



CLEARWATER DEFENDER

NEWS OF THE BIG WILD

A PUBLICATION OF
FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Bill Berkowitz

June 19, 2007

J. Steven Griles did the crime but doesn't
want to do the time

Former Interior Department Deputy Secretary who pleaded guilty earlier in connection with Jack Abramoff looking for 'sentence' of working for anti-environmental group instead of five years in the pokey

J. Steven Griles was convicted earlier this year of withholding information from the Senate Indian Affairs Committee in 2005 about his meeting Jack Abramoff. Facing a possible five-year jail sentence, Griles has enlisted a small army of the well-connected who are petitioning the sentencing Judge for leniency, while Griles himself is asking for community service -- part of which time would be served working with the American Recreation Coalition and the Walt Disney Company.

Griles is scheduled for sentencing on June 26. The career lobbyist is the second-highest-level Bush administration official to be caught up in the ongoing Department of Justice investigation of former Republican Party uber-lobbyist, the currently imprisoned Jack Abramoff. Griles, the former Interior Deputy Secretary who, according to SourceWatch, "oversaw the Bush administration's push to open more public land to energy development," doesn't think he deserves jail time. Evidently this is one situation in which Griles prefers not to follow Abramoff's lead.

In an effort to avoid doing time, Griles and his legal team have developed a two-pronged strategy: Line up a host of A-listers to send letters to D.C. District Judge, Ellen Huvelle, seeking leniency;

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and personally petition the judge to be sentenced to a fine, three months home confinement, and 500 hours of community service with the American Recreation Coalition (ARC), a Washington-based non-profit organization formed in 1979, and the Walt Disney Company.

"It's not difficult to imagine that Griles may soon be working for the ARC," said Scott Silver, the executive director of Wild Wilderness, an Oregon-based grassroots environmental organization who has been tracking these matters for years. "It is, after all, a perfect match-up since they already enjoy the benefits of what has been more than a 20 year working relationship."

Griles "was involved in efforts to help two of Abramoff's clients -- the Louisiana Coushatta tribe and the Saginaw Chippewa tribe of Michigan -- fend off casino proposals from rival tribes and may have done so while engaged in employment negotiations with Abramoff, recent news reports have said. Griles has said through spokespeople that he did not play a major role in endeavors to aid the tribes," The Hill's Josephine Hearn has reported.

"Although Griles initially denied doing any favors for Abramoff's casino-owning Indian tribe clients, court records show that Griles inserted himself into several casino cases at Interior," Greenwire's Dan Berman recently pointed out. "In March, Griles pleaded guilty to withholding information from the Senate Indian Affairs

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Friends of the Clearwater, a recognized non-profit organization since 1987, defends the Idaho Clearwater Bioregion's wild lands 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 to bring an end to commodity extraction and industrialization on our public lands.

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Committee in 2005 about his meeting Abramoff through Italia Federici, president of the Council of Republicans for Environmental Advocacy (CREA - website). Griles was dating Federici at the time." Earlier this month, Federici pleaded guilty to tax and perjury charges and agreed to cooperate with the government's wide-ranging Abramoff probe.

According to TPMuckraker.com, the prosecutors sentencing memo pointed out "how Griles was Abramoff's man in Interior, providing a constant stream of confidential information valuable to Abramoff's tribal clients. In return, Abramoff helped Griles' many lady friends: channeling \$500,000 into ... Federici's right-wing group, the Council of Republicans for Environmental Advocacy, and interviewing two others for possible jobs with Abramoff's lobbying firm..."

In "Crimes Against Nature," published in the December 11, 2003 issue of Rolling Stone, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. detailed some of Griles' activities: "During the first Reagan administration, Griles worked directly under James Watt at Interior, where he helped the coal industry evade prohibitions against mountaintop-removal strip mining." In 1989, "Griles left government to work as a mining executive and then as a lobbyist with National Environmental Strategies, a Washington, D.C., firm that represented the National Mining Association and Dominion Resources, one of the nation's largest power producers."

"When Griles got his new job at Interior, the National Mining Association hailed him as 'an ally of the industry.' It's bad enough that a former mining lobbyist was put in charge of regulating mining on public land. But it turns out that Griles is still on the industry's payroll. In 2001, he sold his client base to his partner Marc Himmelstein for four annual payments of \$284,000, making Griles, in effect, a continuing partner in the firm." "Because Griles was an oil and mining lobbyist, the Senate made him agree in writing that he would avoid contact with his former clients as a condition of his confirmation. Griles has nevertheless repeatedly met with former coal clients to discuss new rules allowing mountaintop mining in Appalachia and destructive coal-bed methane drilling in Wyoming. He also met with his former oil clients about offshore leases. These meetings prompted Sen. Joseph Lieberman to ask the

Interior Department to investigate Griles. With Republicans in control of congressional committees, no subpoenas have interrupted the Griles scandals."

Dan Berman pointed out that "The felony charge could land Griles in prison for a maximum five years and carry a \$250,000 fine. Justice Department attorneys recommended a 10-month sentence. Half of that would be served in a federal prison, according to DOJ's nonbinding recommendation to the court." In a follow-up piece dated June 18, Berman reported that "the head of the American Recreation Coalition said the motorized recreation group made no monetary or future employment promises to Griles in connection with his unusual request to serve community service with an ARC-run nonprofit group associated with Interior and corporations including the Walt Disney Co."

91 letters supporting leniency

Then, there are the letters supporting Griles. "The 91 letters ... reflect his friendships and contacts made through an extensive career in government and industry, including three former Interior secretaries and a litany of senior former government officials and industry executives," Berman pointed out.

"The reality of Steve Griles is in many ways different from the public perception," wrote former Interior Secretary Gale Norton. "His powerful size and bearing seem intimidating, but those who know him realize he is a compassionate and caring person. He helped co-workers who were struggling. He was encouraging and upbeat when people got discouraged."

Norton added: "Many men would have difficulty working with a woman as a superior, especially a woman he had once outranked. Steve instead was supportive and encouraging. We had one of the best, if not the best, working relationships of any secretary and deputy secretary in the administration."

