

November 23, 2013

To: Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's (HNA&HS's) Scenic Views Files For Grave Creek Hills

From: Trip Leaders, Larry McStravog, Member HNA&HS; & Mike Walker, Education Chair HNA&HS (Appendix A)

Subj: Draft Final Minutes of October 25, 2013 Hike Along Grave Creek Hills Trail (GCHT)

On October 25, 2013 almost two dozen participants (Appendix B) hiked the approximate one-half mile Grave Creek Hills Trail, in and out along a quad developed trail (from a west access site (Maps 1 & 2). An all-terrain vehicle (ATV) is also known as a quad, quad bike, three-wheeler, or four-wheeler. Quads are 50" wide and less.



*Photo 1. Copper Queen Grove fm Railroad Tracks
At Hugo Store*

The participants met at the Hugo Hitching Post Store at 9:00 a.m. and proceeded to the parking lot of the Hugo Community Church for orientation and parking of vehicles not car-pooling to the west trail head access site (Photo 1) over a public road system. A significant portion of the orientation was about outdoor safety. All participants signed a liability wavier (i.e., Outdoor Risk Warning Statement & Liability Wavier, Attachment 1).



Photo 2. Safety Orientation at Hugo Church Parking Lot. Courtesy Dick Malisch

The Grave Creek Hills Trail is located in a 240-acre BLM-administered parcel of public lands (Tax Lot 100, Section 21, T.34S., R.6W.) located along the ridge of Grave Creek Hills (Maps 1 & 2). The BLM has allocated the parcel to Matrix - Southern Forest Management Area, which means its primary management purpose is timber production, but it is managed as a Late-Successional Reserve because it was also designated as a Northern Spotted Owl core area (Attachment 2).

Under the NW Forest Plan, lands (BLM and USFS) within the range of the Northern Spotted Owl were divided into a set of seven land use allocations. Some lands were designated as Late-Successional Reserves where the focus of management activities would be to maintain and enhance late-successional and old-growth forests ecosystems. Other lands were designated as Matrix where the primary focus of management activities would be timber production and harvest to provide jobs and contribute to community stability. On the Medford District, BLM further divided Matrix lands. The Copper Queen Grove, while in the general Matrix - Southern General Forest Management Area (SGFMA) has been designated as an Owl Core Area. Under the current plan the stand is to be managed as a Late-Successional Reserve (Attachment 2).

The BLM's operations inventory (OI) for the Copper Queen Grove (CQG) was minimal. Walker believes there is ample room for updating this inventory (e.g., inventory by participants, private consulting forester, etc.). The BLM estimated the units' birth dates were 1870 which would make the grove 143 years old without logging during that time. Under the BLM's definitions the grove was mature (Attachment 2).



Photo 3A. West GCHT Head. Courtesy Dick Malisch

Operations Inventory (OI) Unit: An aggregation of trees occupying an area that is sufficiently uniform in composition, age, arrangement and condition to be distinguishable from vegetation on adjoining areas, a forest stand. The Copper Queen Grove consists of two OI Units, #133713 and #110317. Information within the system for these units is minimal. Unit birth dates were estimated to be 1870. Under definitions in the Medford District RMP, the grove would be classified as mature (Attachment 2).

The BLM's "Mature Seral Stage" exists from the point where stand growth slows to the time when the forest develops structural diversity, approximately age 80 to 200. The BLM's "Old Growth Seral Stage" constitutes the potential plant community capable of existing on a site given the frequency of natural disturbance events. For forest communities, this stage exists from approximately age 200 until when stand replacement occurs and secondary succession begins again (Appendix C & Attachment 3).

The hikers were able to drive to the west edge of the GCHT along the BLM's Quartz Creek logging transportation system (Map 3). In the southeast area of the 240-acre parcel is an approximately 60-acre stand identified as the CQG (Maps 2 & 3). The northern boundary of the grove was basically the ridge line of Grave Creek Hills. On the Sunny Valley side is Mill Creek, a tributary of Dog Creek.

