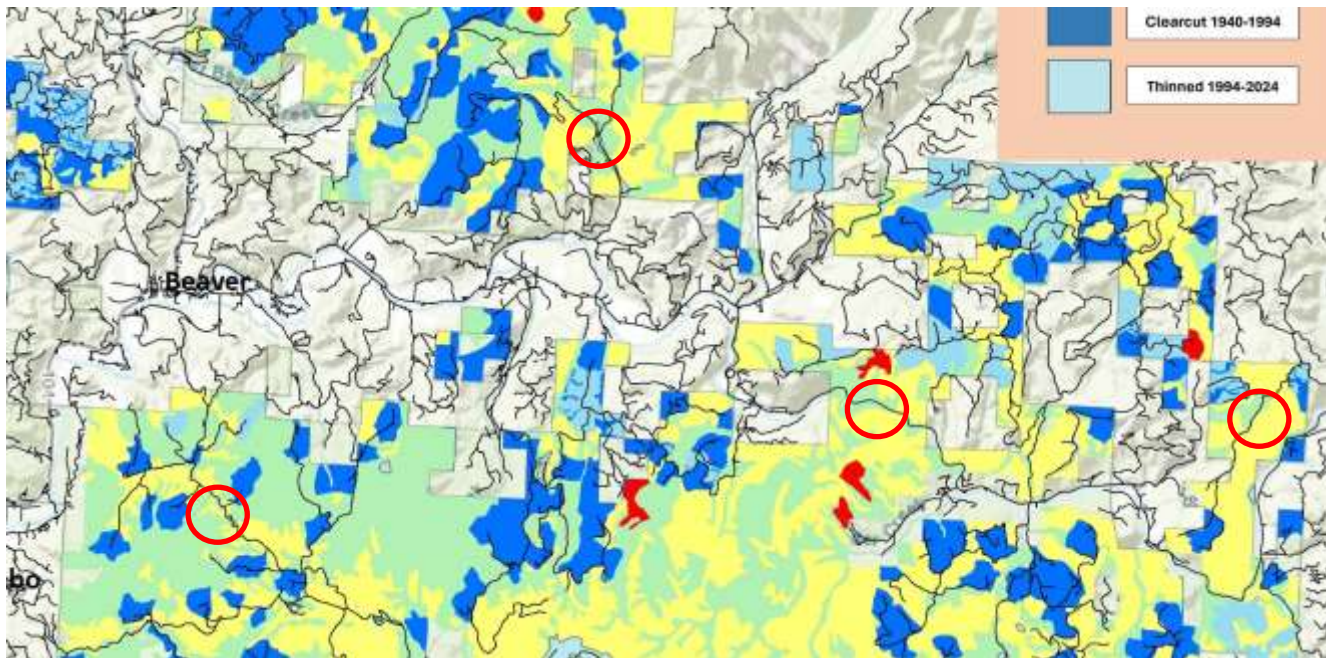
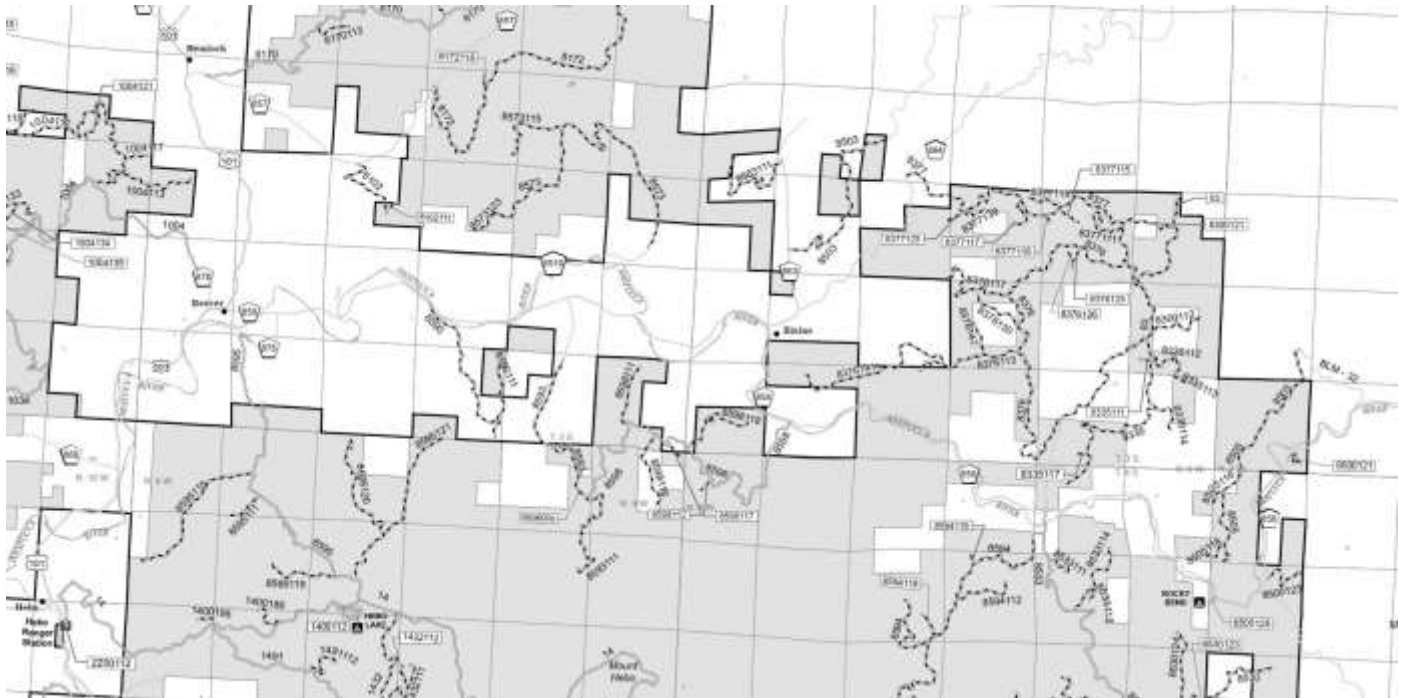
Select a Forest Area to Visit



