



CLEARWATER DEFENDER

NEWS OF THE BIG WILD

A PUBLICATION OF
FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

ISSUED QUARTERLY
FALL 2017, NO.3

Demonizing Forest Fires Won't Lead to Climate Solutions

Guest Opinion

**Chad Hanson, PhD. John Muir Project
Mike Garrity, Alliance for the Wild Rockies**

The little Black-backed Woodpecker just can't seem to catch a break. A rare species that depends not just on areas recently burned in forest fires, but more specifically on the most intensely-burned patches within fires, the woodpecker has found itself in the crosshairs of an odd mix of antagonists.

Logging corporations and their political allies in Congress and the Administration are in the habit of demonizing fire because their "catastrophic wildfire" political narrative is the cornerstone of their campaign to rollback environmental protections on our National Forests and dramatically increase logging and clearcutting under the guise of fire management. Meanwhile, some well-meaning but misguided environmentalists and scientists have begun to echo this message in an apparent attempt to play on the public's fear and misunderstanding of wildland fire and scare people into taking climate change more seriously, as they bemoan one of the "worst" fire seasons and suggest "thinning" of forests ostensibly to address the problem.

Neither is being fully honest with the public, and both are doing a disservice to the very real and serious threats of rising temperatures from climate change due to human activities.

One key fact that both camps fail to mention is that current levels of fire in the forests of the northern Rockies and the western U.S. are not unnaturally high—even in a significant fire year like this one. In fact, more than a century ago, natural levels of forest fire were considerably higher than they are now, resulting in what forest scientists call a "fire deficit" in most forests currently (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1890/ES15-00294.1/full>).

Also, due to post-fire logging policies, most wildlife species that depend on post-fire habitat, like the Black-backed Woodpecker, have become rare, and many of these species are declining in population ([https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/archive/V45/WB-45\(3\)-Hanson-204-212.pdf](https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/archive/V45/WB-45(3)-Hanson-204-212.pdf)), including both cavity-nesting birds that depend on snags (standing dead trees) for food and homes, and birds that depend upon the diverse array of flowering



**A female Red-naped Sapsucker on a snag near
Meadow Creek on the Nez Perce National Forest**

Ron Marquart Photo Credit

plants and natural forest regeneration that follows fire.

Another thing that the Black-backed Woodpecker's adversaries fail to mention is that the most comprehensive current scientific analysis indicates that reducing environmental protections and increasing logging does not lead to lower fire intensity or spread—in fact, it results in the opposite (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ecs2.1492/full>). Moreover, "thinning" and other logging practices that are promoted as "fuel reduction" result in overall lower carbon storage in forests, and higher greenhouse gas emissions, compared to protecting forests from logging (<http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/es402903u>). Fire alone maintains forest carbon storage over time by cycling nutrients, enhancing forest productivity and carbon sequestration potential, and by spurring new growth.

To make matters worse, the Administration's Agriculture Secretary, Sonny Perdue, has stated that he wants to increase thinning on our National Forests to burn the trees as part of an initiative to ramp up biomass energy production, but climate scientists have warned that burning trees for kilowatts produces even more greenhouse gas emissions than burning coal, for an equivalent amount of energy produced. This is not a climate solution.

Meanwhile, unaware of the political and economic forces lining up against it, the little Black-backed Woodpecker struggles to survive. Even in a good fire year, where reasonably adequate amounts of habitat are created by fire, much of this habitat is eliminated by post-fire logging operations, which disproportionately target the best Black-

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Thank you Clare Eigenbrode!

FOC staff wishes to thank Clare Eigenbrode for interning with us this summer! She did a great job helping the organization, including participating in field monitoring, editing educational materials, promoting organization events, assisting with non-profit management and data collection, and helping with fundraising. Most importantly, we hope Clare gained experience in understanding her rights and responsibilities as a federal public land owner! It was great getting to know you this summer Clare, and best of luck with your college studies!



FOC File Photo

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FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

THE CLEARWATER DEFENDER
IS A PUBLICATION OF:

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Friends of the Clearwater, a recognized nonprofit organization since 1987, defends the Clearwater Bioregion's wildlands and biodiversity through a Forest Watch program, litigation, grassroots public involvement, outreach, and education. The Wild Clearwater Country, the northern half of central Idaho's *Big Wild*, contains many unprotected roadless areas and wild rivers and provides crucial habitat for countless, rare, plant and animal species. Friends of the Clearwater strives to protect these areas, restore degraded habitats, preserve viable populations of native species, recognize national and international wildlife corridors, and bring an end to industrialization on public lands.

Friends of the Clearwater is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions to Friends of the Clearwater are tax-deductible.

The *Clearwater Defender* welcomes artwork and articles pertaining to the protection of the *Big Wild*. Articles in the *Clearwater Defender* do not necessarily reflect the views of Friends of the Clearwater.

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Double Dipping up to \$10,000! Ashley Lipscomb

How does an animal's howl, a rushing river, or an undeveloped roadless area have a voice before a district or federal judge? - through your voice and membership to hard-hitting environmental organizations like Friends of the Clearwater. Are you ready to help us find new voices to speak for wildness, specifically through a new membership and donor challenge?