Idaho Gov. Butch Otter (R) wrote about riding horses with Griles in Idaho and Washington's Rock Creek Park. "We have shared many trails, and I have come to recognize that he is a genuine man who is proud of his service to the people of our nation," Otter wrote.

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Rep. Barbara Cubin (R-Wyo.) said that Griles' "voice now strains under the sorrow and regret he bears for his infraction. I believe a sentence of community service will benefit this nation much more than will his imprisonment."

Tom Sansonetti, former assistant attorney general for the environment and natural resources division, and a rumored nominee to replace the late Wyoming Republican Senator Craig Thomas, wrote that "Steve is the consummate public servant. He took on huge, complicated, and often unpopular, tasks for Secretary Norton within the Interior building, such as the complex and high-profiled Cobell case involving the management of Indian Trust Fund monies."

According to Berman, "Sansonetti's successor was Sue Ellen Wooldridge, who married Griles on March 26. Wooldridge resigned in January amid news reports she purchased a South Carolina vacation home with Griles and a ConocoPhillips lobbyist, months before DOJ and the company agreed to settle charges it violated the Clean Air Act."

Among the other 91 requests for leniency include letters from Reagan-era Interior secretaries Don Hodel and William Clark; Craig Manson, former assistant Interior secretary for fish, wildlife and parks; Dan Kish, senior adviser to House Natural Resources Committee ranking member Don Young (R-Alaska); Bill Horn, a Reagan-era assistant Interior secretary and lobbyist; former U.S. EPA acting Administrator Marianne Horinko; Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works John Paul Woodley; James Cason, Interior associate deputy secretary; Ann Klee, former U.S. EPA general counsel and former counselor to Norton; Bennett Raley, former assistant Interior secretary for water and science; Dale Hall, director of the Fish and Wildlife Service and Derrick Crandall, president and executive director of the American Recreation Coalition.

Derrick Crandall's rising star

"In the late 70s, Derrick Crandall was a relative unknown, working for the snowmobile industry and lobbying for snowmobile access in Yellowstone," Scott Silver told Media Transparency in an e-mail interview. In 1981, he became the first President of the American Recreation Coalition, a 'wise-use' organization created two years

earlier in response to the gas-crisis of 1979. "The purpose of the ARC was to lobby in support of fuel for motorized recreation," Silver pointed out. When Ronald Reagan took office in January 1981, Crandall's profile was elevated as he became one of the most influential lobbyists in the nation working on Outdoor Recreation issues.

Crandall's stock rose further when he was chosen to serve on Reagan's President's Commission on Americans Outdoors from 1985-1987 -- a commission that Silver said "basically set a new direction for outdoor management policy and was intended to bring about the commercialization, privatization and motorization of recreational opportunities on America's public lands; the corporate takeover of nature and the Disneyfication of the wild."

During this time then vice president George Herbert Walker Bush and Crandall became close friends: "Crandall took Bush on camping trips in motor homes provided by ARC's sister organization, the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association -- the same organization that outfitted George W. Bush and Dick Cheney with motor homes for their 2000 election campaign," Silver added.

Over the course of the past two and a half decades the American Recreation Coalition evolved from being a shill for the petroleum industry to being the most powerful, influential and successful outside force now shaping recreation policy on federally managed public lands, including the national parks. When National Park management policies came under fire last year and efforts were made to make the parks friendlier to motorized recreation, including more snowmobiles in Yellowstone, the ARC led the charge.

Serving the interests of the motorized recreation industry, other commercial recreation entities and the tourism industry, the ARC seeks to radically transform the management of public lands and to turn outdoor recreation into a chain of products, goods and services. The long tradition of people using public lands to adventure on their own and to interact with the natural world is being replaced by land managers and their recreation industry "partners" who sell pre-packaged experiences; experiences compared to a those that can be had at Disneyland.

Griles looking to pay his debt to society by working with ARC and Disney

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According to Dan Berman, "Griles' legal team has suggested that half of the community service would be with 'Wonderful Outdoor World' (website) in the position of national counselor and strategic planning coordinator. In that post, Griles would develop public and private partnerships among federal land agencies, the Disney Company and the American Recreation Coalition, as well as raise money and conduct outreach to the government and media. The other half of his community service would focus on 'Operation Coaches and Warriors,' to assist injured veterans of the Iraq war."

"While he may have made some mistakes ... we're always willing to help people get back on the right side of life," Derrick added.

In a February 2006 story titled "Who's Ruining Our National Parks?" Vanity Fair contributing editor Michael Shnayerson pointed out that Crandall's ARC "calls itself the voice of a \$250 billion industry, from snowmobilers to Jet Skiers, mountain bikers to equestrians. Top Interior politicals, including Gale Norton and Assistant Secretary Lynn Scarlett, regularly attend ARC's annual meetings to receive awards and give talks about opening up the parks."

"Wonderful Outdoor World is an ARC/Disney co-production," Scott Silver told Media Transparency. "The idea is to create a new constituency that will speak in support of ARC's concept of a Disneyfied Great Outdoors." To accomplish their goals, ARC and Disney have "created a frame for this constituency," claiming that it is "obese, inner-city kids who are addicted to videos and who, unless turned into wildness consumers, will surely succumb to diabetes."

"This frame has been very effective," Silver pointed out. "Simply stated, the ARC and Disney have no use of the traditional conservationist or traditional outdoorsman frame/mindset. They are in the business of selling consumable, commodified recreation. Traditionalists are not consumers

and so the industry has set about to reinvent the entire concept of outdoor recreation. The industry seeks to make public lands more like theme parks saying that theme parks and structured/Disneyfied recreation is what these kids crave."

For more than two decades, J. Steven Griles "served as a representative of extractive industry, while for the past 25 years, the American Recreation Coalition has worked behind the scenes to turn outdoor recreation into an extractive industry," Silver pointed out.