Select a manageable forest area to visit. This should be a relatively small area such as Forest Service land in the Beaver Creek watershed (map to the left) or Tillamook County east of Hebo/Beaver.

Next, consult the color forest maps the CRA provides. The red, yellow and green stands are the priority forest types to visit and document.

(See below for examples). We suggest a screen shot of the FS road map around your target area and then build a map of the area. Below is a screenshot of the area east of Beaver in Tillamook County. The view of the FS road map was set to 100%. Print this map at home or at your local copy shop for 11-17” size or larger.



Above is a screenshot of a portion of the CRA's stand map of south Tillamook County.

North Action Group Area 1 map.

The screenshot is about the same area as the Forest Service road map above. Use a screenshot of the color stand map to create a printed map. Having both maps provides a good view of potential forest areas to visit.

There are four red circles placed on the above map. Each illustrates an area to visit and document. The red circles illustrate priority areas where roads border mature or old growth native forest (green, yellow and red areas).

Using the CRA's color stand map and the Forest Service (FS) road map, mark one or more **target roads** to travel on in order to select forest stands to stop at.

(Optional) Download and view **USGS topo maps** for your target area. These are free pdf files that are highly detailed, including an aerial photo view. Increase the size to 200% and new details emerge. The maps and aerial photos are quite impressive.

<https://store.usgs.gov/map-locator>

(Optional) Consult Google Earth

An optional map to consult is Google Earth with one or more of the color layers viewable from the above stand map. Viewing the areas you wish to visit in Google Earth has several advantages. For one, the agency's forest stand ID number is viewable by right clicking (PC computers) over the target site to visit. And you may change the color and transparency of the overlay to suit your viewing color needs.

Guidance for how to download and view imported layers (CRA files) in Google Earth is here: [CRA Google Earth Files](#)

Suffice it to say that seeing the forest areas in Google Earth is a powerful reference to add to your forest visit planning.

By using the color forest map and the Forest Service road map, any number of interesting areas may be identified to visit. All map files discussed above are available on the CRA's website. Here's the link: [Site Visit Support](#)

Optional Stand Photo: Facing the stand of trees from the road, or within the stand, take a number of photos of the forest stand. Select a photo that best represents what you saw in the stand. The photo can be an important documentation of your forest visit and the stand's condition. Below are some stand photos taken with an I-phone.

