



# CLEARWATER DEFENDER

## NEWS OF THE BIG WILD

A PUBLICATION OF  
FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

ISSUED QUARTERLY  
SPRING 2015, NO.1

### **Lower Snake River Dams** **“Time to breach!”** **Guest Opinion** **Borg Hendrickson**

In 2002, arguing against breaching the Lower Snake River’s four dams, the Walla Walla District of the Corps of Engineers made a number of claims. Now, with 15 years of data and information to test the accuracy of those claims, we find most turn out to have been false. The Corps claimed:

1) It could “fix” the dams for passage of juvenile threatened salmon and steelhead, and therefore, breaching was not needed to meet federal law.

Now after taxpayers have spent over \$700 million on “fixing” the LSR dams and McNary Dam, the 2000-2012 average smolt survival for wild Chinook salmon was just 52%, for wild steelhead just 45%. Most of the highest years coincide with increased spill mandated by Federal District Judge Redden, and in late 2013, NOAA fisheries service said: “Chinook survival through the hydropower system has remained relatively stable since 1999 with the exception of lower estimates in 2001 and 2004.” That essentially means \$700 million improved nothing with respect to smolt survival.

2) The lower Snake waterway would see steadily increasing volumes of freight, including more paper, pulp, logs, petroleum, grain, and other farm commodities.

Today, statistics show that over the past twenty years total freight transported on the lower Snake has declined 69%. All industries other than agriculture have all but abandoned the waterway. Container-on-barge traffic, in particular, has declined 82%. In fact, according to Corps classification, today’s lower Snake waterway is “of negligible use.”

3) Loss of hydropower would be a major cost of breaching, and wind energy is inconsequential.

Although nameplate generating capacity of the lower Snake dams is 3,033 megawatts, during 2000-2012, average power output per year was just 961 megawatts. Further, Pacific

**See breaching page 4**

### **Clearwater National Forest** **Travel Plan Victory!** **Keeping wildlands free from motors** **Gary Macfarlane**



FOC File Photo

There is great news to report. Idaho Federal District Judge Edward Lodge just ruled in our favor on the legal challenge brought forth by Palouse Group-Sierra Club, Alliance for the Wild Rockies, and Friends of the Clearwater regarding the Clearwater National Forest Travel Plan. We wanted to ensure that wildlife habitat and roadless wildlands would be protected. We succeeded in large measure.

Our attorney David Bahr, said, “We are pleased that the judge agreed with us that the travel plan does not use the best available science to protect elk and does not minimize motorized use impacts as the law requires.”

Judge Lodge ruled the Forest Service failed to adequately protect the best summer elk habitat, based upon the latest science. Areas that contain the most important elk habitat, which the Forest Plan commits to protect at 100%, are also the larger roadless areas like Weitas (particularly the Cayuse Creek drainage) and Fish and Hungry Creeks. In essence, trails and areas that are to be managed for 100% summer elk habitat effectiveness need to be closed to motor vehicles. This may amount to 250,000 acres of summer habitat protected from motors.

The judge also ruled in our favor on presidential executive orders for off-road vehicles. These orders date back to the time of Presidents Nixon and Carter. They require federal agencies to minimize the impact from off-road vehicles. The Forest Service did not adequately show how they had minimized impacts from off-road vehicles.

**See ruling page 6**

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**FOC Board member Sam Finch says thanks!**

**FOC File Photo**

FOC was fortunate to participate in the 2014 *Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse (AGMP)* this past December. Thanks to generous community support, we were able to raise over \$1,000 to assist with various wildland programs! Established in 2009, the mission of the AGMP is to give residents of the Palouse a meaningful alternative to holiday gift giving and an opportunity to support local nonprofits. They strive to enhance community well-being and sustainability through celebrating personal charity and community partnerships. **Learn more at [agmpalouse.org](http://agmpalouse.org).**

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## FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

THE CLEARWATER DEFENDER  
 IS A PUBLICATION OF:

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

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

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

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## Spring is in the air Brett Haverstick

So much for winter. With that said, here comes a busy stretch of spring outreach in the greater-Moscow community.