The ARC's Crandall is first and foremost a longtime anti-environment activist, Silver said. "He's testified before congress a number of times in support of drilling the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; he's been on the board of directors of such 'wise-use' organizations as the Coalition for Vehicle Choice, the Foundation for Clean Air Progress, and the Sports Utility Vehicle Owners of America; he has long fought against efforts to raise gas-mileage (CAFE) standards; and has maintained that global warming is either a fraud or should not be taken seriously."

According to Silver, "Griles is a convicted felon and an enemy of public lands, while Crandall is a powerful lobbyist and an enemy of public lands. It is revealing that Griles has asked the sentencing judge to allow him to work for Crandall instead of going to prison. It is also revealing that Crandall, while making no long-term promises to Griles, made this same request of the judge."

"What is most difficult for me to believe is that the specific ARC programs and initiatives upon which Griles would be working are not generally understood to be components within the ARC's ongoing, anti-environmental agenda," Silver added. "Those pleading on Griles' behalf -- Congresswoman Cubin, Former Interior Secretaries Norton and Hodel, long-time motorized recreation lobbyist Horn and others -- know more about the ARC and its programs than does the general public. Will Griles and his anti-environmental partners have the last laugh?"

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Motorized Madness Stopped by Forest Service at Meadow Creek

Gary Macfarlane

There is some really good news to report (well, sort of, in an I-told-you-so way). In the past newsletter, we announced that Nez Perce National Forest officials had allowed a state trail machine association ride to go forth without any formal public review under the National Environmental Policy Act, or without a special use permit. The event was to take place in the upper Red River drainage, though most of the trails that were open for the event were in the adjacent Meadow Creek roadless area. In response, Western Environmental Law Center attorney, Amy Atwood, sent a letter on behalf of Friends of the Clearwater, to the Forest Service about the issue. The agency decided to let the event proceed anyway. FOC decided to monitor the event for possible legal action.

FOC intern, James Holt, got some great information before the event about the area. I went up during the event to see what was going on, and FOC board member and volunteer, Tabitha Brown and Garrett Clevenger, with their newborn son in tow, gathered information after the event.

James found a large group of motorcycles had gathered by Sunday, July 22 near the site of the motorcycle jamboree's camp. On Wednesday (the day the event was to begin and go through Saturday), I hiked the 541 trail from Red River into the Meadow Creek drainage. This trail is not formally closed to motor vehicles and there is extensive damage along it. I camped in the area and returned the next day.

On my hike out Thursday, I reached the junction of a trail (505) that was closed to motor vehicles. I had planned on returning via trail 504, but thought I would hike along 505 and go down 588 to see if I could tell about how many motorcycles had recently been on the only two trails that were formally closed to vehicles in the area. It appeared there was more than one. When I was nearly at the halfway point between the 504 and 588 trail junctions on 505, I heard motors. A motorcycle quickly poohed from my rear and passed rapidly by me (see photo). As I was approaching the junction with trail 588, I heard more motorbikes,



"No ORVs Allowed!" taken by Gary Macfarlane

though I didn't encounter them.

At this point, I only had one photo left. I really didn't expect to see anyone else. However, as I was descending the 588 trail, it was obvious there had been a lot of recent use along it. I heard another motor and saw a cyclist approach, coming the other direction. I motioned for him to stop and said this is a trail closed to motors. He just kept on going and I took a photo. In total, I spent perhaps 2 hours on the closed parts of the 505 and 588 trails. The fact I encountered 2 motorcycles is significant.

I immediately hiked out and went to the Forest Service Ranger Station. Since the ranger was not in, I called the supervisor, Jane Cottrell, in Granville and told her the event should be closed. I also told her it was curious that there were so many different motorcycle groups camped in upper Red River (near Meadow Creek). She later said it was more than coincidence that these groups were there at the same time.

The next day, I learned from the Forest Service that the agency went and discovered that more than 75 motorcycles had come to the event campsite, even though 75 was the limit. The promoters claimed that the additional cycles were not licensed or formally registered, so it was okay—something the Forest Service didn't agree

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with. Since the formal event was camped on private ground, they couldn't be told to leave, but the Forest Service did issue citations. The Forest Service also told me the event was shut down on the national forest because of problems, including duplicity in the numbers from the organizers. I also learned from a Forest Service law enforcement officer that he knew that the Forest Service required a special use permit for one of the past annual rides.

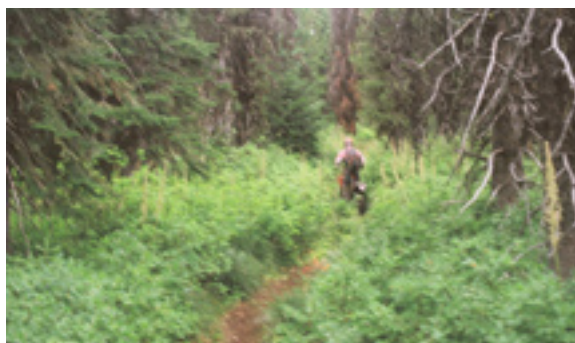
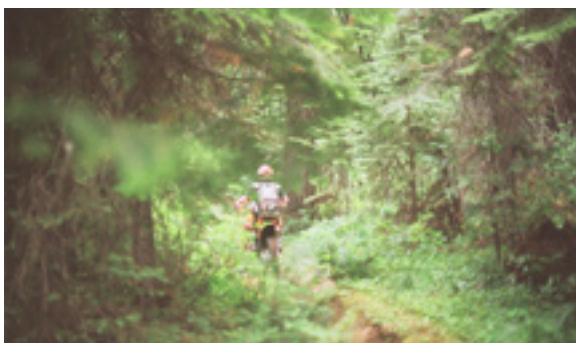
A special use permit should have been required. FOC wrote the Forest Service when we found out about the event, saying that a permit was needed. We learned there would be hundreds of riders as various promotional descriptions of the annual motorcycle jamboree had described.

Jane Cotrell said that users need to police themselves if they expect to use public lands. She was

disappointed that more than 75 motorcycles had apparently showed up at the formal camp. She is writing a letter to other national forests explaining the problem with the annual motorcycle ride.

