



CLEARWATER DEFENDER

NEWS OF THE BIG WILD

A PUBLICATION OF
FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

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Of wolves and wilderness **Guest Opinion** **George Nickas, Wilderness Watch**

*“One of the most insidious invasions of wilderness is via predator control.” – Aldo Leopold,
A Sand County Almanac*

Right before the holidays last December, an anonymous caller alerted Wilderness Watch that the Forest Service (FS) had approved the use of one of its cabins deep in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (FC-RONRW) as a base camp for an Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) hunter-trapper. The cabin would support the hired trapper’s effort to exterminate two entire wolf packs in the Wilderness. The wolves, known as the Golden Creek and Monumental Creek packs, were targeted at the behest of commercial outfitters and recreational hunters who think the wolves are eating too many of “their” elk.

Idaho’s antipathy toward wolves and Wilderness comes as no surprise to anyone who has worked to protect either in Idaho. But the Forest Service’s support and encouragement for the State’s deplorable actions were particularly disappointing. Mind you, these are the same Forest Service Region 4 officials who, only a year or two ago, approved IDFG’s request to land helicopters in this same Wilderness to capture and collar every wolf pack, using the justification that understanding the natural behavior of the wolf population was essential to protecting them and preserving the area’s wilderness character. Now, somehow, exterminating those same wolves is apparently also critical to preserving the area’s wilderness character. The only consistency here is the FS and IDFG have teamed up to do everything possible to destroy the Wilderness and wildlife they are required to protect.

Wilderness Watch, along with Defenders of Wildlife, Western Watersheds Project, Center for Biological Diversity, and Idaho wildlife advocate Dr. Ralph Maughan, filed suit in federal court against the Forest Service and IDFG to stop the wolf slaughter. Our suit alleges the FS failed to follow its own required procedures before authorizing IDFG’s hunter-trapper to use a FS cabin as a base for his wolf extermination efforts, and that the program violates the agency’s responsibility under the 1964



Middle Fork Salmon River
Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness

Rex Parker Photo Credit

Wilderness Act to preserve the area’s wilderness character, of which the wolves are an integral part. Trying to limit the number of wolves in Wilderness makes no more sense than limiting the number of ponderosa pine, huckleberry bushes, rocks, or rainfall. An untrammelled Wilderness will set its own balance.

The FS’s anemic defense is that it didn’t authorize the killing, therefore, there is no reviewable decision for the court to overturn, and that it was still discussing the program with IDFG (while the trapper was in the field killing the wolves). Unfortunately, the district judge sided with the FS and IDFG, so we filed an appeal with the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Rather than defend its action before the higher court, Idaho informed the court that it was pulling the trapper out of the Wilderness and would cease the program for this year. In the meantime, nine wolves are needlessly dead.

We will continue to pursue our challenge because the killing program will undoubtedly return. The Forest Service can’t and shouldn’t hide behind the old canard that “the states manage wildlife.” Congress has charged the FS with preserving the area’s wilderness character and

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FOC member Kelly Emo plays for wildness

FOC File Photo

Thank you everybody for a successful 2014 FOC Benefit Concert! We want to acknowledge **Levi Holt, Fiddlin' Big Al, Jason Perry, Pat McFarland, Garrett Clevenger, Joshua Yeidel, Matti Sand, John Fershee, Smokin' Mojo** and others for their music and time. We would also like to extend gratitude towards **The 1912 Center, Wine Company of Moscow, Pie Hole, Laurene Sorensen and Ruth & Jim May of the Reflections Inn** for their support and generosity. Extra thank you to **Kelly Emo** for being the main organizer.

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FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

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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 commodity extraction and 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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A wild year Brett Haverstick

On September 3, 2014 the Wilderness Act will celebrate its 50th Anniversary. What an incredible opportunity to reflect on the road that got us here, as well as the challenges we face today and tomorrow. We hope to have articles about Wilderness in every 2014 issue of *The Defender*. We also have some exciting community events planned, too, that we hope you can be part of!

