



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 16, 2015

CONTACT: Sharla Arledge, Public Information Officer
(208) 334-0286 or pio@idl.idaho.gov

Idaho keeping public school timber sale on track despite lawsuit

(LEWISTON) – The State Board of Land Commissioners (Land Board) and Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) are standing by the U.S. Forest Service and moving forward with plans to auction an Idaho County fire-burned timber sale that is expected to bring in approximately \$1.6 million for Idaho’s public schools, despite efforts by a neighboring landowner and an environmental group to thwart completion of the sale through litigation against the federal agency.

In May, Idaho Rivers United (IRU) joined a landowner in suing the Forest Service to block the public – including logging contractors on an IDL timber sale – from accessing a Forest Service public road that borders the landowner’s property. The portion of the road at issue is approximately 700 feet long. The Land Board and IDL filed a motion today to intervene in the lawsuit as defendants. The timber sale auction is scheduled for Friday at 3 p.m. at the IDL office located at 913 Third Street in Kamiah.

In its intervention filings, the Land Board and IDL seek to protect the interests of Idaho’s endowment lands, which provide financial support to public schools and other State institutions, by carrying out the Land Board’s authorization of the salvage sale. The pleadings state in part, “Idaho has a substantial interest in this matter because Road 652 provides the only practicable access to the parcel. Without the ability to use Road 652 to conduct the salvage operations on the parcel, Idaho will be unable to protect that portion of the endowment...from spoliation due to decreased timber values, harmful erosion and insect infestation to healthy trees (both on and off the state parcel).”

A copy of the Land Board and IDL’s brief supporting their intervention request is [attachment 1](#).

The Selway Salvage Sale will remove 6.8 million board feet of timber near Lowell in Idaho County that burned in the Johnson Bar Fire in 2014. Proceeds from the sale, worth an estimated \$1.6 million, will go into an endowment fund that supports Idaho’s public school system. The timber sale was put together by a team of foresters with support from an engineering geologist, fisheries biologist, and forest hydrologist. By salvaging the fire-killed timber IDL will reduce the spread of bark beetles and ensure the establishment of a new healthy forest that will provide future benefits to Idaho’s public schools. A detailed fact sheet on the Selway Salvage Sale is [attachment 2](#).

“By intervening in the lawsuit and moving ahead with the timber sale auction we are acting in the best interests of the State and its beneficiaries, especially since 1.6 million dollars for Idaho’s school children are at stake along with the long-term health of this public school endowment forest and the water that surrounds it,” IDL Director Tom Schultz said. “We are confident that the eventual timber sale purchaser has the right of access to the State parcel without the need for Forest Service approval, and we’re confident in the environmental integrity of our timber sale, which was put together by experienced foresters and scientists.”

The IDL attempted to work with the landowner so the timber harvesting and replanting could move forward. Days after IDL met with him, the landowner and IRU filed a lawsuit against the Forest Service.

###