- On **Wednesday April 1**, FOC is giving a guest lecture to the University of Idaho's *Parks & Protected Area Management* class. We will present information on the role non-profits play in working to protect biodiversity and ecosystems.
- On **Thursday April 2**, FOC is participating in the Kootenai Environmental Alliance's long-standing *Lunch & Learn* program. We will give a presentation on USDA Wildlife Services and their wildlife-killing program in Idaho.
- On **Monday April 6**, the Palouse-Great Old Broads for Wilderness and FOC are co-sponsoring, *An Evening with George Wuerthner: Why Wilderness and parks are the best core mechanisms for protecting biodiversity and ecosystems*. See the back of this newsletter for details.
- On **Saturday April 18**, FOC will have an outreach booth at the *19th Annual Moscow Hemp Festival*. You could say, we've always been green!
- On **Wednesday April 22**, (Earth Day) FOC will have an outreach booth on the University of Idaho and Washington State University campuses.
- On **Saturday & Sunday May 2/3**, the Palouse-Sierra Club and FOC will have a yummy crepes booth in the food vendor section of the *42nd Annual Moscow Renaissance Fair*. The menu includes smoked salmon crepes with a cucumber dill spread and huckleberry crepes with fresh whipped cream.

By the time this newsletter goes to print, we will already have co-sponsored an event with the University of Idaho Ecology & Conservation Biology Club and the Palouse Environmental Sustainability Coalition titled, *Lower Snake River Dam Breaching: Embracing the Inevitable*. FOC and allies will continue to work on this important issue and look for future outreach opportunities to engage the public. In order for change to occur, we must continue to analyze the vast costs of maintaining the status quo, and move towards a river system that allows salmon to be salmon, while saving tax-payers bundles of money.

Yellow Dog Flats recently played the *2015 FOC Benefit Concert*. We want to give a sincere thank you to Gary and Annalie Reed, Henry C. Willard and Tom Carroll for graciously donating their time and talent! You can listen to their music at [reverbnation.com/yellowdogflats](http://reverbnation.com/yellowdogflats).

Another big part of the evening centered on Mr. Pierce and 6th grade students from the Palouse Prairie School of Expeditionary Learning, who presented conclusions from their months-long case study on old-growth forests and forest management. The students did an excellent job preparing powerpoint slides and speaking passionately about the need to give 100% protection to remaining old-growth stands!



Thank you Yellow Dog Flats for great music  
FOC File Photo



Thank you Palouse Prairie School for presenting  
FOC File Photo



Thank you Palouse-Sierra Club for the outing  
Learn more on page 9

FOC File Photo

**breaching con't from page 1**

Northwest wind energy now has a capacity of 8,976 megawatts.

4) The LSR dams' 24 turbines could be rehabilitated twice during the 100-year LSR dams project for \$380 million.

During the next fifteen years, all 24 turbines will reach the upper limit of their Corps-identified lifespans of 35-45 years. Three turbines at Ice Harbor dam are already being rehabbed at a contract price of \$97 million. Thus one 24-turbine rehab, in today's dollars, would cost about \$776 million, two rehabs over \$1.5 billion.

Additionally, while the Corps did calculate "passive use values," they ignored them in the 2002 report's economic analysis. Passive use values are those "values individuals place on natural resources independent of direct use of a resource by the individual." For example, people value knowing a resource is available for use by family and friends and will remain available for future generations, and people value protecting a natural resource for its own sake. The 2002 calculated passive value of angling (were the dams breached) ranged from \$22.77 million to \$48.79 million on an annualized basis. Passive use value for a free-flowing river, aside from angling, was \$420.13 million. Yet, that value, the Corps ignored.

Today, the 2013 "Federal Principles and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies" require inclusion of passive values. Their inclusion would eliminate any claim that the economic benefits of keeping the lower Snake dams exceed their economic cost. In other words, passive use values would trump all possible benefits of keeping the LSR dams.