FOC will be teaming up with the Palouse-Sierra Club for *Wilderness 50: The Big Wild Photography Exhibit* at the Moscow Food Co-Op. Members of the public are welcomed to showcase their favorite photos of the Selway-Bitterroot, Gospel-Hump, Hells Canyon and Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. The exhibit runs from September 12 - October 8, 2014. In the coming months, we will have more event details on our website.

FOC is working with Wilderness Watch and the Forest Service to organize *50 Years: A Celebration of Wilderness and our National Wilderness Preservation System* at the Wilderness Gateway Campground (Highway 12) on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. Circle your calendars for September 12-14, 2014 for this family-friendly weekend extravaganza with prominent speakers, a traditional skills workshop, live music by Dana Lyons, recreation opportunities and more. We will have more information about this don't-miss event in the next newsletter.

We also want to note that the Palouse-Great Old Broads for Wilderness are having *My Experiences in Wilderness* at the 3rd Street Gallery (Moscow City Hall) from mid-October thru November.

We are proud to announce that internationally acclaimed artist Monte Dolack is creating a fine art poster commemorating the 50th Anniversary. The theme of the poster is *Celebrating Wilderness*. Along with receiving a number of prestigious awards throughout his career, Mr. Dolack's work is part of the Library of Congress and other museums and foundations. To learn more about him and his work go to www.dolack.com. FOC is selling copies of his original poster for \$25 plus shipping and orders can be placed via our website www.friendsoftheclearwater.org.

The *50th Anniversary National Wilderness Conference* will be taking place in Albuquerque, NM from October 15-19. FOC staff hopes to join Wilderness Watch staff and attend the conference.

Go to www.wilderness50th.org to learn more about the history of the Wilderness Act, the National Wilderness Preservation System and the vast amount of events and activities taking place around the country. Go wild!

This spring we will be unveiling our new "pop-up banner" for community outreach events. We are grateful for the work of local artist **Julene Ewert**, who helped us with graphic design. We also want to thank **Amy Trujillo** of Palouse Land Trust for allowing us to borrow their banner to gain design ideas. And of course, we want to acknowledge **Chuck Pezeshki** for continuing to allow us to use his fantastic photography. The main photo in the banner is Hansen Meadows of the Kelly Creek Roadless Area.



Hansen Meadows
Chuck Pezeshki Photo Credit

We would like to thank the **Moscow Food Co-Op** for recently nominating us as recipient for their *Dime in Time* program. FOC received \$529.49 in donations. We used the money to purchase our new outreach banner. We also want to acknowledge the **Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse** for allowing us to participate in their 2013 holiday event. We received \$753.16 through the program.

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the Supreme Court has held many times that the agency has the authority to interject itself in wildlife management programs to preserve the people's interest in these lands. Turning a blind-eye is a shameful response for an agency that used to claim the leadership mantle in wilderness stewardship.

Wilderness Watch expresses its deep appreciation to Tim Preso and his colleagues at Earthjustice for waging a stellar legal battle on our behalf and in defense of these wilderness wolves.

Editor's Note: George Nickas is the Executive Director of Wilderness Watch. Learn more about the group.
www.wildernesswatch.org



1964 WILDERNESS ACT 2014
 CELEBRATING AMERICA'S WILDERNESS LEGACY

Editor's Note: Above is the 50th Anniversary Wilderness poster by Monte Dolack.
 You can purchase one for \$25 plus shipping at
www.friendsoftheclearwater.org

We want to welcome **Caitlin McHugh** as our Wilderness 50 Intern! Caitlin joins us from Western Washington University, where she recently completed a M.Ed Environmental Education. She will be developing children's activities/curriculum for our Wilderness Gateway Celebration September 12-14. Learn more on page 3.

Jim Fetter Illustrations, Port Angeles, Washington
 Printed here with cartoonist's permission

MEGALOAD TAR SANDS BOONDOGGLE



We are excited to announce that Dr. Fred Rabe has completed *Sights and Stories of the Mallard Larkins Roadless Area in the Clearwater and Panhandle National Forests* report. A long time member and dear friend, this marks the 7th Roadless Area booklet that Fred has completed on behalf of FOC and Wild Clearwater Country. And if you know Fred, he has already moved on to the next project: a report on the North Fork Clearwater drainage. Fred is a true conservation champion and we greatly appreciate all his work!



