

Preservation cuts logging and studies

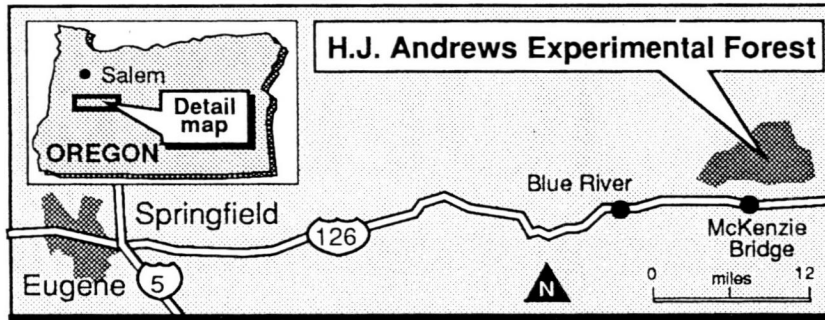
BLUE RIVER — Forest set-asides to protect the northern spotted owl are interfering with research at the H.J. Andrews Forest.

"It's not just the loggers that get yanked around," Art McKee, the site director at the forest, said. "We've had research projects that have been moved or postponed because of the owl."

The owl nests in old growth and mature forests, such as those that cover much of the 16,000-acre Andrews scientific preserve.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is expected to announce this week whether the owl will be listed as threatened with extinction. The move would restrict logging and other disturbances in owl habitat.

Independent of the listing decision, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have their own plans for protecting owls and owl habitat on the lands that they manage.



Andrews, part of the Willamette National Forest, is home to about seven pairs of owls.

McKee said owl protection plans have restricted several projects, including some in which fewer than two dozen trees would be cut.

Although some projects do disturb the forest environment, he said, the work can provide knowledge that will aid in forest management.

"One might argue, isn't it worth

doing something extreme to five acres of old growth forest to definitively learn what the effects of man's practices are?"

McKee said scientists and federal officials are discussing ways of exempting research projects from owl-protection restrictions.

David Klinger, a spokesman with the Fish and Wildlife Department, said the Endangered Species Act, which would apply if the owl is listed as threatened, contains provisions for such exemptions.

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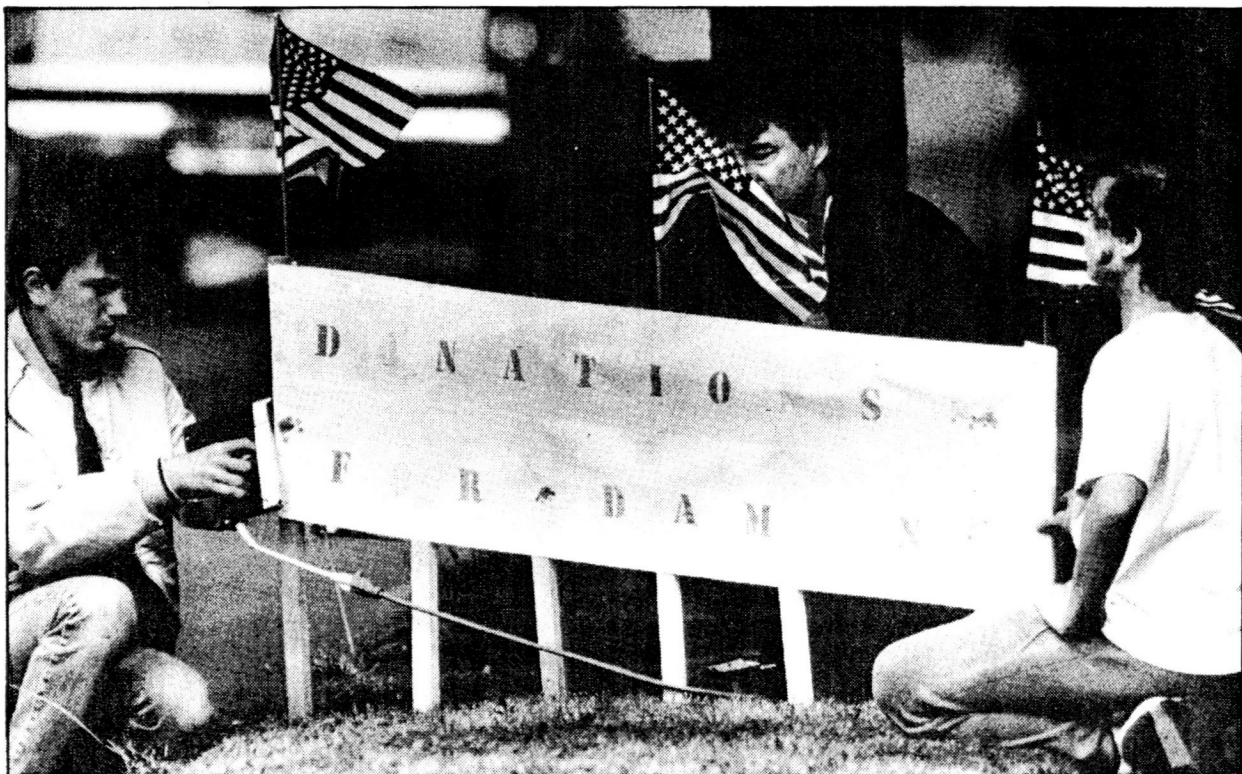
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Bruce Thorson/Statesman Journal

Marcus Melish (left), Dick Barker, and Chris struck and injured by a car. A fiery collision