Research from Colorado (an industry sponsored study) and Utah (Utah State University) suggests it is not a few bad apples when it comes to off-road vehicle use in areas that are not open to such use. Approximately 50% of riders in these studies admitted to riding off-trail (places where ORV use is either discouraged or illegal). The problem is not one of education, it is far deeper. It is past time the Forest Service closes roadless areas in the Clearwater basin to ORVs. This recent event may be the catalyst for the agency to take such long-needed action. Closing the event because of violations was a good first step. Thanks to James Holt, Tabitha Brown and Garrett Clevenger for helping out on monitoring this situation, which lead to a successful conclusion.

*Photos taken by Gary Macfarlane.
Top: Illegal dirtbikers
Bottom: Muddy results of illegal ORV riding*



FLOATING THE WILD SELWAY RIVER

Scott Phillips

Forest Service Retiree---Outdoor Recreation
Management

June 4 thru 8, 2007

Nez Perce and Bitterroot National Forests,
Northern Region

My older son Mike Phillips had the good fortune to obtain a highly sought after permit to float the Wild Selway River on the Nez Perce and Bitterroot National Forests. The Selway flows thru the heart of the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. Only one launch per day is allowed. Campsites are not assigned. No river fees. This magnificent wild river is truly a vestige of Primitive America. Following is a brief chronology of our float followed by some personal thoughts/observations.

The ten trip participants were:

1. Mike Phillips, Thompson Falls, MT resident. Permit Holder. Hunter, Rafter, Fisherman. Works for Blackfoot telephone company.
2. Chris Phillips, WYO resident. Hunter, Rafter, Fisherman. Works for Wyo Game and Fish Dept as an assistant hatchery superintendent. Degree in fisheries from Univ. of MT.
3. Scott Phillips, ID resident. Retired Forest Service employee---outdoor rec. mngr.
4. Professor Charles Pezeshki. WASH resident. Veteran kayaker. Environmental activist. Author of "Wild to the Last -Environmental Conflict in Clearwater country." Engineering professor at WSU.
5. George Grader, Moscow, ID Former professor of Geology at University of Idaho. Now a geology consultant.
6. Steve Jones, Real Estate broker, McCall, ID Former owner of Cascade Raft Co. on Payette river systems north of Boise. Extensive experience in white water safety---including river safety consultant during filming of The River Wild.
7. Allan Burroughs, CA resident. Private engineering consulting company. Life long Rafter. Extensive rafting experience including 7 private trips on the Grand Canyon.
8. Dave Blau, CA resident. Kayaker. Engineering consultant.

9. Doug Bostrom, MT resident. Retired businessman. Rafter.

10. Craig Kelly, MT resident. Rafter. Works for energy company in Missoula.

Sun. afternoon, June 3. Arrive at put-in at Paradise (What a perfect name!) after checking in for our permit at West Fork Ranger Station. Stopped to look at historic Ranger Station at Magruder. Weather good. Enjoyable afternoon rigging the rafts. With only one launch per day it is actually a pleasant experience to be able to rig your rafts at the put-in in an unhurried atmosphere. By contrast, the put-in at the Middle Fork of the Salmon with 7 launches per day is a real zoo.

Mon, June 4th. Ready to launch by 11AM. Weather good with sunshine. River level is 3.1 FT. Thank goodness we have a moderate flow. Chuck, with assist from Jonsey and Mike, gives a thorough safety talk and off we go. River moving along briskly--- about five miles an hour. Camp at Goat Creek river left mid-afternoon. Beautiful camp with large Cedar trees and Goat Creek rushing into the Selway Stayed here once before in 1998.

Tues. June 5th. Weather cloudy with rain threatening. We stop at the private Selway Lodge and have a visit with a friendly caretaker lady on the bridge. We scout Class Four Ham Rapid ---and wisely so. Everyone has a clean run. At lunch some folks are a bit cold and we put on an extra layer of polypro underneath Dri Suit Tops. Camp at Moose Creek on river right. Earlier we saw three catarafts with one raft driver each zip by. I encounter these 3 fellows on the Moose Cr. Bridge and have short conversation. They are traveling fast doing the river with only two camps. One fellow is a "local" from Darby, MT. They did the 27 mile stretch from Paradise to Moose Cr easily in one day.

Wed. June 6th. A lay-over day at Moose Creek. Weather still cloudy and cool. We hike two miles downstream and take a close look at the famous Double Drop Class IV rapid with its two big reversal waves. Rains lightly all afternoon and we hole up in our tents. Mike has his famous Dutch Oven baked Lasagna for dinner. All are impressed. Life is good! Rains lightly all night.

Thur. June 7th. Cloudy but rain has stopped. This is the "Moose Juice Day." Much anticipa-

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tion of the famous rapids below Moose Creek. River drops 50 FT per mile below Moose Creek. Moose Creek a huge drainage that almost doubles the volume of water in the river. Since I am only a raft passenger I gather up my photographic equipment in my day pack and am hiking down to Class IV Ladle rapid by 9:30 AM. Arrive at Ladle and have a pleasant hour to set up my tripod and 300 mm telephoto lens. Goal is to capture some action raft/kayak shots with my 300 mm lens on my Nikon. Put in a new roll of 36 color slide film. All set. I have a great vantage point on a promontory looking down at the rapid. I reflect on the fact that I actually kayaked the Selway twice in the 70's when much younger and somehow survived all these tough rapids. Took a big swim on my first kayak trip and it darned near finished me off! At 65 too old (but a bit wiser) for risking my life anymore!

Sure enough at noon sharp here come the kayaks and rafts. (3 rafts and 3 kayaks)

Everyone thoroughly scouts the rapid. Ladle is such a complex rock garden. The kayaks elect to run river right and easily dance down the stair steps. The rafts all run the left center. I am able to get a photo sequence of all the rafts and on the 2nd sequence

Shot, the house size Boulder fills the frame behind the rafts. Looks good thru the lens!*** Weather is lifting and the light is good.