Currently, the Corps' 2002 claims, such as those above, are being disputed by now-retired, 35-year veteran Corps engineer Jim Waddell of Port Angeles, Washington. Using actual costs over the past fifteen years and, as Waddell puts it, "correcting errors, omissions and false assumptions" in the Corps' 2002 study, Waddell recently completed a comprehensive cost reanalysis of the study. He's found that in its 2002 study, the Corps understated the cost of keeping the dams by a stunning \$160.7 million per year on an average annual basis over the 100-year LSR dam project. Internal Corps' documents clearly show the Walla Walla District knew of many of the problems in its 6-year, \$30 million study, but decided not to correct them for reasons of cost and expediency. Waddell's reanalysis is profoundly revelatory and may open eyes at all levels to the true costs and potential waste of money keeping the four dams would

bring – and to the long-term savings and benefits of breaching.



**Saving Money, Saving Salmon**  
Borg Hendrickson Photo Credit



Enter the *2015 FOC Raffle* and win artwork by Maria Maggi or a commuter bicycle courtesy of the Palouse Bicycle Collective. Tickets are \$1. Send an email to [foc@friendsoftheclearwater.org](mailto:foc@friendsoftheclearwater.org) and tell us how many tickets you would like and we can enter you into the raffle. Then you can mail us a check for the number of tickets you would like. The drawing will be this summer!



**FOC File Photos**

## More than just a timber sale

Guest Opinion  
Bonnie Schonefeld

After forty years of hiking in the Clear Creek Roadless Area, the word that always pops to mind when I think of this special place in my backyard is, “birds”. Our spring-time hikes in this pocket wilderness are always full of exceptional birding experiences. The thick brush and convergent environments provide excellent habitat for our feathered friends, providing safe cover from sharp-eyed hawks. The songs of the warblers fill the air and we often see five warbler species (Yellow, Orange Crowned, Nashville, Townsend’s and MacGillivray’s) on a morning hike. From the soar of an Eagle to our smallest Calliope Hummingbird, the birds abound.

The Redtail nest lies in the fork of a Ponderosa pine above Clear Creek. The Ponderosa is older than I. It survived the fires that raged over these ridges in the 1930’s. It has endured so generations of Redtails could live on, protected by its branches. We’ve been watching the hawks raise their young in this nest for many years.

The precipice trail above the creek offers a birds-eye view of the Redtail home, and every season we make repeated hikes to observe the adults and watch the downy chicks grow. We’ve watched their courtship ritual, locking talons in mid-air and spinning wildly toward the ground. We’ve watched the pair of Redtails defend their territory against an intruding Golden Eagle, dive bombing and chasing the eagle as it lumbered up the steep-sided creek until its heavy body finally caught a thermal and soared over the ridge. As hard as we try, we have never been able to sneak up on the nest site. The screech of a sharp-eyed Redtail always catches us first.

The Goshawk lives here, too. One such hawk exploded from the ground as we rounded a bend in the trail. My curiosity aroused as I looked to see what had riveted the Goshawk’s attention. We had interrupted breakfast—a neatly skinned Ruffed Grouse.

Even in the cold of winter, birds abound here. Flocks of Gold-Crowned Kinglets, Chickadees, Juncos and Nuthatches entertain our walks. Winter Wrens pop in and out of the dense brush.

Unfortunately, none of our feathered friends has read the lengthy *Clear Creek Integrated Restoration Project FEIS*. They don’t yet know that the heart of their homeland is about to be ripped and burned out from under them.



Songs of the warbler fill the Clear Creek drainage  
Bonnie Schonefeld Photo Credit

## The Big Hoax by Ashley Lipscomb FOC Board Vice-President

Not long ago, the combined timber harvest on the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests exceeded 250-million board feet. Due to this destructive practice, values like watershed integrity, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and aesthetics greatly suffered (don’t forget all your hard-earned tax-payer subsidies). Fortunately, the Forest Service and timber industry were reined in by public scrutiny and logging levels were reduced. In 2013, the combined timber program on both these forests was approximately 40-million board feet.