Congratulations to John Crock and Laurene Sorensen on their wedding. Many know John as the owner of Hyperspod Sports; both are longtime FOC supporters. FOC was proud to be asked to help sponsor the wedding reception in Moscow's 1912 Center.
 Mike Beiser photo

**Megaloads and wild-scenic-
rivers don't mix**
Guest Opinion
Linwood Laughy, Fighting Goliath

Megaloads transporting mining equipment to Canada don't belong on a narrow, scenic road that winds through my part of Idaho.

Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in "Writers on the Range," a service of *High Country News*.

Just west of the Nez Perce Reservation border near Lewiston, Idaho, a 644,000-pound heavy-haul transporter carrying tar sands mining equipment rounded a curve at 1:00 a.m. on August 6th, only to find a human blockade waiting.

Police in a dozen squad cars flipped on flashing lights as over 200 Nez Perce Indians and dozens of their allies swarmed onto Highway 12. Their goal: halting the giant load to protest its transport across the reservation. Over the next hour, the sounds of chanting, drumming and singing echoed from the walls of the canyon.

Then the arrests began, including eight members of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee. Another tense hour passed before the mega-transport crept forward toward the Clearwater-Lochsa Wild and Scenic River corridor and the Montana border at Lolo Pass. But the protesters had spoken, and within hours varied media would carry their voices across North America.

My wife, Borg Hendrickson, and I were among that group; for three years, we've been trying to block the effort of international corporations to industrialize U.S. 12 in Idaho. The companies say they must travel this remote route to send gargantuan mining equipment to northern Alberta's tar sands. We say the corridor is a national treasure, a magnet for tourists and not a safe route for these monster loads.

For 100 miles, Highway 12 hugs the banks of two of America's original Wild and Scenic Rivers. It is the nationally designated Northwest Passage Scenic Byway and one of only 30 All-American Roads. But corporate giants such as ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, General Electric and others, encouraged by Idaho's governor and helped at every turn by the Idaho Transportation Department, saw Highway 12 as theirs to take — from its neighbors, its thousands of annual visitors and from America.

Grassroots opposition has steadily grown, however, and during the last three years, state and federal courts have taken the side of the scenic byway. So far, an ExxonMobil subsidiary has transported only one of 207 proposed megaloads over Highway 12 and seven miles

into Montana, where it sat for 13 months before being scrapped. The company has since reported being \$2 billion over budget on its Kearl tar sands project, largely because of difficulties getting its equipment through Idaho and Montana.

Last October, a General Electric subsidiary abandoned its Highway 12 megaload plans after a federal judge ordered the U.S. Forest Service to protect the Lochsa-Clearwater Wild and Scenic River Corridor and temporarily close Highway 12 to megaloads. The Nez Perce Tribe, conservation groups and thousands of individual citizens are continuing their effort to make this closure permanent.

Eight miles downstream from the Nez Perce's highway blockade last August, the Port of Lewiston lies on the Clearwater River's north bank near its confluence with the Snake. The port isn't that busy: between 2000-2011, the total tonnage it shipped decreased by 61 percent, including declines in every commodity — grains, lumber, and paper from a nearby mill.

Megaloads were to be the port's salvation. "If one oil company is successful, many more will follow," the Lewiston Port proclaimed in its application for federal economic recovery funds to extend a container dock that today ships less than 30 percent of its previous cargo. So far, however, plans for the port to bail out declining lower Snake River barging have foundered.

Which brings us to salmon. Most scientists believe that federal dams may have tipped the scale from recovery to extinction of Snake River salmon. "Someone needs to speak for the animals," a Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee member told reporters shortly before the tribe's megaload blockade.

Our fight to preserve the Clearwater-Lochsa corridor we have long called home has led my wife and me through agency offices and courtrooms to the tar sands of northern Alberta, to the decline of commercial navigation on the lower Snake, and now, to the endangered salmon and steelhead trout that swim, in dwindling numbers, past our front door.

Along the way, we've been joined by thousands of fellow citizens who share a love of wild rivers and wild fish. We are all concerned about the growth of corporate power and the consequent bullying of people and disregard for natural places. Like returning salmon, we swim upstream, but our numbers are growing, and our voices persist.