Beamer Creek forest



Beamer Creek forest



Forest off of Road 58



Optional Typical Tree Photo

Looking around the stand, you will notice most of the tallest trees (Dominant Canopy) are about the same width (diameter). A few dominant trees may be larger or smaller than others. Select an average or typical tree of the tallest, dominant trees to photo and measure.

Measure a Tree's Circumference

Using a flexible tape measure, measure the circumference of the typical tree at breast height. An alternative to a flexible tape is a length of rope wrapped around the tree. Mark where the rope meets itself and then measure the rope length using your regular steel tape measure. Siuslaw NF dominant Douglas fir trees are generally in the 30 to 50 inch diameter range.



Tree Photo ID/Name: Same naming method as for the stand photo.

Trees, Ground Plant and Animals:

The form also allows you to note trees and ground plants present and also animal

species you may see or hear. The last two pages are for inserting you two photos if you chose that option.

Once finished filling in the form you have one complete document for one forest site visited.

Use one form for each forest site visited. Visiting and documenting three or more forest stands in one afternoon would not be unusual.

End of instructions

Let the CRA staff know you completed a forest visit.

We have an online form to notify us that you completed a forest visit:

Here's the link to the form:

[forest-visit-notification](#)

What's Next?

You are now in possession of one or more completed forms. Currently, the Forest Service is taking comments on the old growth amendment for all national forests. Soon, the proposed amendments to the Northwest Forest Plan will be published by the forest Service.

CRA staff will be working with coastal and inland conservation leaders to understand what the agency is proposing. We will write an analysis and make recommendations specific to the Siuslaw National Forest. And we will share our analysis and comment recommendations with you as soon as possible.

With the CRA's guidance and reflecting upon what you saw and documented in your forest visit, write your comments to submit to the Forest Service. The agency will have a web portal for submitting comments. Go to the portal and submit your comments and forest visit form(s).

Weekly updates will go out to the Action Group email list but not the CRA's email list.
To sign up on the Action Group list use this link: [Siuslaw Action Signup](#)

Section II. Tools, Maps and Files Described

1-**Camera** (A good cell phone camera is sufficient)

2-Flexible cloth **tape measure** or use the rope method

KSEIBI Fiberglass Tape Measure - 66ft length for about \$15.

Many hardware stores have a 100 ft cloth tape measure in the \$25 range.

3-**GPS** on your cell phone

On the assumption that just about everyone has a cell phone, we recommend downloading a simple GPS app.

If you own an **I-Phone**, we recommend **GPS Tracks**. [Here's the link](#)

GPS Tracks provides GPS location, compass direction and elevation in one view. The GPS location is given in one of five measures (Dec, DM, DMs, MGRS, UTM). **Use the DM or DMS measure** for the site visit form.

The I-Phone compass app also provides the lat-long numbers.

If you own an **Android phone** here are two suggestions:

Polaris GPS Navigation. While the app is free, ads and access to your phone's data is the price paid. [Here's the link](#)

Back Country Navigator GPS PRO (\$15)

<https://www.backcountrynavigator.com/>

Siuslaw National Forest Road Maps

The Forest Service has created three (North, Central & South) detailed road maps for the Siuslaw National Forest. The maps identify every usable Forest Service road by its official ID number. The map is a downloadable pdf file from the CRA website.

Download the North road map here:

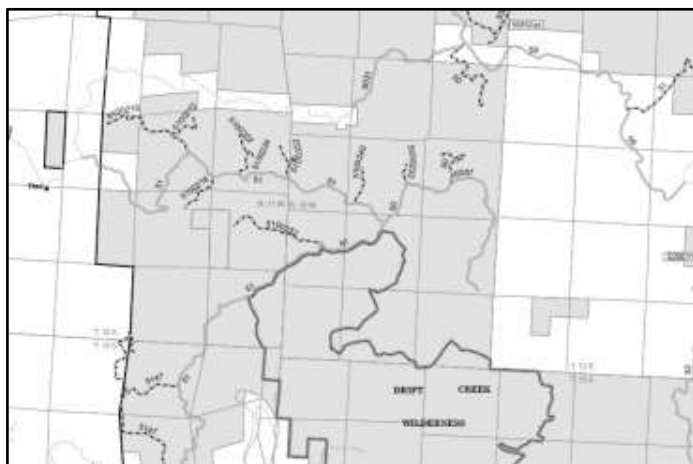
[Link to North Siuslaw Map](#)