A generous benefactor, who believes in supporting tried-and-true, no nonsense organizations fighting for public lands, has offered to match new Friends of the Clearwater memberships and donor gifts up to \$10,000 from now until December 31, 2017.

That's right! Matching funds are waiting in the wings if we all do one important task: tell friends, family and neighbors about the wild Clearwater Basin. Then, encourage them to support the last and largest remaining intact ecosystem left in the Lower 48 through a high-impact membership.

This means a new \$25 membership automatically turns into \$50. A \$200 donation transforms into \$400 with just the click of a button through our on-line giving portal or by writing a check!

FOC won't waist a dime of your membership money on gimmicky perks such as address labels, plush-stuffed animals, and exclusive executive director meet-and-greets (our office door is always open). The meaning of membership with us goes much deeper than receiving a quarterly newsletter or becoming part of an exclusive club.

The real benefits belong to ecosystems, and Friends of the Clearwater provides members access to the court system on behalf of rare places and species. Just one visit to the Clearwater Basin, coupled with a current membership, could afford you the opportunity to become a declarant to protect places like Kelly Creek, gray wolves and Chinook salmon.

Here's a real life example to share with others:

In 2016, Wilderness Watch, Friends of the Clearwater and Western Watersheds Project, represented by Earthjustice, won a lawsuit in which the court ruled that Idaho Department of Fish and Game illegally collared wolves by landing helicopters in the Wilderness, without formal public review by the Forest Service. We were able to do this with the help of members and declarants.

We quickly combed our database searching for members in good standing with these organizations, combined with trips to the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness, who might be interested in submitting declarations sighting that irreparable harm would have been caused

to them, and their opportunity to experience wild wilderness. They had legal 'standing' in the courtroom, and they made a difference.

This is high-impact membership with real meaning and teeth! Cut this article out, and send it to your wildest friend or family member before December 31st and encourage them to *Double Your Defense!*

Send a check to:

Friends of the Clearwater
PO Box 9241
Moscow, Idaho 83843

OR

Make a donation through PayPal at
friendsoftheclearwater.org/get-involved.

This is how we keep it wild!



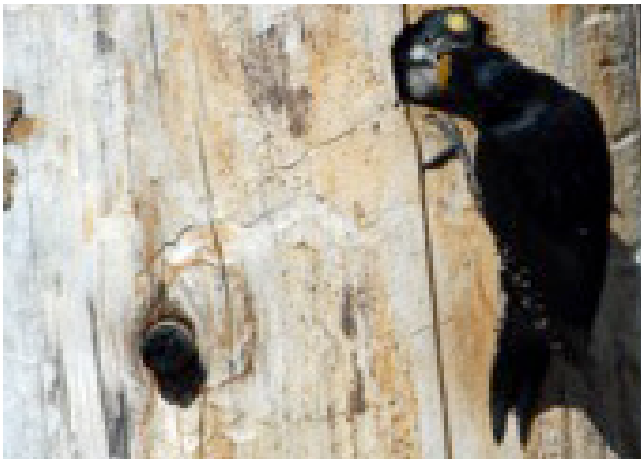
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Black-backed woodpecker cont. page 1

backed Woodpecker habitat on our public lands.

As Black-backed Woodpeckers suffer, so too do many other species. These woodpeckers depend upon the larvae of native wood-boring beetles that are attracted to recently fire-killed trees. The woodpeckers keep the beetle populations in check, and the forest in balance. In addition, these monogamous birds create multiple nest cavities each year—each spring the male creates two or three and the female picks the one she likes the best. In doing so, they effectively make homes for dozens of other wildlife species, like bluebirds, that need cavities but cannot create their own.

But the fate of this rare and reclusive bird, and the many other wildlife species that indirectly depend on it, do not seem to be of much concern to the clamoring political forces that promote the myth of catastrophic wildfire to advance their agendas. Perhaps we should listen less to them and more to the woodpecker. We might learn something.



A male Black-backed Woodpecker feeds one of his chicks

Rachel Fazio Photo Credit

Editor's Note: Chad Hanson, Ph.D. is a research ecologist with the John Muir Project, and the co-editor and co-author of the book, "The Ecological Importance of Mixed-Severity Fires: Nature's Phoenix." Mike Garriety is the Executive Director of the Alliance for the Wild Rockies, based in Helena, MT.

Clearwater Country Report

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Fire suppression in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness

Brett Haverstick

I knew that once we saw a helicopter hovering over the Wild & Scenic Selway River Corridor, we would be hearing the machines throughout our backpacking trip in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness (SBW). So much for a quiet vacation and solitude! Yep, it appeared that the Forest Service was using machines and other heavy-handed methods to "control" fire in the Wilderness.

The week-long backpacking trip took us up the beautiful Three Links drainage, before looping back through Moose Meadows and Big Fog Saddle. It was hot and sunny all week - waking up every morning to the sight of a smoke-filled inversion in the distance. Seeing and smelling smoke in the drainages of the SBW in August is expected, as these forests have evolved with fire over millenia. What was surprising, and equally disappointing, however, were the machines flying every day in the Wilderness. If nature cannot roll the dice in Wilderness, then where can it? If humans cannot show humility and restraint in Wilderness, then where will we? Will we ever?