Linwood Laughy is a contributor to "Writers on the Range," a service of *High Country News* (hcn.org). He and his wife founded FightingGoliath.org, a network of individuals and organizations working to keep Highway 12 from being converted to a heavy haul route for giant industrial equipment.

Around the Clearwater

Gary Macfarlane

Timber Sales

There is some good news. The Forest Service dropped the Lower Orogrande Timber Sale (for the second time) due to a letter Friends of the Clearwater and Alliance for the Wild Rockies sent as a 60-day notice to sue under the Endangered Species Act. The Forest Service is now doing more analysis on lynx, water quality, soils stability and fish habitat. The proposed sale would have allowed “treatment” in streamside protection buffers and in areas with landslide risks.

Now for the bad news: the late Leroy Lee, a timber cruiser and Clearwater defender, caught the Forest Service in a lie over 20 years ago. The agency was trying to justify more logging by incorrectly reporting what was actually on the ground. This issue was raised all the way to the halls of Congress. Recently, the Forest Service has proposed massive sales for Clear Creek, Lolo Creek, the south face of the wild and scenic Middle Fork (in roadless country), and Hungry Ridge. And that is just the beginning. Water quality, fish habitat and wildlife habitat will suffer if all of these sales go forth as planned. We will keep you updated.

State of Disaster

The state government (if one can use that term for the gang that runs the state) has been up to no good, as per usual. We will touch on two topics. The first is the all-out slaughter on wolves, including the aerial gunning in the Lochsa and the new wolf-killing fund. The state recently killed 23-wolves in the Lochsa (Lolo zone). While we understand no wolves were aerially gunned in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, we are following up to make sure. Rogue agencies like the euphemistically named USDA’s Wildlife Services and Idaho Department of Fish and Game can’t be trusted to follow our nation’s laws. FOC is working with allies to explore avenues to counter these two horrific policies.

The second issue is that the legislature actually tabled a bill that would overturn the policy that makes suction dredge miners comply with water quality standards. The bill was unconstitutional, as it would have overridden federal law and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) jurisdiction. It would seem some legislators believe suction dredge miners should have free reign to pollute our rivers and streams. It is likely this foolish bill will resurface in the next year or so, in some form.



Lolo Zone: Wild, Rugged Country or Elk Farm?

Chuck Pezeshki Photo Credit

Adios National Forests: The Farm Bill’s Bitter Harvest

The Farm Bill, which passed earlier this year, contained some awful provisions for national forests and public lands. This is yet another example of the problems of these “must pass” massive omnibus-type bills, which contain many provisions in them. A process which sneaks in unrelated provisions like this is bad for democracy and is further evidence of a broken political system.

Essentially, the bad provisions in the Farm Bill follow a recent trend, which replaces a democratic and scientific process, open to all Americans, with back room deal making under the ruse of collaboration. Some of the main problems in the Farm Bill are detailed below.

1- The bill essentially declared any timber sale on national forests or other public land under 3,000 acres (with a few side boards) would be exempt from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), ostensibly to combat insects and disease. In other words, most logging would be categorically excluded from documentation in either an environmental impacts statement, known as an EIS, or even a more cursory environmental assessment, known as an EA. There would be a short public comment period before a proposal is fully developed and that is it. There would be no analysis of alternatives such as reducing clearcuts in favor of selective cutting, proposing a smaller timber sale that avoids critical habitat, or conducting a sale that is more economical and wastes fewer tax dollars. (NOTE: almost every, if not every timber sale in the Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests are below cost sales. In other words, citizens get a raw deal and pay for it.) This is a return to the cut and run practices of the 1950s and 60s.

2- There is no chance for citizens to even object to the project. Even the pre-decisional objection process, which replaced the more balanced appeals process, is not available.

3- The Forest Service must set up such timber sale areas, at the request of the governor of the state, within 60 days.

4- The Forest Service could turn over on-the-ground timber management to state governments under so-called good neighbor agreements. This could include tasks such as marking trees in timber sales. The National Forest Management Act, 1976 prohibited those who would benefit from timber sales to mark the trees for cutting. This provision in the farm bill repeals that part of the law and creates a potential conflict of interest.