The GCHT is approximately 1.5 miles north of the Hugo Hitching Post Store as the crow flies and 11 plus miles driving to the west trail access site. It is part of the Bummer Creek drainage which drains into Quartz Creek. The trail's elevation ranges from 2,119' to 2,530'. The terrain is rugged and extremely steep on both sides of the ridge of Grave Creek Hills. The trail can be very steep, but is not considered technical by the trip leaders (Table 1; Table 2 are provided to show the goal. Do not spend much time unless you want to be part of



Photo 3B. West GCHT Head

the group that will quality control and update this section after we establish GPS stations, perhaps every 100' of the trail).

	Trail Sections	% Grade
.	Richie's Gap	17%
1.	West Access	40%
2.	Change	10%
3.	E-W Ridge	24%
4.	Transition	27%
5.	Knob	22%
6.	Saddle	28%
7.	East Access	4%
.	Knob 2	13%
.	Viewing	
	Trail Total	14%



4A. Start of Hike Along GCHT

The following is what the participants observed as a group along the trail. The west access at 2,119' of the first half-mile trail started out steep and remained relatively steep for its first quarter mile (Table 1). There was an elevation difference of approximately 400' between the start of the hike and the GCHT Knob.

The second half of the trail after the Knob ranged from 2,500' to 2,600' and was the easiest with only a 100' difference in elevation. Its entire course was used by quads which created a sense of a maintained trail, and except for the steepness, a good hiking trail. The large group size reduced some of the solitude of the hike in the cool, mostly shady, covered trail in the slight wind of the ridge line. On other hikes on the trail the wind has been much cooler to cold and moving smartly causing numerous pieces of small fir limbs on the ground.

Mike Walker felt his trail experience was outstanding. *"It was like walking to Rainie Falls on the Rogue River, once you experienced it you would want to share it with others."* Appendix F.



Photo 4B. Start of Hike Along GCHT
Courtesy Dick Malisch

The Douglas-fir is dominant, interspersed with dozens of big dead Black Oak boles on the forest floor and many still standing. At one time they thrived with the Douglas-fir, but were now soon to disappear. A few Sugar Pine and Ponderosa Pine were present. A few large Madrone were vigorous. There were several large dead standing fir snags and many large decaying fir logs on the ground.

The group had different impressions of the amount of broken or otherwise damaged tree tops from approximately 10 percent upwards to perhaps a third of the stand. Except for dozens of



Photo 5. Cindy, Mike, Deeno, & Pebbles

very small pockets of young fir the trees were widely spaced with a clear forest floor generally lacking understory shrubs or other emerging tree species. The group assumed the openness was because of the stand's mostly closed canopy and lack of sunlight reaching the forest floor, and perhaps the grove's fire history that could be seen on some of the large trees (i.e., several of the larger trees had visible signs of lightning strikes).

For some participants the stand appeared to have characteristics of Late Successional Reserves (LSR), or "old growth", with a distinct mix of downed trees, snags and standing trees predominantly conifer, mixed with very few substantially sized black oaks which are also living; snags; and fallen trees. This could indicate a transition from a black oak forest to a LSR mix. The oaks seemed to be more near the top to the leeward side of the ridge, where high wind damage appears to be a constant. For others it was a beautiful forest that the trail passed through.

On a different field trip to the grove tree measurements were made and the tree size classes ranged from one inch dbh (diameter at breast-height) Douglas-fir to a large five feet plus dbh fir category. There were a few large, aged Madrones, including one of 12' 1" circumference. Other trees measured were three Douglas Fir, 15' 6", 15' and 11', which ranged between seven or eight trees per acre to fourteen per acre along a northerly and more protected dip in the ridge. In this slightly more shielded area, which is approximately 1/4 miles south from the ridge top, two Doug Firs were measured at 15' 7", and 17' 2" respectively (the biggest one at 17' 2" was right at the ridge line). Most of the Douglas fir trees were 1' - 2' feet dbh. Because of erosion and slide potential, this high and steep-sloped ridge stand had been deferred from being part of a timber sale twice in the ca. 1980s according to lifetime area resident Wayne McKy, Chair, HNA&HS. However, the adjacent areas had been logged; and some of those grounds did appear to exhibit effects of erosion from slight to possibly extreme.

On a previous trip to this relatively untouched ridge-top area one member of the group felt the grove had an age of from 300 - 500 years). His rationale for the age estimate was the conifer mix of Doug Fir, Ponderosa,



Photo 6. Bob & Liz Looking Toward Sunny Valley

White Pine, Sugar Pine (one SP measured 12' 2" circumference) and other conifers; combined with other tree species; and one area with fourteen old and large looking conifers within 125' of each other; and the fairly complete canopy; the relatively complex biological diversity present; and the dips, mounds and pit soil shapes present throughout the grove.