After returning from the trip, a letter was sent to the Moose Creek District Ranger on the Nez Perce National Forest seeking answers for all the fixed-plane and helicopter activity. The agency responded swiftly, explaining that yes, they had suppressed three fires in the Wilderness up to that point, but that it was also managing fires for "the wilderness resource." One must ask, do we need fixed-planes and other machines to manage for wilderness character?

The 1964 Wilderness Act authorizes the agency to use motorized equipment to suppress fires in the Wilderness, *if it so chooses*. The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness General Management Plan further states, "Emergency landing such as fire, search and rescue and law enforcement will be allowed for separately at the discretion of the managers."

The response letter from the Forest Service also provided deeper insight into how the agency thinks and responds to fire in places like the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The Forest Service uses the words "key resources," "cultural resources," and "historical resources" repeatedly to justify the suppression of fires deep in the backcountry, even though the words imply the same thing - structures! In other words, the agency is double or triple-counting when justifying spending our tax dollars, while also needlessly putting firefighters in harms way when suppressing these wildfires. It's a shame to see the Forest Service sacrifice and trammel wilderness character, too! We need to let more fires burn and fulfill their critical ecological role, especially in Wilderness.

**Congressman Gianforte, GOP
vote to gut the Wilderness Act
Guest Opinion
George Nickas, Wilderness Watch**

One thing most Montanans agree on is we love our nationally acclaimed wildernesses and don't want to see them harmed. Whether we hike, fish, hunt, ride horseback or just stand in awe of these wild gems, Montana's designated wildernesses are the pride of our state. We might fight like hell over whether to designate this area or that one as new wilderness, but the Bob Marshall, Scapegoat, Selway-Bitterroot, Absaroka-Beartooths and our other protected wildernesses are sacred to Montanans of all stripes.

That is, apparently, all stripes except U.S. Congressmen Greg Gianforte, who just voted to effectively repeal the Wilderness Act and open places like "the Bob" to endless forms of habitat manipulation, predator control, road-building and anything else that might be construed as benefiting "hunting, angling, recreational, shooting, or wildlife conservation."

This stealth attack on the Wilderness Act comes in the form of H.R. 3668, the Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act, introduced by Rep. Jeff Duncan of South Carolina. It would affect every wilderness in the nation, including all of Montana's wilderness gems.

By nearly unanimous vote, Congress passed the 1964 Wilderness Act in order to protect America's wildest landscapes. The law describes wilderness as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man... retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions." The Wilderness Act is essentially nature's Bill of Rights, places where we humans, out of a sense of respect, humility and foresight, have agreed to let nature be. Since passage of the Wilderness Act, the National Wilderness Preservation System has grown to include 110 million acres in more than 760 units.

The SHARE Act would turn the Wilderness Act on its head, allowing endless habitat manipulation and modification, including logging, chaining, herbicide spraying or myriad other offenses done under the guise of "wildlife conservation" or for providing hunting, fishing and recreational shooting experiences. While such management might be fine for a Texas game farm, they represent a dramatic change for the Wilderness Act, which for over 50 years has required the preservation of wilderness character as the top priority for public wildernesses.

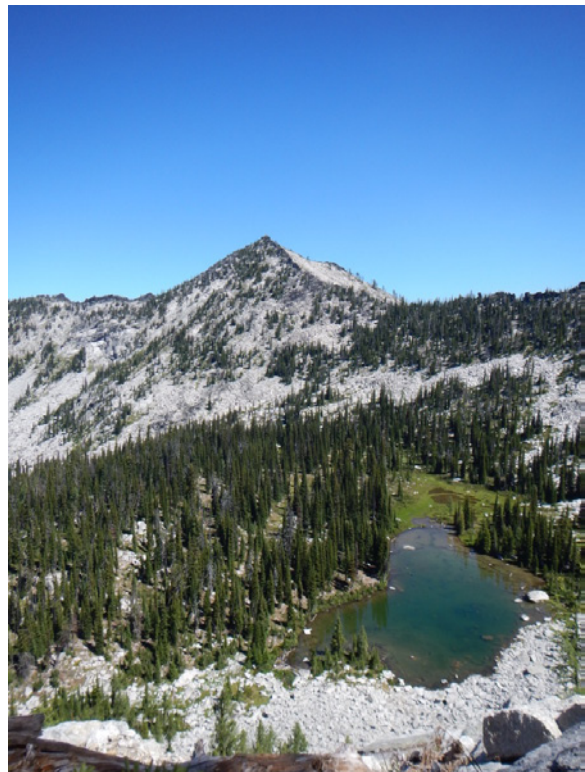
The SHARE Act would also allow the construction of "temporary" roads, dams or other structures in wilderness, again if done under the guise of benefiting hunting, angling, recreational shooting or wildlife conservation. And all such

projects would be exempt from any environmental review or public scrutiny under the National Environmental Policy Act — in essence making wildernesses some of the least protected of all public lands.