Download the Central road map here:

[Link to Central Siuslaw Map](#)

Download the South road map here:

[Link to South Siuslaw Map](#)



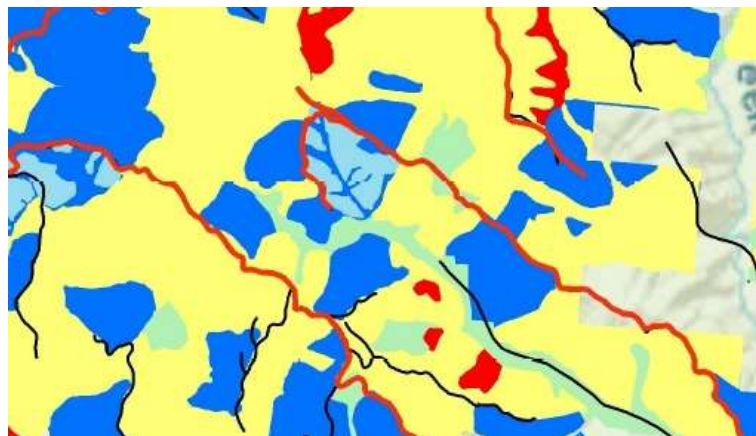
Pictured left, a small portion of the **Central** Siuslaw roads map. The maps show all Forest Service owned roads and their ID number.

Coast Range Association (CRA) Forest Maps

Siuslaw National Forest

The CRA's forest stand and road maps were created from Forest Service data. CRA maps identify:

- a. Remaining natural forest areas (green, yellow or red).
- b. Plantations established before 1995 (dark blue).
- c. Areas thinned since 1994 (light blue).
- d. Major Forest Service roads (red line)
- e. All other roads (black line). The only roads the Forest Service represents as usable are the roads on the Forest Service Road Map.



Download the pdf of one or more color Action Group Area maps. (For Windows operating systems = Control & click to follow link). These are very detailed maps with three overlapping maps for each of the three Action Areas.

North Action Group Maps

Lincoln City inland & south Tillamook County

[North Action Group Area 1](#) (Cloverdale to Beaver and east county)

[North Action Group Area 2](#) (Salmon River area to Cloverdale)

[North Action Group Area 3](#) (East of Lincoln City)

Central Action Group Maps

Newport to Searose Beach south of Yachats

[Central Action Group Area 1 Map](#) (Seal Rock to Waldport)

[Central Action Group Area 2 Map](#) (Waldport to Yachats)

[Central Action Group Area 3 Map](#) (Yachats to Heceta Lighthouse)

South Action Group Maps

Florence to Reedsport and inland areas

[South Action Group Area 1 Map](#) (Siuslaw River area and north)

[South Action Group Area 2 Map](#) (Inland from Siltcoos Lake)

[South Action Group Area 3 Map](#) (Smith River & North)

USGS Topo Maps (for free)

(Optional) Once you pick a Siuslaw NF area to explore and document, acquire a free electronic USGA topo maps for the area will provide an impressive level of detail – including an aerial photo layer that can be turned on or off.

Here is the link to the topo maps: <https://store.usgs.gov/map-locator>

“The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) publishes maps for the area of the Siuslaw NF at a 1:24,000 scale. USGS maps at this scale cover an area measuring 7.5 minutes of latitude and 7.5 minutes of longitude and are commonly called 7.5-minute quadrangle maps. Maps at 1:24,000 scale are fairly large and provide detailed information about the features of an area, including the locations of important buildings and most campgrounds, ski lifts, and water mills. Footbridges, fence lines, and private roads are also shown at this scale.”

(Optional) Google Earth Program and Files

The CRA's Siuslaw Forest Stand information (the color maps above) can be viewed in Google Earth using files downloaded from the CRA's website.

First: download the free Google Earth program.

Google Earth is a free program from Google that works with any computer.

Download the program from this link:

<https://www.google.com/earth/about/versions/#download-pro>

Second: download the CRA Google Earth forest files

For this project, there are seven files to potentially download and open in Google Earth. The good news is that using the Google Earth files is very simple.