Deep forest birds seen or heard on another field trip were three territories of Mt. Quail, and at least four territories of Hermit Warbler, Pileated Woodpecker. Edge species were Lesser Goldfinch, Oregon Junco, Flicker, Hairy WP., Nashville Wblr., MacGillivray Wblr., Red Br. Nuthatch, Blk. Capped Chickadee, W. Tanager, Scrub Jay, Mourning Dove, Pair of Ravens, Turkey Vulture, Hutton's Vireo, N. Flicker, and Ruffed Grouse.

During a discussion at the end of the hike a half dozen or so members of the group had mixed feeling about whether they were viewing an old growth stand over 200 years old or a mature



Photo 7. Toward GCHT Knob. Courtesy Dick Malisch

stand approximately age 80 to 200 (Appendix C & Attachment 3). It seemed there were many definitions of old growth. Most of the group was silent listening. The stand could be younger based upon the high forest productivity which in previous years was estimated from thick tree rings at several stumps from an adjacent logged unit. Several of the participants provided their observations (Appendix D). For example, Drake provided the thought to the group, "Why did it matter whether it was old growth or not?" He then referenced the U.S.

House Resolution 1526, *O & C Trust Conservation & Jobs Act* that was approved in the House in September 2013. This bill splits up the 2.8 million acres of former Oregon and California Railroad land into areas to be actively managed for timber production and ones to be preserved. If this bill, or its legislative compromise, becomes law by passing the U.S. Senate, where is the inventory dividing line between timber production and conservation? In a summary of the trip he stated *"This hike reassures me that I made the right choice moving here from Texas. Lovely hike, lovely people, lovely views, lovely forest!"*

Over the years the HNA&HS had collected a reasonable bit of information on a variety of topics: Scenic views, trails, hugo high road, forest lands (Appendix E).

The goal is to revisit the grove to collect detailed measurements and observations of the trail's delights and the CQG's characteristics, including the botany and wildlife of the area.

Larry & Mike :)

Larry McStravog, Trip Leader & Member
Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

Mike Walker, Education Chair & Member
Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

Acronyms

ATV	All-terrain vehicle or Quad
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CQG	Copper Queen Grove
DBH	Diameter at Breast-Height
GCHT	Grave Creek Hills Trail
HNA&HS	Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society
LSR	Late Successional Reserves or Old Growth
OI	Operations Inventory
SGFMA	Southern General Forest Management Area

Maps

Map 1.	2013 240-Acre BLM Forest Parcel: Tax Lot 100, Section 21, T.34S. R.6W., W.M.
Map 2.	Grave Creek Hills Ridge Line & Copper Queen Grove
Map 3.	BLM Road System (based on map - Northern Hugo Viewpoints: Quartz Creek)
Map 4.	Grave Creek Hills Trail In Section 21



Photo 8. Sunny Valley from GCHT
Courtesy Dick Malisch

Photographs

Photo 1.	Copper Queen Grove from Railroad Tracks At Hugo Store
Photo 2.	Safety Orientation at Hugo Church Parking Lot
Photo 3A.	West Grave Creek Hills Trail (GCHT) Head
Photo 3B.	West GCHT Head
Photo 4A.	Start GCHT Hike
Photo 4B.	Start GCHT Hike
Photo 5.	Cindy, Mike, Deeno, & Pebbles Along GCHT
Photo 6.	Bob & Liz Along GCHT
Photo 7.	Up GCHT
Photo 8.	Sunny Valley from GCHT
Photo 9.	Larry & Jim Along GCHT
Photo 10.	GCHT Ridge Line

- Photo 11. Cindy & Pebbles Along GCHT
- Photo 12. Liz & Jim Along GCHT
- Photo 13. West Grave Creek Hills Trail Head
- Photo 14. Dick & Collen Malisch With Sunny Valley Background
- Photo 15. Laila & Marion Dzene With Sunny Valley Background
- Photo 16. Sunny Valley
- Photo 17. Joe, Bob, & Phyllis Along GCHT
- Photo 18. GCHT
- Photo 19. GCHT
- Photo 20. Larry Along GCHT
- Photo 21. Group at West GCHT Head
- Photo 22. Copper Queen Grove from Hugo Road