The bill is being pushed at the behest of the Safari Club International and a few like-minded groups that are upset that wildernesses around the country aren't managed like game farms, something Montanans roundly rejected at the ballot box not long ago. Not satisfied with the rich diversity of life our wildernesses hold or with the special experiences that wilderness provides, these groups want wilderness managed solely to benefit their idea of hunting and to favor the animal species they want to shoot. Even if it means building a road or a dam, clearcutting a forest or wiping out native predators to meet their hunting or angling goals.

Montanans who love our wildest, best places and don't want them degraded for a selfish few should contact Rep. Gianforte and urge him to remove the wilderness gutting provisions from the SHARE Act. Before it's too late.

Editor's Note: George Nickas is the Executive Director of Wilderness Watch, a national wilderness conservation organization based in Missoula, Montana. This editorial originally appeared in the *Missoulian* on October 4, 2017.



The Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act (SHARE) would allow construction of roads, dams and other structures in places like the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness

FOC File Photo

Adios National Forests? From Citizens to Stakeholders to Customers (or not) Gary Macfarlane

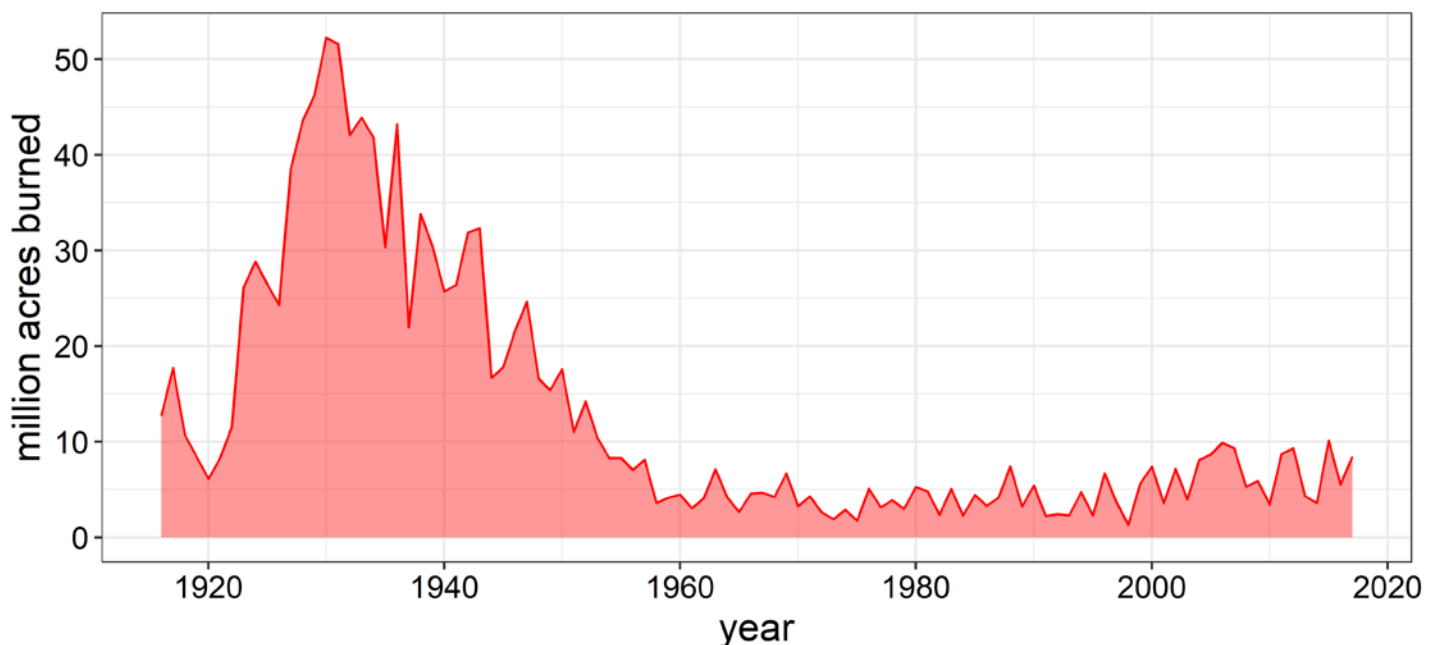
One of the sure signs that the Forest Service had lost its sense of mission - its duty to US citizens who own the national forests - was the change in terminology in how the agency refers to us. Nope, we are no longer citizens. Sometime in the 1980s, the agency used the term publics, as if it wasn't already plural. Whether or not this was a way to divide citizens into more deserving (industry representatives) and less deserving (ordinary citizens) groups, it does look suspicious. If that weren't enough, citizens who pay fees on public lands are now customers and those with extra connections are stakeholders. For example, if you participate in a so-called collaborative group - and only those who are paid to participate can easily do so, as these groups meet during the work week - then you get to be a stakeholder. As reported in past *Defenders*, these kind of select groups undermine the legally authorized public involvement processes and make citizen participation a pro forma exercise. Or, as attributed to Stalin, though it is certainly apocryphal, "It's not the people who vote that count. It's the people who count the votes."