I hike down and catch up with the rafts a mile and a half below Ladle. I learn that Mike and Chris FLIPPED their raft in Class III Puzzle Creek. They entered on the wrong side and hit a big wave which literally stopped the boat. Kayakers & other rafters assisted, the raft was quickly recovered and righted, and nothing was lost. Of course this flip provided fodder for the humor mill the rest of the day. These things happen and you must be prepared for a raft flip on the Selway! (or any river)

Superb camp at Tango Creek on river left. We stayed there back in 1998 when I floated the Selway with Chuck Pezeshki. Big cedar tree and huge sandbar. The camp is idyllic. Someone spots a young bear grazing across the river. Fine cocktail hour with appetizers for the final night. Chris and Doug do grilled steak with Idahoan mashed potatoes, brown gravy, and vegetable. Doesn't get better. The camaraderie of our tight-

*Friends of the Clearwater
wishes to thank the
following foundations for their
support this past quarter:*

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knit group of 10 guys has been special.

Friday, June 8th. Beautiful blue-sky morning with sun out. A few more class three rapids. Many are fishing from the rafts. We stop and carefully scout Class IV Wolf Creek. It also deserves much respect. More photography from a high perched vantage point on the trail. Everyone has clean run. The Selway is constantly moving with no flat stretches and at 3pm we are at the take out opposite Meadow Creek, a major tributary to the lower Selway and a critically important 200,000 acre NF Roadless Area. It is crucially important for cold/clear water; anadromous fisheries; wildlife habitat; and quiet recreation. (Chuck has a stand-alone chapter on Meadow Creek in his book)

What a superb Selway Wilderness Float experience. We have indeed been fortunate. Many, many years in early June with a bigger snowpack much higher water levels would transform the Selway into a white knuckle, on-the-edge, white water roller coaster. We enjoyed the more mellow conditions. The stars aligned and the good "kharma" and the River Gods were with us for this early season float. We were so lucky. This was my fourth trip down the Selway. If I never get another the memories are priceless. May the WILD Selway always be there for future generations. It is a national treasure.

*** When the roll of 36 was developed I was fortunate to get good exposures and stop action

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clarity. The 300 mm telephoto on the Nikon was the right tool. I loved the results!

Some Personal Observations on the Selway Wild River/Wilderness Experience juxtaposed with other rivers.

The Northern Region of the Forest Service has been able to preserve the Wild Selway as a true Wilderness River----- in harmony with the Wilderness Act and the Wild & Scenic River Act. This did not happen by accident. Visionaries like Bill Worf, Ed Bloedel, and Tom Kovalicky knew full well that enormous political and commercial pressures would be exerted to "open up" the river for more use and prudently and wisely held the line at one launch per day. Thus, the Selway in the 21st century is arguably an intact and true vestige of Primitive America. I have talked briefly with District Ranger David Campbell and the Selway Wilderness Managers are very cognizant of how important this is in the larger scheme of things.

We saw only three other catarafts on our float. On day one we saw half a dozen backpackers high up on the trail. On day five we saw a few day hikers/fisherman coming up from the bottom. We talked with two caretakers at the Selway Lodge. That was the sum total of human encounters in 48 river miles. On the Middle Fork of the Salmon River you encounter literally hundreds of other boats and hundreds of other floaters. Also the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness (FCRONRW) has a high volume of airplane traffic which was absent on the Selway. (I am sure Moose Creek gets significant air traffic late June thru mid October.)

I am in no way putting down the Middle Fork Salmon River experience---especially having been the lucky beneficiary of floating the Middle Fork about 18 times in my life. With one hundred named rapids in 103 miles, hot springs, wildlife, fine camps, and classic central Idaho scenery it is a superb outdoor experience. But a "wild" river or a "wilderness" experience it is not. A "rubber river" is perhaps an apt description.

Of necessity the MFSR is a highly managed/regulated social outdoor recreation experience. The Middle Fork Ranger District does a good job coping with up to 10,000 floaters per summer. You talk about the summer crunch of people

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management! 7 launches a day are allowed---four privates and 3 outfitters. By contrast there are only 62 total launches on the Selway in the May 15th thru July 31st lottery control period. I am only contrasting the striking difference in the mental quality of the experience.

A word about economics. We were told that a commercial outfitter on the Selway charges around \$2100 for a four or five day float. Our total expenses per individual exclusive of personal gas to drive to the put in were around \$150, including food and shuttle. (\$70 apiece). Do the math and draw your own conclusions.

A word about access to the river---any wild river in the US. We all know there is extreme demand and limited supply. It is simply a fact that if an individual desires instant access to the Middle Fork, Selway, Grand Canyon, Hells Canyon, the Yampa, the Rogue, etc. they have the option of simply writing a check to an outfitter. It's that simple. After all---in crass dollar terms---it's the age of money spent for speedy gratification gained. (I am certainly part of this overall problem because I opted for the outfitter solution in order to experience the Grand Canyon not wanting to wait 15 years for a private permit) The private river floating community ----i.e. the non-outfitted

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populace--- goes thru the highly competitive river lottery application process. It's a bit of an uneven playing field. Money speaks loudly in our society and the outfitting industry has tremendous (too much!) political clout. Nuff said.

A word concerning commercial outfitters. I am not "anti" outfitter because some folks simply don't have the requisite skills and experience or the river equipment or the free time to put together their own float. (On my two Grand Canyon trips - '91 & '96-- we opted for a non-motorized small and low key outfitter from Flagstaff who offered the "hikers special" promising to get you into position for maximum hiking opportunities. They delivered. I found it to be a quality experience with a very competent outfitter.) In '96 it was \$2900 for a 16 day Grand Canyon float and hiking combo trip which was reasonable. But I have always been upset with allowing too many outfitters on a wild river, whether it's the Grand Canyon or the Salmon. The Middle Fork and Main Salmon are classic examples of outfitter excess with approximately 30 outfitters permitted on each river. In my view, these kinds of huge outfitter special use permit numbers are absurd in the Wilderness/Wild River context. A dozen outfitters on the Middle Fork and Main Salmon each would be more than enough to properly serve the outfitted river floating public. The Grand Canyon (NPS) has been notorious for giving about 80% of the river floating "pie" to commercial outfitters. Individuals have waited in line 12 to 15 years to obtain a private permit. To my dismay--when the smoke clears in the real world----I have found myself on the losing end of this hypothetical argument for 30 years!