While it remains to be seen how extensive this potential logging could be--it excludes Wilderness and might exclude most roadless areas among its sideboards--this could be the first step in undoing one hundred years of conservation law. If the legal sideboards prove to be minimal, and it will take a few court cases for that to be determined, it could return national forests to the cut and run days before Teddy Roosevelt, before national forests were national forests.

Indeed, a 3,000-acre timber sale (consisting of numerous clearcuts) would normally yield about 30-million board feet of logs in the Clearwater, Idaho Panhandle and Nez Perce National Forests. Timber sales of that size--and they are few--routinely go through analysis in an EIS because of the major impacts they have.

Years ago, some of us in the conservation community warned other conservationists that so-called collaboration (back-room, deal making) was replacing the open and scientific process under the National Environmental Policy Act. This is sad proof of our warnings and the devolution of federal public lands to local special interests.

Whether through naiveté, perceived political expedience or funding sources, many large conservation groups have been complicit in turning back the clock on conservation. Regarding the Farm Bill, the Wilderness Society noted, "The Wilderness Society is committed to seeing these provisions effectively implemented on the ground and being part of the solution in advancing comprehensive forest restoration projects." It is sad to see the Wilderness Society conflate logging with restoration. These are bitter fruits indeed.



Farm Bill promotes lawless logging

FOC File Photo



The loss of friends and family

Gary Macfarlane

Warren Miller

Twenty years ago, while caretaking the University of Idaho's Taylor Ranch inholding in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, I came across a crosscut saw manual written by Warren Miller. The policy at that time, which I hope is still intact, was to use nonmotorized means within the inholding, even though it was not officially part of the Wilderness. I didn't know Warren at the time, but knew of him.

Warren loved the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. I knew Warren as a tall but quiet guy who lived lightly on the land. He worked for years as a wilderness ranger in the Selway. I only recently learned that he was born in Salt Lake City and graduated from Reed College.

No doubt his stewardship, along with others like Dick Walker and Sarah Walker, led to the reputation of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness being the example of proper administration. He maintained his friendship with past wilderness rangers.

Our condolences go to his longtime partner Sandy Lilligren, her daughter Sarah and all other family and acquaintances. His wisdom and wilderness ethic will be missed.

The passing of a dear friend Barry Rosenberg

The forests, grizzly bears, streams, fish and the city of Sandpoint lost one of their most tenacious and dedicated defenders, when Elizabeth “Liz” Sedler passed away on February 6, 2014 at her home in Samuels, Idaho. She was 71. Her frequent, strong laughter, her occasional persnickety and outspoken ways, and her unjustified sense of modesty will be missed. She was a unique and gifted individual. I felt fortunate to be counted as one of her friends.

In 1988 I got a call from a friend of hers who asked me if I would meet with Liz Sedler. It seems that Liz wanted to get involved in protecting the environment but did not know where to begin. I said I would be happy to meet and work with her.

We spent a lot of time together hiking proposed and ongoing Forest Service timber sales, meeting with regulatory and administrative agencies and conservationists, going to meetings, digging through Forest Service files, writing administrative appeals and when necessary, contributing to the filing of lawsuits against proposed and illegal Forest Service timber sales.

She spent many years as a volunteer with Alliance for the Wild Rockies. Liz was a board member of AWR and also served as its president. She was on the board of the Inland Empire Public Lands Council during the 1990’s, and served on the board of the Idaho Sporting Congress. Liz also did contract work for several environmental groups.

Liz became one of the most effective environmental activists of the northern Rockies and an expert in the regulations pertaining to fish, water quality and especially, the grizzly bear. She held regulatory and administrative agencies feet to the fire making sure they were fulfilling their mission to protect the bear. She also wrote legal arguments for appeals and litigation for the maintenance and enlargement of habitat necessary to insure its viability. It is acknowledged that Liz was one of the individuals most responsible for protecting grizzly bear habitat and populations in the northern Rockies.