Recently, new Forest Supervisor Cheryl Probert chose the largest alternative for the Clear Creek Integrated Restoration Project. Clear Creek is located about 5-air miles southeast of Kooskia. Dubbed the “big one”, this timber sale would turn back the clock and produce 85-million board feet over the next few years from a single watershed. It’s important to point out, that this watershed does not currently meet water quality standards under the existing forest plan. Also keep in mind, the Forest Service is trying to weaken, not strengthen, water quality standards in their existing forest revision efforts. It all makes sense now.

The *Clear Creek Integrated Restoration Project* is the pet-project of the timber industry driven Clearwater Basin Collaborative. Just as the collaborative process is dubbed as “democratic”, the giant timber sale(s) produced by the group are classified as “restoration”. The common denominator is that they are The Big Hoax. The majority of Americans don’t want to see the glory days of destructive logging return to places like the Clearwater Basin.

**Editor’s Note: The above letter to the editor appeared in the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* on Monday February 23, 2015.**

ruling con't from page 1

The ruling was not perfect, however. It concluded that the Forest Service need not close all recommended wilderness (including areas that are to be managed as recommended wilderness under a 1993 forest plan settlement agreement) to all motorized or mechanized vehicle use. This, despite the fact that the Forest Service Regional Office in Missoula, which covers Northern Idaho and Montana, has suggested the agency do close recommended wilderness to all motorized and mechanized use. However, since the Clearwater National Forest Plan allocates recommended wilderness as 100% summer elk habitat, it seems these areas must be closed to motor vehicles during the summer season. Nevertheless, those areas might be open to mountain bikes or snowmobiles during the winter.

In the interim, the current travel plan will stay in place until the Forest Service conducts its reanalysis. The Forest Service now has to go back and rework the Clearwater National Forest Travel Plan in order to comply with the ruling. We don't yet know how the agency will proceed or what timeline they may have, but we will keep you updated.

At the very least, in order to comply with Judge Lodge's ruling, we expect trails and routes in areas that are allocated to 100% elk habitat effectiveness to be closed to motor vehicles during the summer. For example, that should translate to 250,000-acres in the Weitas Creek and Fish and Hungry Creek roadless areas, as well as additional lands in the Mallard-Larkins roadless area. In order to minimize conflict, as per the executive orders, other areas may need to be closed to vehicle use. That could involve summer off-road vehicle use in important wildlife habitat in Pot Mountain and the western part of Weitas Creek, as well as winter snowmobile use in other roadless areas.

We want to thank our attorneys, Dave Bahr, and local counsel, Dana Johnson, for this amazing win. Thanks also to Fund for Wild Nature and Patagonia for providing funding specifically for the court case.

### **Some Bad News: Little Slate**

In contrast to the decision on the Clearwater National Forest Travel Plan, we have lost our appeal to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals regarding the massive Little Slate Timber sale. Unfortunately, the court ruled that the agency need not comply with its forest plan on a site-specific level. This has been the trend lately across the Northern Rockies and the Pacific Northwest in court challenges where the Forest Service has failed to show it is complying with individual forest plans. Unfortunately, this makes it very difficult to hold the Forest Service accountable for its decisions.

### **Two Other Massive Timber Sales Close to Approval**

The Forest Service recently released draft decisions on two large sales—lower Orogrande and Clear Creek. Objections are like comments since they occur before the Forest Service makes a final decision.

Orogrande Creek flows into the North Fork Clearwater a few miles below where the much larger Weitas Creek enters the North Fork. Past logging and road building have seriously damaged Orogrande Creek. Alliance for the Wild Rockies and FOC filed an objection to the lower Orogrande Project earlier this year. The Regional Office in Missoula issued a letter after the objection meeting that gave instructions to the Forest Service at the local level. We are awaiting a final decision from the agency on that project. The Regional Office did direct the local office to do certain things, but it is doubtful the agency will make any changes to the timber sale.

Alliance for the Wild Rockies and FOC, along with citizens, are also preparing an objection to the Clear Creek Project. This has been dubbed the “Big One,” a huge timber sale that is the combined size of the infamous Cove/Mallard timber sales on the Nez Perce National Forest of a couple decades ago. This is a “collaborative sale” that presents many serious problems for water quality, wildlife habitat, and vegetation. There is also a serious concern over the cozy relationship between the collaborators and the Forest Service. Some collaborators may benefit financially from this timber sale.

