

Big Step for Bigfoot

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The "War" Department's UFO disclosure, with multiple tranches of disturbingly incomplete reports, has given Americans at least one unalloyed benefit: an occasion to learn what the word "tranche" means.

But in case you were disappointed with the effort, and the apparent government opacity on the subject, another division ("tranche"?) of the United States Government has stepped up to the plate to scratch your paranormal and government-transparency itches: The U.S. Forest Service.

It's about Bigfoot.

Or, since it's plural, Bigfeet?

Bigfoots, I think.

Anyhoo, in mid-October the Forest Service placed FOIA files about the Bigfoot/Sasquatch phenomena on a public server; it took over a month for *The Washington Post* to print an article on it: "Bigfoot believers get a boost from an unlikely ally: the U.S. Forest Service."

A boost? Really?

It's worth remembering that the most famous filmed footage of a Bigfoot is convincingly designated by many a hoax, and that the files disclosed in this small batch consist of nothing more than two reports and one newspaper article. One is the 1980 testimony of Leo T. Kinney, relating an eerie hunting incident near Missoula from the 1940s; the other is an official report from 1982 by Umatilla National Forest personnel of some over-sized footprints. The newspaper article is about more recent footprint findings.

Even more lackluster than the many batches of UFO files! Unfortunately, the lore of Bigfoot and UFOs intersect in ways inconvenient for a simple explanation of Bigfoot as some elusive large ape or secretive clans of lingering Denisovans.

Meanwhile, investigator David Paulides has been researching missing persons in the national forests, and he has his own theories about what Bigfoot is: something somehow *paranormal*! More importantly, he accuses the Forest Service of not providing a complete list of missing persons cases on government forest land and national parks.

Maybe we should demand disclosure on missing persons before we get too worked up about a probably-fictional cryptid.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.