The extent of how far the Forest Service has strayed from its obligations to US citizens is illustrated by an incident that happened recently in the Kelly Creek (also called Hoo-Doo or Great Burn) inventoried roadless area. The Forest Service in the 1987 Clearwater National Forest Plan recommended much of this area for wilderness. The 1993 lawsuit settlement agreement on that Forest Plan required the Forest Service to administer almost all of the area under the protective recommended wilderness management cat-

egory.

A group of citizens recently visited the area and found some serious problems regarding the safety of food storage at an outfitter camp, including strong smells emanating from the camp. Not long before, FOC staff member Ashley Lipscomb had visited the area on her own and noticed the same problem. The citizens contacted the FOC office and then wrote a letter to the North Fork District Ranger. Ashley also wrote a letter to the Ranger. Rather than being grateful for the information, the Ranger suggested that both the citizens and Ashley should not have been in the outfitter camp, even though it is on public land and was not being tended, and scolded them for doing so. He stated that outfitters were important "partners" to the Forest Service and the agency didn't have enough staff to follow up on such trivial issues. So much for citizens, or for bears who may be attracted to the camp and then killed as nuisance bears. It should be noted that an out-of-state hunter, hunting over bait, illegally killed a grizzly in Kelly Creek about ten years ago. The erosion of a public land agency from serving US citizens to being the conduit of using the public commons for private interest is ongoing and a hallmark of, unfortunately, both political parties.

So, some citizens are customers. Others, who hike on the national forests, apparently are not. That could change for the worse soon. Recently, the US House passed a noxious bill, HR 289, which is now in the Senate. This bill would allow federal land management agencies, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, to charge fees to be on national forests and public lands for anything. This bill, also called the GO Act (for Guides and Outfitters) has other bad provisions as well. However, the concerns about being able to merely walk on public land without paying



Data from federal sources, chart developed by Julia Piaskowski

a fee cuts across all party lines. Please contact your Senator and let them know how you feel about this legislation. Idaho Senators Risch and Crapo may also be receptive to citizen concerns. Senator _____, US Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 or senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.

The last *Defender* also reported on the agency's fire-fighting program. Articles in this issue of the *Defender* debunk the nonsense about how neither logging nor thinning the national forests will prevent fire. Another myth is that wildfire is increasing from what it was historically. While fire has increased over levels from the mid-to-late 1900s, there is not more fire, according to data from fire agencies, than occurred in the early 1900s and before (NOTE: data may not be precise for all years, especially earlier ones, but it does give a big picture idea on what has happened). Much of the recent increase is not due to forest fires, rather range fires. Many media outlets, when talking about forest fires in the West this year, also mentioned this year saw the largest fire in Montana history, but failed to note this was not a forest fire, rather a range and grassland fire in the eastern portion of the state. The amount of pre-settlement acreage burned is estimated to be about three times that of the early 1900s. (See chart facing page).

The Cove-Mallard Sales Come Back from the Dead and the "End of the World"

As reported in the last *Defender*, the Forest Service has been building fire lines miles from fires in order to extend logging in roadless areas. It happened again this year in roadless land adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The Forest Service just recently approved the Lowell Wildland Urban Interface timber sale with a categorical exclusion, which means there will be no chance to file a pre-decisional objection. We are reviewing whether we have good legal options to pursue before the logging takes place. Though slightly improved—no logging in the Wild and Scenic River corridor—it still will log 93 acres in the roadless land. While no temporary road would be built, the fire line was put in where the road would go anyway, making it, in effect, a road. We had planned on meeting with the Forest Service to discuss this and two other sales, supposedly before the decision was to be made, but the decision happened before our scheduled meeting. In a letter to the Forest Service where we cancelled the meeting, we noted, "When the Forest Service tells us that it wants to discuss a project with our organization before a decision is made and then makes the decision prior to the scheduled meeting to discuss that project, it comes across as disingenuous. Further, when we learn that the de facto decision had been made even before we scheduled the meeting, it conflicts with your rhetoric about working with the public." The For-

est Service gave the excuse that "we misunderstood." There was no misunderstanding. Perhaps the agency did not communicate internally or decided it was politically expedient to make a decision before the planned meeting because the Andy's Hump fire was burning a few miles away.

The Forest Service also logged along the 444 Road, which is a road excluded from the Gospel-Hump Wilderness. While we have been told that the agency didn't cut a fire line into the Wilderness itself, it appears the logging went up to the boundary, which is offset 250 feet from the road itself.

If that were not enough, the Forest Service has decided to revive the infamous Cove-Mallard timber sale in roadless land contiguous to the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (now called Dixie-Comstock). Bruce Bernhardt, the Nez Perce National Forest Supervisor at the time, stopped these sales in the late 1990s. His action was folded into the nascent Forest Service planning effort to protect roadless areas on a national level. Citizen outrage over the Cove-Mallard sales helped convince the Forest Service to take that step. However, the ensuing 2001 Roadless Rule and the even worse Idaho Roadless Rule haven't lived up to the promises made in the 1990s. An environmental impact statement (EIS) will be done and public input requested for the Cove-Mallard sales. If you are signed up for email alerts, we will let you know when comments are being taken. When the draft EIS comes out, we will send out information about the proposal.