Liz also worked closely with the late Leroy Lee on the phantom forest scandal. Lee discovered and publicized the fact that the Kootenai National Forest exaggerated its forest inventory by stating that many areas were fully stocked with mature trees when in reality they were clearcuts. **(Ed. Note: the late Leroy Lee did the same for the Clearwater National Forest.)**

Being an extremely private person, Liz rarely talked about herself but I managed to gather a little in-

formation about her life. She was a graduate student who taught Italian at the University of California at Berkeley before she moved to Big Sur where she met and married Shamus Sedler. They had two sons together, Moses and Jesse. From Big Sur they moved to Lopez Island and then to Yaak, Montana in 1967 where they established a home-
stead.

Always a hard worker in all her undertakings, she worked relentlessly on environmental issues from the day I met her until her recent illness left her unable to continue her work.

Brian Peck, a noted grizzly conservationist, had this to say about Liz:

More than 70 years ago, Aldo Leopold said:

“Like Winds and Sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until ‘Progress’ started to do away with them. Now we face the question of whether a still higher standard of living is worth its cost in things Natural, Wild, and Free.”

Though small in stature, Liz was a Giant when it came to defending all things natural, wild, and free-especially the grizzlies of the Cabinet-Yaak & Selkirk. They have lost a champion, and we have lost a friend. There are no words, and there is no replacement.

Growlingly,
Brian

Editors note: Liz Sedler was the 2012 recipient of FOC’s annual Plank Award. She will be sorely missed.

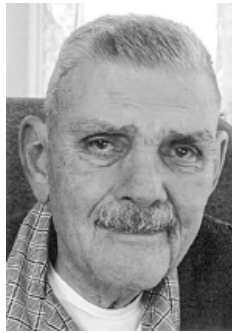


Grizzly bears lost a true friend with the passing of Liz Sedler
USFWS Photo Credit

lost friends cont. from page 7

John Cooper

Joan and John Cooper contacted FOC several years ago about protecting bears on their Moscow Mountain property. It was through this experience that I got to know them. Over the years, I would see them around town, always friendly, always helping.



Born in Maine, John dedicated his life to public service. He graduated from West Point and later was an English professor at the Institution. A lover of learning, he attended and received graduate degrees from Columbia University, St Lawrence University, and the University of Idaho. After he retired from the US Army, he became a faculty member of English at the University of Idaho where he eventually directed the International Student Programs until his retirement.

He was committed to humanitarian and egalitarian goals. He taught his children the importance of social responsibility and the environment, including the other life on the planet. A lover of literature, he was particularly fond of a passage from *The Tempest*, which was included in his obituary in the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*. Our condolences go to his family, his wife Joan and their children.

Mark Becker

Nearly twenty years ago in Moscow, I had the great fortune to meet a remarkable man. At the time, the Cove-Mallard campaign was raging, a wild chunk of country that should have been part of the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. The Forest Service had approved timber sales in this wild roadless country.



Durig that time, I learned that Mark had been recently active in defending forests in Oregon. By active, I mean that he was involved in direct action. This mild-mannered man, so different than the younger set involved in direct action, was full of surprises.

He was a committed Quaker and valued the principles of peace, justice and nonviolence. In 1956, he moved to Portland, OR. where he found his love of the old-growth forests and his wife, Jennifer Kay Chapin, a Reed College student. Mark enjoyed reading, hiking in the wilderness, engaging in conversations about politics, and being involved in the community. I enjoyed many conversations with him.

Over the years, I got to know Mark further, along his wife Jennifer and son Joe. They were and are fixtures in the Moscow community. Mark was a great friend of the Clearwater and a strong supporter of the organization. He also helped organize environmental organizations in

Jay Macfarlane

The first time I experienced real wild country was on a backpack trip with my father in the 1960s. Utah's Uinta Mountains were then a primitive area—the only one in Utah at the time. Since then, the Uintas have been designated Wilderness, the largest Wilderness in Utah. My father loved wild country, especially the mountains and perhaps even more so, the desert canyon country of his home state.



He was quite a guy, more comfortable driving the tractor in the orchard than spending time repairing it. I remember spending a whole day finding parts and then fixing the starter on the old tractor. The three reasons to be a

schoolteacher, June, July and August, meant he (and I) got to run his parents' farm.

He got his Master's degree and his Bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University. He spent his working career as an educator, most of it with students with special needs. If it were not for his hay fever, I am certain he would have been a farmer, even though he didn't like to fix tractors. Nobody could lean on a shovel with such authenticity while irrigating.