A word about the dreaded Fees. It was so mentally refreshing that the Selway River management program did not extract a river floating fee. The fees on the Middle Fork and Main at \$5 per person per day are upsetting. It isn't just the darned money. After all the hassle of obtaining a private permit (a reality of life in the 21st century) in the lottery system, to then be levied a heavy-handed fee to float your own Wild River floating thru Wilderness is just offensive. Fees are appropriate only for highly developed national forest sites with major capital investment/infrastructure such as developed Campgrounds or boat ramps with potable water, paved roads, toilets, etc. I am a fierce

opponent of fees for any Wilderness, Wild River, or general dispersed National Forest or BLM Recreation activity/experience. Fees are the thin edge of the wedge invariably leading to commercialization and privatization of our precious Public Lands. Anyone following the Forest Service FEE and RSFMP issues over the last several years can clearly see that the butt end of the wedge has now arrived and it is not a pretty picture. Congress must come to its senses and adequately fund Wild Rivers, Wilderness, Trails, and maintenance of recreation infrastructure on our precious Public Lands. Additionally, the Washington Office of the FS has clearly been siphoning off at the top of the bureaucracy high percentages of what recreation dollars are allocated for recreation management by Congress. This is an untenable situation that must be turned around.

In summary, the Selway Wild river is simply the gold standard. It is the top end of the "quality curve." Region 1 and the two involved forests deserve much credit for their historical actions. I strongly recommend that the Nez Perce and Bitterroot National Forests never, EVER, allow more than one launch per day such that future generations will inherit a WILD Selway. I appreciate being able to share these personal observations based on my own good fortune in floating many western rivers over the years.



*FOC Board President, Lynne Nelson,
on the Selway*

Western Perspective: for shifting fire policy to be successful, it must include a holistic view of wildfire

Will Boyd

Scott Russell, resource adviser for the Rattlesnake Fire and Nez Perce Forest fish biologist, met me at the Elk City Ranger Station late morning August 16. I had followed a Forest Service pickup with two pallets of fire wrap down the grade from smoky Grangeville, Idaho. The air was clear on the South Fork, safe from the wind blown smoke of the Poe Cabin fire, south of White Bird, and the short-lived Little Canyon fire which flared up and was contained by resourceful farmers.

I followed his dust through town, up and over the hill, and down the Red River Road. We drove through the heart of Bennett timber lands. Cut three to four years ago, these damaged lodgepole and subalpine fir forests contrasted starkly with the surrounding Forest land.

District Ranger Terry Nevius met us at Red River Ranger Station, the Incident Command Post for this fire. He was joined by IMT (Incident Management Team) Information Officer, Jennifer Costich, and Incident, Commander Bill Cowin.

Russell is the point man for this fire. On the Rattlesnake Fire since ignition, and familiar with this type of operation, he has been on the Forest for fifteen years. Jennifer and Bill were part of IMT number three. IMTs are replaced every two weeks to ensure that fresh and rested legs are always present, protecting both fire team personnel and ensuring that high quality work continue through an entire fire incident.

While waiting to leave for Dixie, I pored over several crisp new multilayer maps. The day's recently updated activity map for the "Snake", sparked July 13 in the grassy Salmon River breaks, showed continued movement north and west well into the Gospel Hump Wilderness and Jumbo Mining District, and also northeast along the Salmon River corridor within the Frank Church Wilderness.

Daily updated maps are the norm; many times appearing thanks to nightly aerial surveys utilizing infrared technology.

Thus far, the "Snake" had avoided private property. This was not a WFU (wildland fire unit with

a 'let burn' policy). Though well within two wilderness areas and the Wild & Scenic Salmon, fire officials considered this blaze important to suppress, though to date, well over one month later, containment is at 10%. Until recently it was nil.

This fire had been labeled a suppression fire (red) on the zone fire maps because of its proximity to Dixie, Idaho. This "town" lies in the heart of wild central Idaho; an outpost surrounded by vast lodgepole pine forests and inventoried roadless areas on all sides. Year round residents of Dixie number about twenty-five.

Flashback.

Wildland firefighting began on a scorching August day in 1886. Captain Moses Harris of the First Cavalry, recently appointed by General Philip Sheridan as the new superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, ordered his men to attack a wildfire near Mammoth Hot Springs. From that time on, fire has been battled at an incredible cost to human life (24 firefighters in 2006), ecological integrity (erosion & compaction of already thin & unstable soils, fragmentation of intact forest lands), and our pocketbooks (45% Forest Service budgets in 2006).

Flash forward.

Something different was happening here, however. Few fire lines had been dug. (At press time bulldozers had dug lines on Forest land near the Whitewater Ranch. Up until this time hand lines were the norm; dug on the north and south ends of Dixie, and several others at spot fires and in proximity to Orogrande, Concord, and Whitewater Ranch.) Instead of taking this fire head on, nearly always a lose-lose scenario, the Forest had put almost all of its efforts and resources into protection of private property.

The Rattlesnake Fire had cost \$12 million to date with a \$17 million dollar ceiling according to Nez Perce Forest Supervisor Jane Cottrell. According to her calculations this fire was costing \$127/acre compared to an average of \$138/acre for suppression fires on the Forest. The Bridge and Boundary fires, much smaller and to the north were being approached similarly. To date the Bridge Fire was costing about \$13/acre.

Compare this to the disastrous Slims Fire suppression action, which occurred in Meadow Creek

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Roadless Area in 2003. The fire, only 1700 acres and threatening a designated campground, was suppressed at a cost of \$22 million dollars in only a several day period. Meadow Creek, proposed in part for wilderness designation by the Nez Perce Forest, is a geologically unique area and one important for wildlife, rare resident and migratory fish, and significant stands of mid-elevation old growth. It lies adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness to the east, a place where fires have been allowed to burn for the past thirty years.

