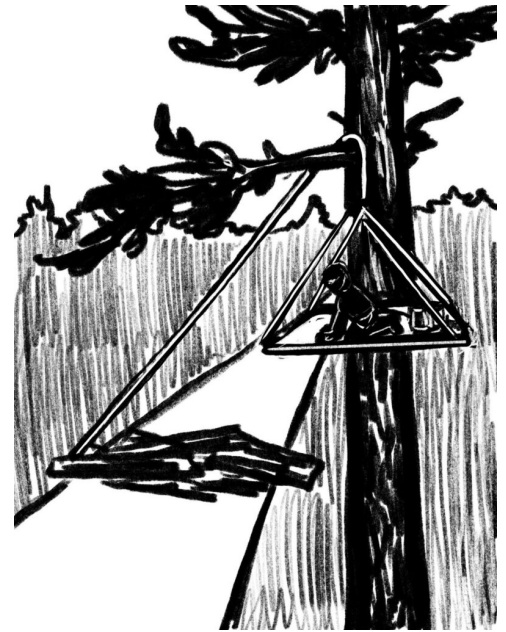


Below is a statement released by forest defenders in the Elwha Forest on the Olympic Peninsula. On May 7th, the group launched a tree-sit and blockade to defend a century-old forest that had been auctioned off last year by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, and purchased by the Murphy Company, an Oregon-based timber firm.



Sketch of a tree-sitter platform, held by and tethered to a barricade on the road below.

On June 14th, vigilantes on ATVs and a in a truck came into the forest with weapons, threatened the lives of the forest defenders and forcefully removed the blockade. The tree-sit was situated on a platform high in a tree, that was held up primarily by a rope bound to the blockade on the road below.

"I put myself in positions of danger because it is a way to immediately stop an outdated system of objective destruction. Our forests are being cut for profit and mismanaged at a rate that will devastate our watersheds, air quality, natural resources, forest species, and therefore our local human communities, starting with the poor. We need to talk about it

with people who are different than us and build empathy for those who act out of care.”

– A, Elwha Forest defender

June 17th 2025 – Elwha Forest Defenders Forced to Leave Woods After Attacks from Violent Vigilantes, Police and Government Technology

Statement released by forest defenders on the Sacred Action Northwest Instagram

On Sunday night [June 8th], the blockade of the Parched timber sale in the Elwha Watershed was dismantled in response to a violent vigilante who pulled a gun on forest defenders, threatening to shoot them and firing shots in the forest. This shocking and disturbing final event came after several days of a slew of different kinds of attacks and repression.

The Parched timber sale is attempting to log 192 acres near two rivers in the Elwha Watershed. The sale targets legacy forest comprised of large, mature Douglas Fir, Red Cedar, Western Hemlock and Big Leaf Maple and a diverse understory. For almost a year, local community members have been resisting this project, and more recently, some of those community members decided to put their bodies on the line to stop it. For over a month they have lived in a treesit on the side of the road, preventing logging vehicles from entering.

The breakdown began on **Monday June 9th** when the campaign ProtonMail email account was shut down due to an investigation by the Swiss government. This caused the unfortunate loss of campaign infrastructure, such as lists of supporters and journalists, and disabled communication.

On Friday June 13th, police of unknown affiliation came to raid the support camp underneath the treesitter. They seized tents, sleeping bags, mats, pots, cooking gear, water filters, bear spray, communications gear, and more. This seizure forced ground support to continue camping without adequate gear in

order to ensure the treesitter's safety, resulting in a survival situation for the supporters that night.

One person present for the raid said, "We were peacefully camping before the cops swept their camp, a very aggressive move in an open recreation area where dozens of community members had been each day. The police confiscated everything as it was, including carrying out hot bowls of oatmeal instead of pouring them out. The sweep put the safety of the sitter at risk by exposing them to worse violent treatment and threats, which is ironic, given the police earlier said they prioritized the sitter's safety."

Local community members quickly rallied to reprovision camp and support the tree sit, donating money and supplies and hiking through the cover of darkness to ensure essentials made it to camp without being intercepted by police.

On **Saturday night [the 14th]**, a new opposition arrived: a truck and two ATVs attempted to tamper with the anchor line of the treesit and damage the tripod, both of which were holding a person's life. They harrassed and threatened the people on the ground and in the air, appearing to be drunk and throwing around empty bottles. They left late into the night. On Sunday evening, after another wave of support came from town to repair the tripod and treesit, yet another group came up on an ATV with a winch. A supporter recounted, "At dusk, about a half mile from the sit and still hiking, I could hear a woman's voice screaming, "We're coming back!" I started to run up the road and as I approached the wrecked tripod, a black late model Jeep turned the headlights on and started to drive towards me. [The driver] got out of the car and I was able to see two children and a woman. He came running over at me threatening to kill me. I ignored him and continued to walk to the tree to see if the sitter was ok."

The vigilante attached his winch to the anchor line and dragged it off the road. This was immensely dangerous to the treesitter, and could have been fatal. The sitter's platform

fell multiple inches. After, the man drove around shooting a gun into the air before pointing the gun at a forest defender, walking at them aggressively, and threatening to shoot. The danger presented by the family and their dismantling of the blockade caused the forest defenders to choose to safely evacuate.

However, forest defenders maintain that the resistance to the logging remains strong: *"The most central thing that happened here wasn't the fact that someone was living in a tree. It was that a group of people came in closer contact with the Earth through joy and grief and interfering with the forces that do Earth harm—in this case, through logging."*

"Our commitment to defend the forests and waters of the Olympic Peninsula remains strong," stated the forest defenders. "To the vigilantes, the DNR cops, and state-sponsored repression, we say: You did not dig up our roots. We are still here. Stop pillaging our people. Stop pillaging our forests. Stop pillaging our waters. Our movement has not been uprooted. It is just beginning to grow."