My father was an intellect and a bit of a rebel, the latter trait he passed on to me. He loved Wilderness and was a strong financial supporter of FOC and organizations protecting Utah's wildlands. I miss him. *Fois do t'anam.*

Mountain bikes and wilderness don't mix

Guest Opinion

Howie Wolke

My first wolverine sighting in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem happened on a sunny July 2012 afternoon. On a pass above northwest Wyoming's West DuNoir Creek, the elusive animal scaled a rock face about 100 yards from where I was sitting beneath a scraggly spruce, and then ambled away.

Under prehistoric conditions, wolverine populations were thinly spread across big landscapes; in 21st century America, wolverines veer toward the endangered species list. Wolverines need wilderness, which is one reason that for four decades conservationists have promoted wilderness designation for the DuNoir Special Management Unit of the Shoshone National Forest. Under existing laws and regulations, the DuNoir is to be managed to maintain the wilderness option, with no mechanized vehicles allowed.

The roadless DuNoir landscape is contiguous with the designated Teton and Washakie Wilderness areas, and it is stunning: its wooded basins and sprawling tundra provide rich wildlife habitats for many species native to Greater Yellowstone. Unfortunately, it also appeals to a growing cadre of mountain bikers who regularly violate the restrictions; and they are vocal advocates for their sport. The Shoshone National Forest plans a bike route through the heart of the area and is on record opposing wilderness designation for the DuNoir and other Shoshone Forest roadless areas.

When Congress passed the 1964 Wilderness Act, our foremost land protection law, its authors had the foresight to forbid "mechanized," not just "motorized" travel in wilderness. Under this carefully worded law, wilderness areas must remain "untrammelled" and their "wilderness character" maintained. Designated wilderness is primeval nature, a landscape of human restraint, where natural conditions and self-sufficiency prevail. Sure, there are other land-protection options such as national monuments or recreation areas, but none equals wilderness for protecting a vestige of America as it was for eons before the spread of civilization.

When mechanized mountain bikers demand access to proposed and designated wilderness, they fail to understand that if allowed, owners of unimagined future contraptions will certainly demand equal treatment. So will modern-day snow machine and all-terrain vehicle owners. This is important, a claim that I do not make lightly. In nearly every situation where conservationists have agreed to alter proposed wilderness boundaries to



Wilderness champion Howie Wolke

Howie Wolke Photo Credit

allow mountain bike access, concessions have also been made for other kinds of off-road vehicles plus additional non-wilderness activities, too. In most situations it is not realistic to expect alternative designations to function essentially as wilderness with the exception of just allowing mountain bikes. To loosen wildland restrictions starts us down a very steep slippery slope, indeed.

In addition, mountain bikers are not traditional users, such as hikers or horse-packers. These machines didn't even exist until the early 1980s. Furthermore, the argument that bikes create less resource damage than horses is true in some cases, but false in others. Yes, some packstock operators abuse their privilege and that needs to be ameliorated. In fact, all human uses create some impact, but that does not mean that every new use or machine or gadget that's invented should be allowed in wild country on public lands. Human impacts are cumulative. Haven't we de-wilded our landscapes enough? By allowing mountain bikes to proliferate in roadless areas, the Forest Service nourishes yet another anti-wilderness constituency. A cynic might suggest that's no accident.

Backcountry biking damages the land. Even the most careful bikers veer off trail just to keep from crashing. Last year, I sent the District Ranger photos of mountain-bike damage to vegetation at Kissinger Lakes in the DuNoir, but the problem persists. Because mountain bikers ride fast, they startle wildlife more than hikers or horse-riders. They also make formerly remote areas more accessible, thereby reducing solitude and increasing the disturbance of wilderness-dependent species such as lynx and wolverines. Like trail runners with ear pods, mountain bikers inadvertently "troll for grizzlies," as demonstrated by the 2004 mauling of a DuNoir mountain biker. Speeding mountain bikers also endanger horse-packers and hikers on steep trails. Let's face it: mountain bikers don't wear all that protective gear because they're always in control.