When the Google Earth program opens on your computer, the view is an aerial photo of the land. Each file you download is an information item from our color forest maps above. Below are the file links. To open a link press control and double click on the link:

1. **Large** mature native forest stands (green).
[Go to the file here](#)
2. **Mid-size** mature native forest stands (yellow).
[Go to the file here](#)
3. The **largest** mature native forest stands (red).
[Go to the file here](#)
4. Areas that were past clearcuts and are now plantations (dark blue).
[Go to the file here](#)
5. Areas that have been thinned since 1994 (light blue).
[Go to the file here](#)
6. A file of SNF roads (red line).
[Go to the file here](#)

Download all six files into a folder. With the **Google Earth program open** and zoomed to western Oregon, click on one or more files. The feature will appear on your screen in Google Earth. **Caution:** Don't click on the Google Earth file unless the Google Earth program is open and running. Once you have the files open, save the view.



Ordinary Google Earth view of an area east of Hebo in south Tillamook County. Forest Service-14 road is seen across the view. FS-14 is also known as Mt. Hebo Road.



Same view as above with the midsize (yellow) forest layer showing. The yellow color can be made more or less transparent by adjusting the opacity setting.



Appendix 1. Safety in the Forest

If you are not familiar with traveling within Forest Service land it is good to read the agency's recommendations. Here's a Forest Service webpage with many recommendations. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/know-you-go>

Here is the Siuslaw National Forest's main webpage: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/siuslaw/>

The Siuslaw has a page of alerts and notices here:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/siuslaw/alerts-notice>

Many areas of the Siuslaw National Forest have no cell service and you may not see another vehicle for hours. In other words, plan for being on your own and capable in an emergency. Bring water, food and good walking shoes. A first aid kit is important to have. Over the decades, the Siuslaw National Forest has not encouraged visitors into the interior areas of the forest. Make sure your cell phone is fully charged and vehicle's gas or batteries are full. We strongly recommend travelling with companions unless you are a seasoned backroads traveler in the Siuslaw.

Driving & Forest Roads

The number one tip for safely driving single lane gravel forest roads is GO SLOW. Such roads are built for yielding the right of way to an oncoming vehicle using a turn out. Loose gravel is like driving on marbles and excessive speed is to be avoided. Handle a blind curve as if a log truck was around the corner. Take the outside track going uphill and the inside track going downhill. If the road appears wide enough for two vehicles stay in your lane. Always be ready to yield the right of way. Park off the road when stopping to view the wonders and vistas. National Forest roads are maintained (or not) by the U.S. Forest Service and should be used with caution. Lastly, be sure to check your spare tire before going into the Siuslaw. It is important to have a person on the trip who is comfortable changing a flat tire.

Weather

The weather at almost any time of the year can be rainy and windy. Always be aware of weather conditions and the forecast before going into the forest. We advise not visiting the forest if windy and rainy conditions exist. Always have your raingear on a trip if there is a chance of rain. Having a chainsaw may get you past that one small tree across the road.

Appendix 2. How much is left?

The Siuslaw National Forest as of 1994*

Ranger District	Mature Conifer	Clearcut	Other
Alsea District	63,638	43,565	1,495
Hebo District	94,807	47,844	4,200
Mapleton District	131,205	63,194	4,337
Waldport District	87,701	45,926	2,760
Totals	377,351	200,529	12,792
	63.9%	33.9%	2.2%

Excluding the Dunes National Recreation Area, the Siuslaw National Forest (SNF) area covers approximately 590,700 acres. As of 1994, 34% had been clearcut since 1940.* The above table summarizes the forest conditions before the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP).

Since the NWFP went into effect, SNF management committed to an agenda of forest restoration through three strategies: 1. No further cutting of native forest. The agency refers to the 64% not previously clearcut as **natural** stands. 2. Commercial “thinning” in the older plantations of the 200,000+ acres previously clearcut. The agency refers to such areas as **managed** stands. 3. A road program that closed many unnecessary roads and improved other roads to lower their impact on streams and salmon habitat.

Since 1994, Siuslaw management closed the Alsea and Mapleton ranger stations and consolidated operations in Waldport.

*North Fork Siuslaw Watershed Analysis, 12-16-1994. Available at:
https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5194228.pdf

The Forest Service **data viewer for mature and old growth forest** reports that the area between Florence and Waldport has somewhere between 26% to 54% mature and old growth forest. Given the politics at play, a range like this can be a big problem. Subtracting private lands and the 34% of the Siuslaw previously clearcut, it is likely that almost all remaining natural forest is in a mature or old growth condition. How much and where older forest exists has huge implications for forest management. **That is why the citizen forest documentation project is so important.**

How much is left continued....old growth?