Cottrell was quick to acknowledge that a bulldozer line would not have been carved through Meadow Creek if tactics in use today had been used in 2003. "The biggest difference now," she said, "before we do full confinement, containment, and control, we assess values at risk and use indirect tactics. Instead of trying to run out and put a dozer line in, we think about what we can do to protect the values at risk."

Values at risk is one of many new guiding phrases that fall under Adaptive Management Response (AMR), a relatively new system of decision making used by the IMTs. With this more flexible approach, the Forest Service may finally have the opportunity to change some of the misconceptions surrounding fire and limit the damage caused by Smokey Bear and an aging fire policy designed by the U.S. Army. Says Cottrell of AMR, "Lots will say this system endangers communities or makes bigger fires. The prime example people need to see is the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, with thirty years of wild fire use."

What Cottrell refers to is somewhat unique to this pocket of the West. The Forests in this region have long had the most common sense fire policy in the nation. A higher percentage of fires have been allowed to burn in this part of Idaho and in parts of Western Montana than anywhere else in the nation, in large part because of the presence of large designated wilderness areas.

"Because wildfire has been allowed to return, the last ten years have been smaller fires," she continued. "I'll bet my reputation that any fire that starts in the lower Gospel Hump next year will not be this big."

Russell mirrors Cottrell's optimism. "This fire is the perfect marriage between resource protection and rehabilitation and property protection."

The decisions made by the IMTs on this fire

demonstrate a priority shift. In a world of limited resources, human health and safety and structure protection are more important than preventing a fire from "destroying the forest." In fact, much to the chagrin of the Forest Service, the Rattlesnake fire has already accomplished the objectives of the Crooked Cove Fuel Reduction project, burning nearly the entire project area, which was scheduled to occur in 2008.

According to Gary Macfarlane, Ecosystem Defense Director for Friends of the Clearwater, a public land advocacy group based in North-central Idaho, "The Forest Service still has a long way to go, both in bringing this fire-industrial complex under control financially, and in acknowledging the limitations of defensible space during a wildland fire event."

An often-sited paper written by Forest Service researcher Jack Cohen in 2001 reports that homes themselves can provide fuel for fire if they are made of flammable material or exposed to burning vegetation. Cohen says that "residential compatibility with wildland fire...can be more effective at preventing wildland-urban fire disasters than the current approach of emergency wildland-urban fire protection."

According to Cottrell, "Property owners are going to have to take more responsibility. Some communities aren't in fire protection districts. They are either going to have to pay or take on more responsibility."

One resident of Orogrande, northwest of Dixie, has already done just that. Roof-line sprinklers, a pump house that draws from the creek, and eighteen in-ground sprinklers stand between his property and future fires. Once the fire closes in enough to drive him from his fire hose, he need only flip the pump switch, drive away and hope for the best.

This is far from the norm, however. With no tax base, Dixie, Orogrande, and many other places will continue to rely on federally funded fire protection. Most Dixie residents have gratefully accepted the help. According to Cliff Ragdale, volunteer fire chief, "IMT folks have done remarkable work to protect homes. Top notch work." He feels like 90% of structures would survive a fire if it moved up Crooked Creek to the unincorporated town.

Last year's efforts ate up 47% of the Nez Perce

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Forest's budget. And with what appears to be a more aggressive shift in efforts to battle the "Snake", the \$17 million dollar ceiling set for the fire could soon expand.

According to Nevius, "its only going to get more expensive (to fight fires)." He expects fire fighting costs will to exceed 50% of the Forest's budget this year.

The model provided by the Rattlesnake, now topping 100,000 acres, isn't perfect. Costs associated with protecting private property will continue to escalate as more cabins and summer homes are built in fire dependent ecosystems. Discussion over who pays for what will continue until the first lightning strikes a ponderosa pine snag next summer.

According to Steven J. Pyne, a professor at Arizona State University and a former wildland firefighter who fought fires for 15 years on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, the ecology of wildfire must be part of these discussions. In his essay, "Thinking about the Biological Basis for Fire," Pyne makes the case for understanding fire as far more than a disturbance, much too integral to be seen and treated as an independent force to be combated.

Wildfire must be studied before, during, and after its return to a specific ridge line or draw. Fire ecologists and botanists must be allowed to enter the fire-industrial complex currently occupied primarily by firefighters and foresters. If we are to let wildfire continue to do its important work, which will eventually reduce future opportunity for catastrophic fire and accomplish many of the Forest's costly management objectives, we must understand it as primarily ecological.



*long time FOCers,
Kristin Ruether and Natalie Shapiro*



*FOC Ecosystem Defense Director:
Gary Macfarlane*

The Wolves Today

Sioux Westervelt

Wolves living in the wilds of Idaho have no idea how confusing the issues swirling around their survival are becoming. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is trying to decide whether or not they should still have endangered species status; Idaho and Montana are writing up plans on how they should be “managed” once they are no longer bound by the Endangered Species Act; Wyoming wants to shoot wolves on sight and still can’t get a management plan written that is acceptable to the USFWS; and now the Feds are trying to change a 2005 special rule (10J) to allow the killing of wolves if they are deemed to be killing too many elk, which no one seems to be able to scientifically prove. It looks like we could be in this wolf management quagmire for a good long while, because even when Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming all have management plans acceptable to the USFWS so endangered status is removed and states can take over, lawsuits from many factions could tie up state management for years to come.

Idaho Fish and Game is currently working on a “harvest” plan in preparation for the USFWS decision sometime in February on whether or not to remove endangered status from the wolves. Once endangered status is removed, wolves will probably be classified as big game animals and managed similarly to bear and cougar for purposes of hunting. There are still many unanswered questions surrounding what a hunting season on wolves will look like, however, the goal must be to maintain the federally mandated number of 20 viable packs (200 animals) or they will revert to endangered again.

While Idaho’s governor is anticipating killing wolves, Washington and Oregon are forging ahead with management plans, even though they have no viable populations. The progressive attitude of those states is enviable. They have set up well-balanced citizen management committees and are already talking about spending time and money to educate the public about wolves and their habits. There are certainly ranchers and hunters in those states who are apprehensive about wolves mov-

ing in, but if more preparation of that kind had been done before wolves were released in Idaho, we might have less animosity and fear than is so prevalent here.