And, if all that were not enough, the Forest Service has announced two more massive timber sales. One, aptly named the "End of the World," would cover nearly 50,000 acres south of Grangeville. It will be done under an expedited process, meaning little public involvement and inadequate analysis. The other is in Lolo Creek, an area where the Nez Perce Tribe has spent millions trying to recover the watershed from the effects of logging and road building. It is a sale that was put on hold after the fires of 2015, but is now back with a vengeance (and only a fifteen-day initial public comment period, though there will be another comment period on the draft EIS). Significant logging is proposed for the Eldorado Roadless Area and the National Historic Landmark Corridor, which includes the Nez Perce National Historic Trail and the route used by Lewis and Clark.

Given the increased threats to watersheds and wildlands, due to Forest Service policy to drastically increase logging levels on the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests (see the last issue of the *Defender* for more details) and government efforts to make more areas subject to recreation fees, we will be gearing up for legal challenges where we have strong legal ground. It will be a daunting challenge. Your voice and support will be needed to keep watersheds clean and full of fish, wildlands wild, and habitat intact for forest-dwellers. Again, we will let you know when public comment opportunities arise.

2017 North Fork Rendezvous

Guest Opinion, Jesse Feathers

FOC Member

“Try bartering,” Patrick suggested. “Just walk around the campground and barter. Think outside the box, man. That’s what I always say.”

I looked at Patrick, who was wearing a tie-dye t-shirt and chopping up mushrooms for a spaghetti sauce missing a key ingredient - onions. “I never considered that.”

Following Patrick’s advice, my brother Joe and I solicited the occupants of Kelly Forks - the confluence of the Clearwater’s North Fork and Kelly Creek - and quickly found a fly fishing family willing to trade three onions for two dark chocolate bars. “That was easy,” Joe said to me, when we were out of earshot. “Patrick is brilliant!”

This incident occurred during the July campout sponsored by FOC and the Palouse group - Sierra Club. Earlier in the day, while others ventured up Kelly Creek, we’d headed south to inspect East Saddle, an area where the Forest Service wants to do “restoration logging.” After a somewhat cursory examination, we concluded the forest was healthy enough and moved on to Cayuse Creek. There we hiked upstream, following a trail that paralleled the water and meandered through a shady forest. In places, larch trees soared into the sky. Before turning around, we stepped through shallows to reach a small island where we watched the creek glide over a cobblestone bed.

“The water’s sure clear,” Joe remarked. “Let’s hope it stays that way,” I said, skipping my usual sermon: The Clearwater’s granitic soils are highly erosive, and logging of any nature degrades streams, making it tough on fish. “Uh-huh,” Joe said, and we resumed staring, hypnotized by sparkling water and green mountains covered with church-steeple fir.



It’s easy to get hypnotized by the beauty and grandeur of Cayuse Creek

FOC File Photo

With onions in hand, Ashley (heroic FOC staff member) and Patrick finished the spaghetti sauce, and then our group of twenty settled in for an evening of fine dining and stimulating conversation. There was Turns East regaling us with tales of working on North Fork trail crews during the 1970s, while explaining how his name is a protest against James Watt, who changed the Department of Interior’s official seal, flipping the buffalo head from left to right.

There was also North Fork District Ranger Andrew Skowlund laying out the logic behind the East Saddle project. “Times have changed,” he said. “We have a new administration and different priorities. It’s imperative we do something to help local timber towns and restore forest health.”

Our reaction was at first silence. Nothing could be heard but the crackling campfire and the soothing sound of Kelly Creek. Then, Gary (heroic FOC staff member) began to speak. He pointed out the definition of a healthy forest is in some sense subjective. That if we choose to have a forest dominated by grand fir, it isn’t necessarily a bad thing. Moreover, trying to improve the forest by cutting grand fir and replanting with white pine may yield unanticipated results, some of them negative.

I tried to back Gary up. “This forest is primarily roadless. Regardless of how you define healthy, our roadless lands certainly contain the healthiest forests, which are best left unmanaged. That’s why they’re healthy in the first place.”

Andrew was unconvinced. “The forest is full of dying trees. Besides we’re not logging in roadless land.”

“You’re planning to log right up to the boundary,” I protested. “So you’re violating the roadless rule’s spirit.”

Andrew scoffed. “Where does it stop? If a roadless area requires a buffer zone, then doesn’t the buffer zone also require a buffer?”

“That doesn’t make sense,” I grumbled, struggling to articulate counter arguments. Later, lying awake in our tent, I imagined a conversation more to my liking:

Me: “In Yellowstone, we’ve been careful to protect surrounding buffer zone wildlands. As a result, the greater Yellowstone area is a functioning, healthy ecosystem. By contrast, outside Great Smoky Mountains National Park, we have Dollywood bumping up against the park boundary. It’s a disaster.”

Andrew: “The North Fork is different. This isn’t a National Park. It’s a National Forest. By law, it must be managed with multiple uses in mind.”