Generally speaking, the place for mountain bikes is on roads, not in relatively pristine backcountry. Let me be clear. I assume that some mountain bikers really care about wilderness. But in too many instances, organized mountain bike groups and individual bikers are working to exclude their favorite riding areas from proposed wilderness, thus compromising the size and integrity of the protected landscape. The DuNoir is an example. So is the Gallatin Range, another world-class Greater Yellowstone proposed wilderness that's right in my backyard. And again, when we exclude areas from potential wilderness for biking, we usually end up having to exclude additional areas for snow-machines and other mechanized contraptions, too. Conservation biologists tell us that in order to maintain wild ecosystems with native predators and functioning landscape processes, wilderness areas should be big with minimal non-wilderness enclaves or "cherry stem" exclusions. Unfortunately, big and unfragmented is usually not what you get when you accommodate non-wilderness uses into a wilderness designation plan.

As much as I would like mountain bikers and wilderness proponents to work proactively together for the common good, that's a tough nut to crack so long as many mountain bikers work to exclude riding areas from wilderness designation. When there is collaboration, that's usually the focus: chopping out chunks from the proposed wilderness. Thus, the implication is that their sport is more important than long-term land protection. It pains me to say this, but there is an element of selfishness at play here.

At this point in our history, I believe that public land management should be about preserving wildness and doing what's best for the land and wildlife. Recreation can adapt. Though some—certainly not all—mountain bikers apparently view our public lands as outdoor gymnasiums, that is not their function. Nor is a wild place a metaphorical pie to be divvied up among "user groups" or local "stakeholders," to use a bit of bureaucratese. The authors of the Wilderness Act would be appalled at the Forest Service's eagerness to mollify every recreation group that decides its form of recreation trumps all else. It is a shame that the Forest Service, many politicians and some recreationists are so wrongheaded, stuck in a self-indulgent and myopic worldview regarding the DuNoir and so many other endangered wildlands.

As a backpack trip outfitter, I've guided throughout the West from northern Alaska to Mexico, including the DuNoir, since the mid-1970's. When these lycra-clad speedsters zip past our groups, ripping up vegetation and spooking critters, it diminishes our clients' hard-earned wilderness experience.

But that's not why the DuNoir—and most other qualifying wildlands—should be designated wilderness. It's because wilderness designation is best for the land. Wilderness is about humility, the acceptance that we humans don't know it all and never will. More than any other landscape, wilderness takes us beyond "self"; in it we are part of something so much greater. I think that's a very good thing. Wilderness is timeless, transcending short-term concerns. Above all, wilderness is about the intrinsic value of wild nature. As the human (over) population mushrooms into nearly every conceivable nook on this beleaguered planet, the wilderness idea represents a flicker of hope that wild nature can survive in at least some places. Let's not unnecessarily sacrifice even an acre of that remaining hope. If it's still wild, we need the discipline and restraint to back off and simply let it be.

Howie Wolke is a wilderness guide/outfitter for backpack and canoe trips and he has been a public lands wilderness advocate in the West since the mid-1970's. He has authored two books and many articles on the vanishing American wilderness, and is a former president and current vice-president of Wilderness Watch. He lives in the foothills of the Gallatin Range, just north of Yellowstone in southern Montana.

MIKE GARRITY
ALLIANCE FOR THE WILD ROCKIES
GRASSROOTS ACTIVIST OF THE YEAR

We want to congratulate Mike Garrity and the Alliance for the Wild Rockies (AWR) for being recognized by *Counterpunch* as the 2013 Grassroots Activist of the Year, for his tireless work and expertise in protecting wild country throughout the northern Rockies and Utah. As Executive Director of AWR, Mike does a fantastic job of holding federal agencies accountable by working to ensure that agency decisions abide the law(s), utilize the best-available science and incorporate public opinion. Over the past decade, The Alliance has an 85% success rate in appeals and litigation. This of course, reflects poorly on the federal agencies and decision makers that continue to do industry's bidding, while disregarding our public lands laws. We salute Mike for all of his dedication and hard-earned accomplishments and are proud to call him a friend and professional ally.

KEEP, KEEPIN' IT WILD

Happy 50th Anniversary
Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness
FOC File Photo



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