About 700 wolves are believed to live in Idaho, but wildlife biologists have a difficult time counting those elusive creatures in wilderness areas, so it’s hard to say with any certainty how many wolves are really here. If suitable habitat with ample prey is vacated by one pack, another pack moves in. Wolf populations are determined by the prey supply in their territory and the size of the pack. Large packs of 8-10 wolves are more efficient at hunting than smaller packs that might have 4-5 members. Consequently, bigger packs have more pups because they are able to feed them, but they still generally have only one breeding alpha pair.

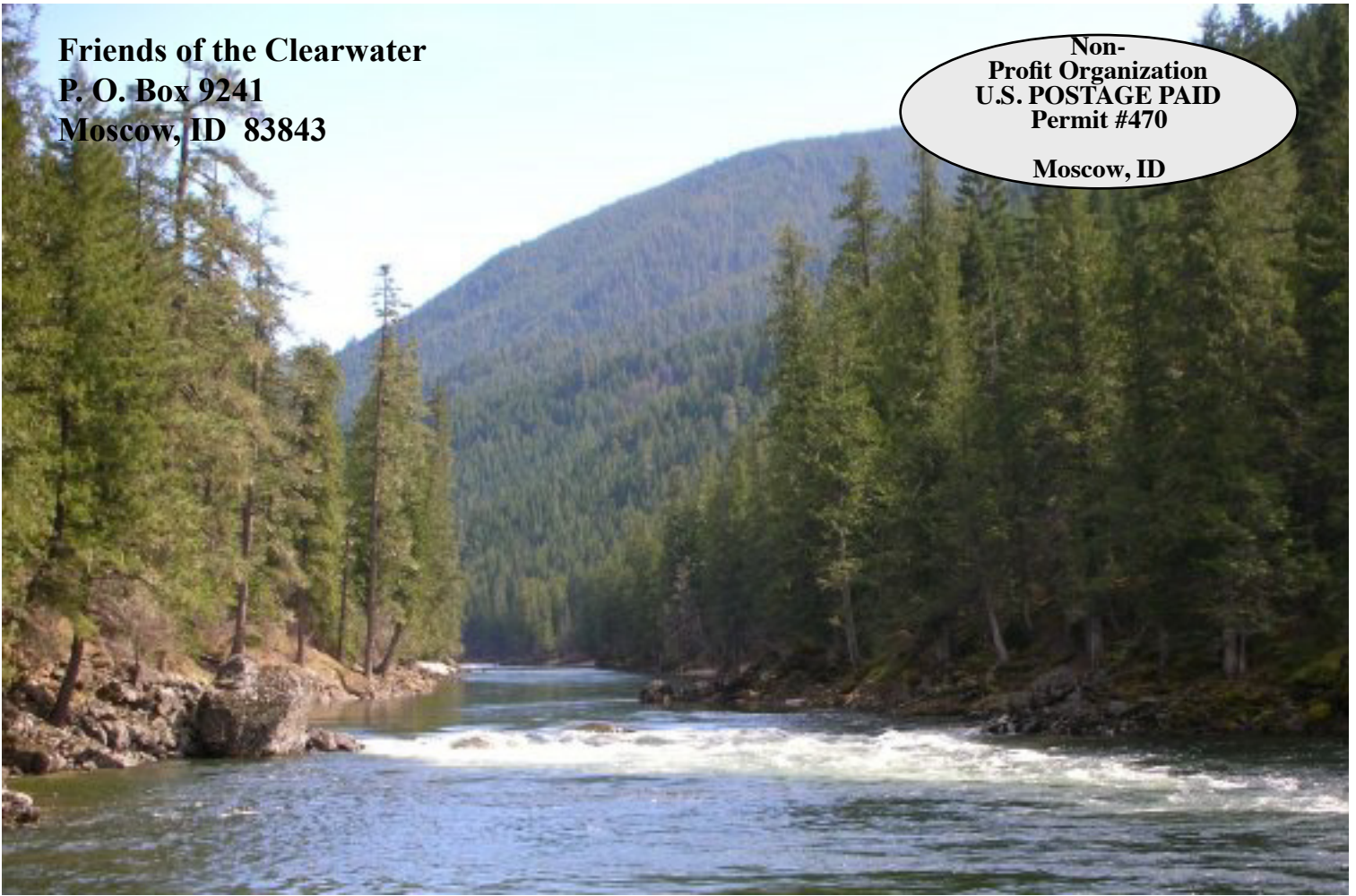
Wolves were annihilated in Idaho before I was born. Now that they’re back, we owe it to Idaho’s children to leave them a world that is ecologically intact, which includes large predators like wolves. Children live from their hearts and are wise beyond their years. As 7-year-old Fiona O’Murphy said in her letter to Governor Butch Otter, “Wolves are part of nature...I spend a lot of time in the woods by the creek, and I hope to hear or see a wolf some day...” Fiona’s 9-year-old sister, Olivia O’Murphy, said in her letter to the governor, “...The wolf is part of our heritage and deserves our respect. I don’t think it is right to kill the wolves if no one is going to eat them...I am not old enough to vote, but when I am, I will vote for people who are allies with Nature”.

My sincere thanks to Olivia and Fiona for letting me use their letters in this article.

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Selway-Bitterroot National Forest, photo taken by Maricelle Cardenas

FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Fall 2007

**October 10:
Decommissioned Road Wildlife Study (weekly trip all summer and into October)
10am-12pm**

Work with FOC and Wildlands CPR (Missoula, MT) to continue the monitoring of 4 sites on Feather Creek.

**October 12-14, Friday-Sunday:
Wild Rockies Rendezvous**

Have you always wanted to get to know the Wild Rockies but haven't had the chance? Join FOC at the Symes Hotel in Hot Springs, MT for good music, discussion, hiking, and more as the Rendezvous celebrates the people and places of the Wild Rockies!

To reserve a room, go to: <http://www.symeshotsprings.com/>