Me, channeling Patrick: “Think outside the box, man! On the North Fork, we need to undertake true forest restoration, meaning for one, consolidating roadless lands. Instead of your logging project, we need to remove the Toboggan Ridge Road, thus joining up Kelly Creek and Bighorn - Weitas Roadless Areas. Further, we need to advocate

for a National Monument encompassing all North Fork, Lochsa, and St. Joe wildlands, plus the historic Lolo Trail. As it stands now, Lolo Trail is managed in the most disgraceful manner. Where once the Nez Perce and Lewis & Clark trod, we have a motorcross - our own version of the *Baja 500*, ironically, staged on what the Forest Service calls the 500 Road. To honor the Corps of Discovery, we need a Corps of Recovery converting road to trail."

Andrew: Speechless.

Back to what really happened: "Where can I log?"

Andrew asked with frustration. "Where can we have a timber harvest that won't generate a lawsuit?"

Other people like Brett (heroic FOC staff member) volunteered coherent, intelligent answers, which I would gladly recount, except my sixty-year-old brain can't recollect much anymore. Therefore, I can only relate that at one point I declared, "Andrew, the further east you come, the more resistance you'll get from people like me. Stay west of Weitas Creek drainage, in the front country, and you won't hear from me."

"I'm glad to know that," Andrew said. Then, he went back to defending the East Saddle project, maintaining it was wrong to concentrate all timber harvest in the front country. To me, it was an amazing admission. Wasn't he saying the East Saddle project isn't about forest restoration? That it's really about spreading the damage around?

Of course, I wasn't nimble enough to express this. Instead, I allowed others to speak (I really did!), and when it was my turn again, I told Andrew he wasn't helping timber communities by hooking them on another round of unsustainable logging. I also asked this question: "What project is the Forest Service undertaking that will specifically benefit the Nez Perce? All we hear about is helping communities like Pierce and Elk City. I want to know what the Forest Service is doing to help Indian communities."

For a moment, I detected panic on Andrew's face. But he recovered quickly. "The tribe cares a lot about elk, and the East Saddle project benefits elk. By thinning the forest, we will improve habitat. Elk numbers will go up."

"Perhaps," I countered. But I think removing the road would do even more for elk. It's a fact - when humans have access, elk disappear." (Actually, I didn't say this either. But wouldn't it have been cool if I had?)

When the evening was over, Gary reminded Andrew that environmentalists are probably the Forest Service's biggest fans. "We aren't the enemy," he said.

Then, everyone lined up to shake Andrew's hand, including me. After all, besides bravely engaging us in lively debate, he'd contributed a sweet, juicy watermelon to our wilderness banquet.

The next morning, we broke camp and said our goodbyes, even as a few of us lingered. Behaving like party

guests that refuse to go home, we drove to the west flank of Pot Mountain. There we took a short hike, before wading into a pool beneath the cool spray of Chateau Falls. One of us - Laurene - climbed a rope that led to additional pools in the multi-tiered cataract. From below, I watched her, admiring her athleticism and derring-do. In her own way, she was thinking outside the box, aiming for higher ground.

Editorial Note: Friends of the Clearwater will notify the public when the Forest Service releases its Environmental Analysis (EA) for the East Saddle Integrated Restoration Project. A second public comment opportunity will be offered at that point.



**We had gorgeous summer weather
for the hike up Kelly Creek**

FOC File Photos



**Thanks to Palouse group - Sierra Club
for being a trip co-sponsor**

Jesse Feathers Photo Credit

**Saving Salmon to Save Ourselves:
Scenes from the Free the Snake Flotilla**
Guest Opinion, Maggie Caldwell
Advocacy Communications Manager,
Earthjustice

Pickup trucks rumble into Chief Timothy Park, just outside Lewiston, ID, towing kayaks and canoes and swelling the campground with hundreds of tribal members, boaters, anglers, local business owners, and other river advocates. They are gathering to take part in the *Free the Snake Flotilla*, an annual rally on the water organized by the Save our Wild Salmon coalition and Friends of the Clearwater.

Their vision: Remove four dams from the Snake River in what would amount to the greatest wild salmon recovery and river restoration in history. Protests against these dams have persisted for more than 40 years. Free the Snake activists are racing against time as native fish die off.

All four species of wild salmon and steelhead found in the lower Snake and Clearwater rivers are now listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. Scientists say the species are crashing because of the four dams—Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor—that hinder fish passage.

For centuries, the Nez Perce have relied on salmon for sustenance and trade. The tribe, along with the state of Oregon and a coalition of conservation and fishing groups represented by Earthjustice, have been in court successfully battling a series of failed federal hydropower management plans for nearly two decades.

In five different rulings, federal judges have found these plans illegal and ordered the agencies to help these native fish survive and recover. But the federal agencies have repeatedly squandered these opportunities.

The most recent court decision in 2016 ordered the Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies to take a fresh look at these dams and their deadly impacts on salmon and steelhead, opening up a public comment period. People from around the Pacific Northwest and beyond heeded the call with nearly 400,000 comments calling for dam removal. Those comments must all be considered as the agencies draft their Environmental Impact Statement due in 2020. This process could be overridden and all those people's comments ignored if a proposed bill in Congress (HR 3144) seeking to prevent changes to dam operations despite the public and court pressure passes.

