

Port Angeles, WA – Compiled from press advisories, instagram posts, and a conversation with the media team.

As of May 7th, 2025, forest defenders have been on a platform high off the ground(70-100 feet) to defend a century-old forest. Located on the Olympic Peninsula Elwha Forest is part of the ancestral lands of the S’Klallam people, and it’s sale has been the subject of increasing public outcry. The forest was auctioned last year by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources(DNR), and purchased by the Murphy Company, an Oregon-based timber firm.

Timeline:

May 7th: Forest defenders launch a blockade. They placed large debris in the middle of the[logging] road. This debris is attached to a climber who is suspended above on a “dunk-tank” platform in a large tree. If authorities attempt to remove the road debris, the platform will drop, risking a long fall for the climber.

May 8th: Protesters call for a phone zap to the Commissioner of Public Lands, Dave Upthegrove, to demand the police stop endangering the tree sitter by threatening them and shining spotlights in their face at night, and re-open the recreation area, for the safety of the tree sitter and for access for the public.

May 9th: Dozens of protesters risk arrest, marching past the police closure blocking access to the treesit, to rally in support of the forest defender camped in the canopy

May 11th: Cops back off(temporarily) from the blockade site, and the tree sitter requests visits.

May 17th: A small group of unidentified individuals arrive on ATVs in the middle of the night to aggressively harass the site

May 18th: Forest defenders hold a rally and Plant Walk to support the tree-sit and defend Elwha Legacy Forests

May 23rd: Judge rules *against* an injunction to halt logging for another 90 days, allowing logging to legally continue any

time

The timber sale, known as “Parched”, is currently under litigation by the Earth Law Center and Legacy Forest Defense Coalition, and a petition—started by members of the Lower Elwha Kallam Tribe urging that the watershed be protected—has been signed by over half of tribal member, as well as being widely supported by local citizens. Having never been logged by machinery, this 100-year-old forest is home to Douglas fir, grand fir and western red cedar, and is developing old-growth characteristics essential to endangered species like the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet. An imperiled flower, *whipplea modesta*, also makes its home here.

Additional concerns have been raised about an impact of logging on fragile salmon runs. “Parched” and other DNR sales are very near the site of the recently removed dam, where state and federal governments invested more than 338 million in river and salmon restoration.

When asked why they are staying up high on the platform, the forest defender had this to say:

“The fish have returned to their historic spawning sites after about a century of barred access due to dams, eventually removed after the Lower Elwha Klallum tribe successfully sued the government to remove it on the basis of fishing rights. This watershed and its reclamation of the land with the help of folks who care for it is worth fighting to protect! It should be in the hands and stewardship of the Indigenous residents.”

Demands of the Blockade:

- Immediate cancellation of the “Parched” Timber Sale
- A pause on all logging in the Elwha watershed
- A permanent ban on logging the remaining mature forests in western Washington

To read how to support the tree sit, follow on Instagram

To support financially, go to their GoFundMe