### **Forest Plan and the New Supervisor**

Friends of the Clearwater staff and members of the board recently met with the new Forest Supervisor for the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests, Cheryl Probert. Ms. Probert listened to our concerns and we had a good dialogue. It remains to be seen whether the agency under her leadership will be more transparent and show greater concern for the broader public interest, as opposed to local, special interests.

We are following the forest plan revision effort very closely. The Forest Service has a target date of a draft for public review at the end of this year, potentially the first of November. However, there are a couple of other public involvement opportunities that may present themselves earlier in the year. The agency intends to release some rough draft alternatives and a draft idea for monitoring at some point. This is a crucial process, so stay tuned!



**Dredging on the lower Snake River is being challenged**

FOC File Photo

As reported in the last newsletter, FOC has joined with several organizations, including the Nez Perce Tribe, in challenging a multi-year plan to dredge the Snake and Clearwater Rivers near their confluence. While the court allowed dredging to occur this winter, the case is proceeding on its merits. We expect a final decision to be issued later this year. This is, yet, another expensive project in an effort to keep the lower four Snake River dams in operation and the Port of Lewiston a seaport, despite unnecessary costs to the American taxpayer, and the fact that better alternatives exist for transportation and power generation.

Speaking of the Port of Lewiston (POL), several local citizens have sent a letter to the office of Idaho's Attorney General questioning whether the Port, a public entity, is following Idaho's Open meeting laws. It appears that the POL might have been using closed executive sessions in the past to conduct normal business that should be done in open meetings. The letter noted:

- In the 2-year period between 2013-2014, POL Commissioners met for a total of 5,163 minutes. Of those minutes, 2,391 or 46% of the total, were spent in executive session.
- During 2013-2014, the Commissioners entered executive sessions 45 times. Publicly, the Commissioners took no formal action at the conclusion of any of them. Yet, later-publicized actions or activities of the Commissioners and/or the POL's manager and staff, have led us to conclude that, indeed, decisions had to have been made during at least a portion of those executive sessions.
- As reason for nearly all of the above-mentioned 45 executive sessions, the Commissioners noted Idaho Code 67-2345 "1(e)," that is, "to consider preliminary negotiations involving matters of trade or commerce in which the governing body is in competition with governing bodies in other states or nations." Yet, in the 2013 and 2014 minutes, we find no record of any Port of Lewiston Commission decision or contract related to trade or commerce that may have resulted from such "preliminary negotiations" consid-

ered during those 45 executive sessions.

It has been well documented that shipments from the POL's own dock have been declining greatly over the years. It is very questionable whether continuing subsidies to fund this dock serves the public interest.

### Legislation

With the current Congress the way it is, we can expect more assaults on public lands and national forests. Last year saw the Farm Bill allow exemptions from normal environmental analysis for timber sales up to 3000-acres in size. Already, there is a bill in the Senate, sponsored by Alaska's Senator Murkowski, operating under the rubric of "sportsman heritage" that would open up Wildernesses across the country to commercial filming, which is prohibited by the Wilderness Act's ban on most commercial enterprises. The House has a much different version of its so-called sportsman's bill, which would essentially repeal the Wilderness Act. While the House Bill won't likely make it to the President's desk, the Senate Bill is a real possibility. Like last year, expect to see legislation introduced that either mandates increases in logging or facilitates it on national forests and other public lands, regardless of the ecological harm it may cause. This legislation could be national or regional in scope.

Among other inanities, the Idaho State Legislature is toying with passing a bill (House Bill 51) that would override Federal Law to allow unfettered suction dredge mining in Idaho's rivers and streams. Such a move is unconstitutional, but passing illegal provisions, which are later struck down, is nothing new for Idaho's legislature. Another bill, (House Bill 265) that aims to create a compact with other states in the West to steal public land owned by all Americans has also been introduced. Even though the legislature's interim committee suggested a different route, it appears this bill is going through the Ways and Means Committee. The last time states banded together for such a nefarious purposes, they called themselves the Confederate States. We all know how that turned out.