Photo 9. Larry & Jim Along GCHT

Appendices

- Appendix A. Trip Leaders For October 25, 2013 Hike Along Grave Creek Hills Trail
- Appendix B. 20 Participants Of October 25, 2013 Hike Along Grave Creek Hills Trail
- Appendix C. BLM's Mature & Old-Growth Definitions
- Appendix D. Average Trail Grade & Grave Creek Hills Trail Grade Calculations (Available Upon Request)
- Appendix E. Potential Vegetation On Trail Soil Types
- Appendix F. Statements of Some Participants
- Appendix G. HNA&HS Files With Applicable Information On One-Half Mile Grave Creek Hills Trail

Attachments (available upon request)

- Attachment 1. Outdoor Risk Warning Statement & Liability Wavier
- Attachment 2. BLM October 31, 2011 Inventory of Copper Queen Grove
- Attachment 3. BLM's Seral Stages Applicable to the Copper Queen Grove
- Attachment 4. Driving Distances
- Attachment 5. Appendix D. Average Trail Grade

Appendix A. Trip Leaders For October 25, 2013 Hike Along Grave Creek Hills Trail

Larry McStravog, Member
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Appendix B. 20 Participants Of October 25, 2013 Hike Along Grave Creek Hills Trail

Larry McStravog *
Mike Walker *
Cindy Walker
Bob Foulke *
Jim Ford *
Rene Ford *
Liz Butowitsch*
Laila Dzene *
Marion Dzene
Mike Brassill *
Bruce Martin *
Dick Malisch
Collen Malisch
Malcolm Drake *
Leta Neiderheiser
Joe Neiderheiser
Phyllis Chatham
Kelly Rarey *
Berneata Rarey
Bob Black *

Eleven (*) of the participants will be receiving the final minutes of their field trip per their request on the Outdoor Risk Warning Statement & Liability Wavier sign-up sheet.

In the process of coordinating the trip several folks had conflicts and could not participate that wanted to make the hike. The goal is to organize another trip this winter for those missing the trip and for others that would like the experience: Flo Folke, Tom & Mary April, Pete Scaglione, Darryl & Terri Dickerson, Tommi Drake, Wayne & Janet McKy, Ray Freitas, Dick Strycker, Clay & Judy Dickerson, Ken & Leslie Munyon, JoAnn O'Bryan, Dan Garland, Jackie Canal, and Tim & Kathy Krushe.

Appendix C. BLM's Mature & Old-Growth Definitions (Attachment 3 available upon request)

Mature Seral Stage - This stage exists from the point where stand growth slows to the time when the forest develops structural diversity; approximately age 80 to 200. Conifer and hardwood growth gradually decline. Developmental change slows. Larger trees increase significantly in size. Stand diversity gradually increases. Big game hiding cover, thermal cover, and some forage are present. With slowing growth, insect damage increases and stand breakup may begin on drier sites. Understory development is significant in response to openings in the canopy created by disease, insects, and windthrow. Vertical diversity increases. Larger snags are formed.

Old Growth - This stage constitutes the potential plant community capable of existing on a site given the frequency of natural disturbance events. For forest communities, this stage exists from approximately age 200 until when stand replacement occurs and secondary succession begins again.

Old-Growth Conifer Stand - Older forests occurring on western hemlock, mixed conifer, or mixed evergreen sites which differ significantly from younger forests in structure, ecological function, and species composition. Old growth characteristics begin to appear in unmanaged forests at 175-250 years of age. These characteristics include (a) a patchy, multi-layered canopy with trees of several age classes; (b) the presence of large living trees; (c) the presence of larger standing dead trees (snags) and down woody debris, and (d) the presence of species and functional processes which are representative of the potential natural community.

For purposes of inventory, old-growth stands on BLM-administered lands are only identified if they are at least ten percent stocked with trees of 200 years or older and are ten acres or more in size. For purposes of habitat or biological diversity, the BLM uses the appropriate minimum and average definitions provided by Pacific Northwest Experiment Station publications 447 and GTR-285. This definition is summarized from the 1986 interim definitions of the Old-Growth Definitions Task Group.