At Chief Timothy Park, a cross-section of river defenders gather ahead of the next morning's float. Members of the Nez Perce join the crowd, as do members of the Palouse, Snohomish, Nooksack, Kalispell, Colville, Lummi, Duwamish, Lakota Sioux, Saanich, Shoshone-Bannock, Yakima, Umatilla and Klamath tribes.

"All of these tribes are salmon people," says Julian Matthews, a Nez Perce member and treasurer of Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting tribal lands and waters.

"We have a profound respect for salmon," Matthews says. "We want to make sure we protect their rights to swim up and down these rivers, to spawn and then return, and make sure we do our part to protect them just as they've protected us."

The launch site bustles with people packing food and water, preparing their kayaks, canoes, and dories. Devon Barker-Hicks, who owns a family rafting business, takes to the loudspeaker.

"We built the dams. We know how to build. Let's use our collective knowledge to build," she begins. "Let's build beaches. Let's build current. Let's build shade. Let's build fish runs. Let's build jobs. Let's build river communities. Let's build healthy water. Let's build native lands. Let's build whitewater!"

As her voice rises, the crowd gathers closer cheering her on. Barker-Hicks says her husband, too, depends on the river working as a salmon fishing guide.

"If you are pro-dam, you must realize you also say no to fish, local cafes, gas stations, guides, to my husband's way of life, to hotels, to the tourists. You are saying no to many things."

Three miles downstream from Chief Timothy, the people on the water converge around a big "Free the Snake" banner in the water. Tribal members sing a call and response and someone beats a drum sending reverberations across the water. An organizer leads the group in several rounds of "Free the Snake! Free the Snake!" A dog in one of the boats starts howling in unison.

Editor's Note: Thank you to the Moscow Food Co-Op and Panhandle Artisan Bread Co. for donating food to the flotilla. Below photo credit Wingspan Media.



Smokin' Mojo played another great benefit concert this summer!

Brett Haverstick



FOC File Photo

FOC is fortunate to have Smokin' Mojo - one of the best bands on the Palouse - play on behalf of our efforts to protect the vast public wildlands of the Clearwater Basin in north-central Idaho. Led by Brad Crooks, the band has been playing music for over twenty years in our area, taking different shapes and forms throughout its existence.

The *2017 FOC Summer Benefit Concert* was the second year in a row that the band has performed for us. Both Brad and Sandye Crooks have been kind enough to host both benefits at their lovely home, allowing us to barbecue good food, meet new friends and supporters, and raise money for a good cause! We also want to thank every member in the band, and other guest musicians, for taking time out of their schedule to play sweet music!

FOC gives presentation to Spokane Falls - Trout Unlimited

Brett Haverstick

FOC staff and board members traveled to Spokane this fall to deliver a presentation about the ill-advised East Saddle Integrated Restoration Project on the Clearwater National Forest. As discussed in previous issues of the *Defender*, including this one (pages 8 - 9), the proposal would threaten the Weitas Creek, Kelly Creek and Moose Mountain Roadless Areas, as well as Cayuse Creek and Kelly Creek. The aforementioned waterways are "blue-ribbon" streams that attract anglers from around the country. Besides producing Westslope-cutthroat trout populations, both Cayuse and Kelly Creeks provide critical habitat for Bull trout. Thank you to Spokane Falls - Trout Unlimited for hosting us! We look forward to working with the chapter and other groups and citizens to stop this project, which is proposed in such a wild, remote section of the Clearwater National Forest. Thank you also to FOC member Fred Rabe for driving us to Spokane!

Moscow welcomes back Buffalo Field Campaign

Brett Haverstick

Friends of the Clearwater and Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment welcomed our friends with the Buffalo Field Campaign (BFC) to Moscow this September. The *2017 Road Show* featured BFC co-founder Mike Mease, flutist Mignon Geli and dedicated volunteer Joseph Anderson. This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the group's work to protect the last genetically pure wild buffalo herds in America from hazing, harassment and slaughter in and around Yellowstone National Park. More than 10,000 bison have been needlessly killed over the last decade! Learn more about BFC by visiting buffalofieldcampaign.org.



FOC File Photo

Lost Friends: Moscow loses a community member Sharon Cousins, FOC Member



Rodna Louise Hansen, 1948 - 2017

Rodna Hansen, a small woman with a heart as big as all outdoors, will be missed by many of us. Often seen assisting her husband and videographer Tom Hansen at events for environmental balance and social justice, Rodna set a high standard of love and service for this planet and its people. Rest in peace Rodna, and thank you for your example.



The 3rd Annual Free the Snake Flotilla drew another big crowd
advocating for a free-flowing lower Snake River!

Mike Beiser Photo Credit

FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ANNUAL MEETING & GATHERING

Saturday November 4, 6:00 - 9:00 pm

1912 CENTER, 412 E. THIRD STREET, MOSCOW

POTLUCK, LIVE MUSIC, SILENT AUCTION, AWARDS, BOARD ELECTIONS

WHY WILDERNESS?

AN EVENING WITH AUTHOR & ECOLOGIST GEORGE WUERTHNER

Tuesday November 14, 7:00 - 9:00 pm

1912 CENTER, 412 E. THIRD STREET, MOSCOW

Friends of the Clearwater

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