As part of the old growth amendment process, the Forest Service has released various documents supporting the proposed plan amendments. One document is titled DRAFT Ecological Impacts Analysis Report for the Draft EIS for Amendments to LMPs to Address Old-Growth Forests Across the NFS. Deep in the document are pages of tables that state the agency's estimate of remaining old growth forest for each of the nation's 154 national forests. Below is a snippet of page 109 where the **Siuslaw National Forest's old growth estimate is stated**.

As you can see there is a range to the estimate of between 171,000 acres and 239,000 acres. The estimate comes from Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) plots that exist across Oregon and the nation. In western Oregon, there is a two acre plot for every 2,500 acres of forestland. Each two-acre plot is examined in detail counting trees, noting tree species, inventorying ground vegetation, etc. The number of sample plots for the Siuslaw is about 240.

The scientists then estimate a likely range of old growth forest from the plot data. The same holds true for how much of the remaining mature forest may exist.

This report is incorporated by reference in full for the Draft EIS for Amendments to LMPs to Address Old-Growth Forests Across the NFS

Region	NFS Unit	Old-growth Estimate (1,000 acres)	95% Confidence Interval (1,000 acres)	Percent of Forested NFS Lands as Old-growth
6	Okanogan	299	231 - 366	19%
6	Olympic	199	161 - 236	34%
6	Rogue River	255	206 - 304	41%
6	Siskiyou	269	221 - 317	26%
6	Siuslaw	205	171 - 239	35%

Because of the large range in the area of old growth forest and uncertainty of where such forest exists, the Coast Range Association began the citizen-based, self-organized forest documentation project.

Thank you for being part of the project. Every stand of natural forest citizens like you can document and submit as a comment to the plan amendment process advances the chance that adequate native forest protections occur.

Appendix 3

Siuslaw Action Groups

Summary of Action Group Purposes

1. **Ground Truthing** the Siuslaw National Forest's (SNF) remaining mature and old growth forest and forest conditions.
2. **Educate** and alert your local community about the (1) Plan amendment processes, (2) Siuslaw National Forest management issues and (3) the location and benefits of local mature and old growth forest.
3. **Expand** the circle of local people aware of the Siuslaw's mature and old growth forest and involve them in the plan amendment process.
4. **Celebrate** your community's Siuslaw native forest for its majestic beauty and wonder.

Why Ground Truth the Siuslaw National Forest's (SNF) remaining mature and old growth forest?

The CRA's GIS stand data and map products are arguably more accurate than the Forest Service's satellite derived or FIA data maps of mature and old growth forest areas. At issue is the SNF's remaining native (previously not cut) forest areas. The SNF's native stands are in the 100 to 200 year age class and therefore are either mature forest or ecological old growth.

We ask people across western Oregon to self-organize and ground truth native forest in the Siuslaw National Forest. The materials and guidance provided by the Coast Range Association are sufficient for a fun and productive forest visit. We do not expect people to bushwack through the forest. Instead, we ask that you self-select forest sites near the Forest Service Road system.

Ground truthing will involve documenting your location, taking several photos, measuring a representative dominant tree and filling in a forest visit form. The goal is to have an inventory of representative stands and trees identified by citizens that validate and/or correct the agency's satellite or FIA forest data. Our goal is to have a large number of people submit their forest visit materials to the Plan amendment (DEIS) comment portal.

Summary of Project Actions

1. Acquire the materials described in this document and self-organize a forest visit.
2. Let us know you intend to do a forest visit or have accomplished a forest visit.
[Use this link](#)
3. Carefully read the instructions to prepare for a forest visit.
4. Visit your selected site area and document forest stands.
5. Work with other Action Group volunteers and CRA staff to self-organize your forest visit.
If you have questions, write CRA forest visit organizer Willow willow@coastrange.org
Put **Forest Visit Question** in the email's subject line.
6. Submit your site visit materials and comments to the Forest Service's **public comment portal** for the Northwest Forest Plan amendment and the old growth amendment. The old growth portal is open now:
<https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public//CommentInput?Project=65356>



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