### CLEARWATER COUNTRY REPORT

[friendsoftheclearwater.org/big-wild-bi-weekly](http://friendsoftheclearwater.org/big-wild-bi-weekly)

Sign up today to receive 1x month e-newsletters containing important information about issues and events!

## The passing of Brian Gill

### Antone Holmquist

Brian Gill's passion was music. He shared his music for a decade on the Palouse, including at FOC fundraisers. In 2013, Brian returned to his native Illinois to support an ailing friend and folk musician, Art Thieme. Brian was diagnosed with advanced lymphoma last September and died on January 31st. He was 65.

An athlete as a youth, Brian survived a tornado and the collapse of a roller rink roof during a practice session with his National Champion Roller Skating partner in 1967. A couple of years later, Pete Seeger's TV show, *Rainbow Quest*, inspired Brian to pursue music. He moved to Chicago where he learned from great folk musicians such as Art Thieme and Steve Goodman. Louis Armstrong was a strong influence, as well. Brian taught himself to play guitar, banjo, and fiddle and was making his living playing in Chicago and on the road until he developed a serious hand problem in his twenties. No longer able to play stringed instruments, he learned trumpet from Chicago great, George Bean. Eventually, he was able to resume playing guitar and stepped back into his Folk career. His album, "Idaho Peace of Mind" is a fine testament to his talent as a song writer and a cut, "Cadillac Nashville Bound", based on a drive from Las Vegas to Nashville in a '55 Coupe De Ville, really rocks.

Brian founded the Palouse School of Folk Music, patterned on Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music. He loved teaching and had a way with young musicians. Brian sang duets with Emily Poor, Katrina Mikiah, 7-year old Madison Perkins, and others. He played the *Rendezvous in the Park* and was M.C. of many events during his decade in Moscow.

In 2013, Brian traveled to upstate New York to meet Pete Seeger. Pete was very tired, but eagerly reviewed and applauded Brian's Art Thieme songbook and played Brian's banjo during their meeting.

A few years ago, with his bad hand increasingly sore, Brian dusted off the trumpet and weakly played jazz and gospel at a local Moscow bistro with the late, great pianist, Lynn Wright. I treasure those nights and the sing-alongs. To quote Brian's song about his good friend Steve Goodman, "A Good friend is dead and gone, but his song ain't over yet."

**Editor's Note: Brian Gill graciously played at the 2013 FOC Benefit Concert. He will be sorely missed by many and we offer our condolences to his family and friends.**



Brian and Madison in Moscow July 2011

Antone Holmquist Photo Credit

## The passing of Sue Hovey

Clearwater Country lost a friend with the recent passing of FOC member Sue Hovey. A lover of the Selway and Lochsa Rivers, she will be sorely missed by many. We offer our condolences to her family and friends.

**We have approximately (15) official 50th Anniversary Wilderness Act posters left! If you would like this gorgeous Monte Dolack design for your home or office, contact us. Close-out sale: \$10 each plus \$5 shipping. Place your order at [friendsoftheclearwater.org](http://friendsoftheclearwater.org)**



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## **Lolo Pass winter adventure**

### **Guest Opinion**

#### **Al Poplawsky, Palouse Group-Sierra Club**

The strengthening late winter sun shone brightly over the partially forested landscape of Lolo Pass, as outing participants gathered Saturday morning just before noon to listen to trip leaders describe the afternoon plans. The landscape at the pass is excellent habitat for the wolverine, which was the conservation subject of the outing. A few participants had braved the dark, curvy, and rock-littered road the night before, enabling a leisurely Saturday morning breakfast at Lochsa Lodge. Most had risen, however, early in the Palouse morning darkness in order to make the 3.5-hour drive and participate in the outing.

Despite the abnormally low snowpack, conditions were not bad – essentially a 3-4-foot thick base of thawed, refrozen snow, with 2-3 inches of fresh stuff on top. The group split into two groups, with six folks gliding away on skis, and nine preferring the security and versatility of snowshoes. Under these conditions, one could either ski or snowshoe off-trail with ease.