Potential Natural Community - The community of plants and wild animals that would become established if all successional sequences were completed without interference by man under present environmental conditions. For forest communities, the potential natural community is an old growth conifer stand.

Appendix D. Average Trail Grade & Grave Creek Hills Trail Grade Calculations (Attachment 5 available upon request)

International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) Trail Difficulty Rating System

The IMBA Trail Difficulty Rating System is a basic method used to categorize the relative technical difficulty of recreation trails. The IMBA Trail Difficulty Rating System can:

- Help trail users make informed decisions

- Encourage visitors to use trails that match their skill level
- Manage risk and minimize injuries
- Improve the outdoor experience for a wide variety of visitors
- Aid in the planning of trails and trail systems

This system was adapted from the International Trail Marking System used at ski areas throughout the world. Many trail networks use this type of system, most notably resort-based mountain biking trail networks. *The system best applies to mountain bikers, but is also applicable to other visitors such as hikers and equestrians.* These criteria should be combined with personal judgment and trail-user input to reach the final rating.

Trail Grade (maximum and average) Maximum grade is defined as the steepest section of trail that is more than approximately 10 feet in length and is measured in percent with a clinometer. Average grade is the steepness of the trail over its entire length, or for our purposes individual sections of the trail. Average grade can be calculated by taking the total elevation gain of the trail, divided by the total distance, multiplied by 100 to equal a percent grade.

- **Easiest** (White Circle) - Average Trail Grade less than 5%. Maximum Trail Grade 10%.
- **Easy** - (Green Circle) Average Trail Grade 5% or less. Maximum Trail Grade 15%.
- **More Difficult** (Blue Square) - Average Trail Grade 10% or less. Maximum Trail Grade 15% or greater.
- **Very Difficult** (Black Diamond) - Average Trail Grade 15% or less. Maximum Trail Grade 15% or greater.
- **Extremely Difficult** (Double Black Diamond) - Average Trail Grade 20% or less. Maximum Trail Grade 15% or greater.

International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). Downloaded October 30, 2013 Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. *IMBA Trail Difficulty Rating System*
<http://www.imba.com/resources/maps/trail-difficulty-ratings>

Appendix E. Potential Vegetation On Trail Soil Types

1983 Soil Survey of Josephine County, Oregon

http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/Manuscripts/OR033/0/or033_text.pdf
 Downloaded November 1, 2013

The following is some general information about the soils and potential vegetation of the Copper Queen Grove. It is assumed that most of the grove along the Grave Creek Hills Trail and south is the 7F-Beekman-Colestine soil complex, 50 to 75 percent south slopes. The 6F-Beekman-Colestine soil complex, 50 to 80 percent north slopes is the ground north of the trail and ridge of the Grave Creek Hills (see the 1883 soil report for more information).

6F-Beekman-Colestine complex, 50 to 80 percent north slopes. (Pages 23 - 24) This map unit is on mountains. The native vegetation is mainly Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, Pacific madrone, shrubs, and grasses. Elevation is 1,000 to 4,000 feet. The average annual precipitation is about 35 to 60 inches, the average annual air temperature is 45 to 54 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 100 to 160 days.

Woodland.-The Beekman soil is well suited to the production of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine. Based on a site index of 115 for Douglas-fir, the potential production per acre is 6,360 cubic feet from an even-aged, fully stocked stand of trees 60 years old or 57,960 board feet from an even-aged, fully stocked stand of trees 90 years old.

The Colestine soil is also well suited to the production of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine. Based on a site index of 124 for Douglas-fir, the potential production per acre is 7,260 cubic feet from an even-aged, fully stocked stand of trees 60 years old or 68,580 board feet from an even-aged, fully stocked stand of trees 90 years old.

The main concerns in producing and harvesting timber on these soils are steepness of slope, the hazard of erosion, and the difficulty of reforestation. Minimizing the risk of erosion is essential in forest management. Proper design of road drainage systems and care in the placement of culverts help to control erosion.

7F-Beekman-Colestine complex, 50 to 75 percent south slopes. (Pages 24 - 25) This map unit is on mountainsides. The native vegetation is mainly Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, Pacific madrone, shrubs, and grasses. Elevation is 1,000 to 4,000 feet. The average annual precipitation is about 35 to 60 inches, the average annual air temperature is 45 to 54 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 100 to 160 days.

Woodland.-The Beekman soil is well suited to the production of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine. Based on a site index of 105 for Douglas-fir, the potential production per acre is 5,460 cubic feet from an even-aged, fully stocked stand of trees 60 years old or 52,400 board feet from an even-aged, fully stocked stand of trees 100 years old.

The Colestine soil is also well suited to the production of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine. Based on a site index of 110 for Douglas-fir, the potential production per acre is 5,880 cubic feet from an even-aged, fully stocked stand of trees 60 years old or 58,100 board feet (International rule, one-eighth inch kerf) from an even-aged, fully stocked stand of trees 100 years old.

The main concerns in producing and harvesting timber are steepness of slope, the hazard of erosion, and the difficulty of reforestation. Minimizing the risk of erosion is essential in forest management. Proper design of road drainage systems and care in the placement of culverts help to control erosion.

VEGETATION The native vegetation is mainly Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, Pacific madrone, shrubs, and grasses.

Conifers

Douglas-fir
Ponderosa Pine
Sugar Pine

Deciduous

Pacific Madrone
California Black Oak

Understory (Page 186)

Soil 6F Beekman

Tanoak
Pacific Dogwood
Cluster Tarweed
Pacific Poison-oak
Mountain Brome
Deerfoot Vanillaleaf
Common Snowberry
Slender Hairgrass
Huckleberry Oak
American Trailplant

Soil 6F Colestine

Tanoak
Cluster Tarweed
Pacific Poison-oak
Deerfoot Vanillaleaf
Common Snowberry
Slender Hairgrass
Huckleberry Oak
American Trailplant

Soil 7F Beekman

Tanoak
Mountain Brome
Cluster Tarweed
Pacific Poison-oak
Pacific Dogwood
Deerfoot Vanillaleaf

Soil 7F Colestine

Tanoak
Pacific Dogwood
Cluster Tarweed
Pacific Poison-oak
Huckleberry Oak
Deerfoot Vanillaleaf

USDA, Soil Conservation Service. December 1983. *Soil Survey of Josephine County, Oregon.*

Appendix F. Statements of Some Participants

Malcolm Drake: Old Growth VS. WHAT??

What is old growth? Is the 60 acre “old growth” where a couple of dozen of us hiked (Hugo Old Growth Trail Hike) on October 25, 2013 truly old growth?

Old growth is a term that’s been bandied about for many years. But there appears to be no consensus about what it really is. Those of us who have lived or worked in a forest of 2000 year old Sequoia sempervirens, for instance, often have a totally different idea of what old growth is than people whose experience is limited to much smaller trees. I’ve seen single trees in the Redwood forests of northern California which had more volume of wood in them than all the trees on my 43 acres in Jump Off Joe Valley combined, including all of its old growth! When I moved here in 1975, I had a hard time taking the term “old growth” seriously, when applied to Josephine County forests, which would have been called “Pecker Poles” back in Humboldt County!

Many people consider old growth to be any “old” forest, with a minimum age suggested by some to be 200 years. The reason? Hard to say.

When I worked for the US Forest Service, 30+ years ago, the term “old growth” was applied to any forest with particularly large, old trees. Indeed, one of my assignments was to estimate how many acres of old growth were present in private lands surrounding Forest Service land, based on nothing other than aerial photographs and my experience working in the woods.

In October, 1989, the Chief of the Forest Service, in his infinite wisdom, directed all “Regional Foresters” to develop “ecologically based” definitions of old growth. Why? Who knows? But definitions were, in fact, developed. There are other organizations who have developed other definitions, but here are the ones developed by the Forest Service.

NOTE: The FS definition mentions “Old growth is typically distinguished from younger growth by **several of the following attributes**”:

- Large trees for species and site.
- Wide variation in tree sizes and spacing.
- Accumulations of large-size dead standing and fallen trees that are high relative to earlier stages.
- Decadence in the form of broken or deformed tops of bole and root decay.
- Multiple canopy layers.
- Canopy gaps and understory patchiness.

Ok, so it’s just a *little bit* subjective . Oh, well.

I’ve been asked to give my opinion about whether or not the Hugo Old Growth Trail passes through real, live, Old Growth. I’ll grade the forest on all six sections of the USFS definitions, with the caveat that it’s my first impression only, and-in fact-I doubt I could give a firm answer if I studied the situation there for months.

- Yep; I’d say so.
- Definitely. That one’s clear.

- Tough call. There's a fair amount of large-size fallen trees, but I saw very few large-size dead standing trees. Of course, I was only looking at the area within sight of the Hugo Old Growth Trail....
- I'd say no, although I didn't look for decayed roots, as I'm not trained in gopher work. I saw very few broken or deformed tops of boles, though, and I *did* look for them.
- Yes, definitely, though for all I know the FS has come up with some esoteric definition of "canopy layer".
- Yes.
-

Conclusion. Recall that the FS said, "The FS definition mentions "Old growth is typically distinguished from younger growth by several of the following attributes". In other words, the forest stand does not have to meet all six descriptors. In my opinion, this stand of trees meets at least four out of the six criteria. Maybe five.

Based on this count, I'd say that the stand is, in fact, Old Growth. Furthermore, based on everything I have learned working with foresters, and other experts, at the Forest Service, and using those (not very standard) standards, I would say that this area is *definitely* old growth.

So there you have it, for what it's worth. Other observers may have different opinions.

Malcolm Drake
Old Growth Forest/Woodlot Manager and Homebuilder
October 30, 2013

Larry McStravog Larry felt that Malcolm Drake had a point about U.S. House Resolution 1526, *O & C Trust Conservation & Jobs Act* and what it might mean if the Copper Queen Grove was eventually allocated to "mature" stand or "old growth" and managed for timber production or conservation. However, why spend a lot of energy when we don't know how BLM will inventory the Copper Queen Grove (e.g., Matrix - Southern Forest Management Area or Northern Spotted Owl core area and managed as a Late-Successional Reserve, etc.). Larry stated he is for jobs, but the trail along the grove is such a beautiful spot and it would be a shame if it was gone one day.

Mike Walker felt that the CQG may or may not be old growth, but it had many characteristics of an old growth stand, and that the ultimate experience was a trail adventure not a ecosystem experience. Mike's trail experience was outstanding. "It was not a Crater Lake experience of jaw-dropping views and gorgeous scenery that stays in your mind long after trip memories fade. It was an awesome experience like walking to Rainie Falls on the Rogue River and that once you experienced it you would want to share it with others." He said "I will remember the great views of Sunny Valley and Hugo, great hiking in the shade of the big trees and the mostly closed canopy, and photo opportunities of Wooo, look at that giant tree. The clear crisp air smells and frequently windy ridge line sometime felt like he was eating the experience. The 10-plus mile drive through the "getting lost" logging road system also made it feel like a fairly remote and special spot, and it was in terms of access and his mind."

Appendix G. HNA&HS Files With Applicable Information On One-Half Mile Grave Creek Hills Trail

Files

- Scenic Views

Files: HNA&HS, Genealogy, Scenic Views, Grave Creek Hills
There are many photographs in these files from several field trips.

April 2009
May 2009
July 2011
October 15, 2013
October 25, 2013
October 25, 2013 (Malish Collection)
October 29, 2013

- Trails

Files: HNA&HS, Genealogy, History Brochures, Trails, Grave Creek Hills

- Hugo High Road

Files: HNA&HS, Genealogy, History Brochures, Trails, Hugo High Road

- Forest Lands

Files: HNA&HS, Community Issues, Forest Lands

- Rogue Umpqua Wildlife Corridors Files

Files: HNA&HS, Community Activities, Rogue Umpqua Wildlife Corridor

Many pictures in this file from previous trips

Maps

- Map 1. 2013 240-Acre BLM Forest Parcel: Tax Lot 100, Section 21, T.34S. R.6W., W.M. Base Map: BLM Transportation Map.
- Map 2. Grave Creek Hills Ridge Line & Copper Queen Grove. Base Map: USGS. 1998. *Merlin Quadrangle*. 7.5 minute topographic series, scale 1:24,000, and contour interval 40 feet.
- Map 3. BLM Road System (based on map - Northern Hugo Viewpoints: Quartz Creek). Base Map: BLM Transportation Map.
- Map 4. Grave Creek Hills Trail In Section 21. Base Map: USGS. 1998. *Merlin Quadrangle*. 7.5 minute topographic series, scale 1:24,000, and contour interval 40 feet.