The ski group ended up doing the big loop of about nine miles, which is primarily flat, with a few gentle hills here and there. Scenery was very pleasant, with open meadows interspersed with glades of trees and larger hills in the background. An advancing cold front caused the temperature to drop during the afternoon, and skiers ended up bundled in more clothing than they started in. The ski group included two teenage boys who traveled well over twice the distance of the other skiers.

Snowshoers started by traversing the meadows along the creek before climbing a ridge for some great views. Views included nearby mountains, as well as the hotly contested Upper Lochsa checkerboard lands. Both groups ended up back at the parking lot at about 3:30 pm, with plenty of time for a nap or hot spring soak before dinner at the lodge.

Dinner at the lodge was an extravaganza, with all thirty-plus participants seated at the same length of tables in the lodge library, and large portions of fantastic food served – such, that even the teenage boys had their appetites well sated.

Trip participants viewed the lodge's large display of stuffed animals and animal skins with mostly mixed feelings. It was particularly ironic that the presentation on wolverines took place in a room where there happened to be a wolverine skin hanging over the entrance! However, Gary Macfarlane's fascinating presentation attracted not only outing participants, but also a few of the lodge staff, with at least a few snowmobilers standing in the nearby shadows

to learn a thing or two. Who knew that a major wolverine winter food source happens to be the carcasses of hapless mountain goats dug from avalanches! The Clearwater is at the core of critical wolverine habitat in the lower 48, and this is, yet, another reason why we need wilderness protection for Clearwater roadless wildlands.

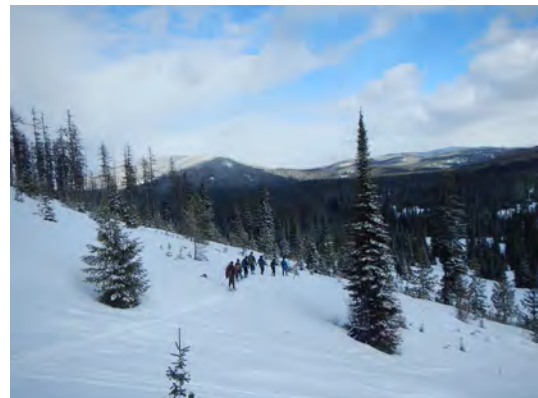
Everyone agreed that we should consider making this winter outing an annual event so keep your eyes open next January or February.



**Good times at the Lochsa Lodge**



**Geared up and ready to explore Lolo Pass**



**Spending time in wolverine habitat**  
All photos FOC Credit

## Wilderness Watch blocks Arizona wilderness helicopter invasion

### Guest Opinion Kevin Proescholdt

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On January 29th, the Forest Service's Southwest Regional Forester favorably responded to objections by Wilderness Watch and others to halt – at least for now – a massive helicopter invasion of Wildernesses in Arizona for an intense manipulation of bighorn sheep. In December, Wilderness Watch and allies filed a formal objection with the Forest Service over this plan.

The plan, proposed by the Arizona Department of Game and Fish (AZGF), would last 10 years and involve hundreds and hundreds of helicopter flights and 450 helicopter landings in five designated Wildernesses on the Tonto National Forest. This project is related to a separate ten-year proposal, with 200 more helicopter landings, to monitor and possibly place more bighorns into the Pusch Ridge Wilderness on the Coronado National Forest. The state agency would use the helicopters to capture, collar, translocate, monitor and otherwise “manage” bighorn sheep.

The helicopters would also likely be used to eliminate predators like mountain lions. Though AZGF's documents don't directly mention predator control, they do admit that, “In some instances, predator body samples will be taken for analysis and research investigation,” a strong indication that AZGF plans to kill predators. Already, the AZGF has contracted with hound hunters to kill mountain lions in the Pusch Ridge Wilderness. Ironically, the use of hounds also stresses bighorn sheep.

The proposal is wrong for Wilderness in many ways. First, it would authorize a massive, long-term invasion of designated Wildernesses by helicopter landings. Second, the proposed project would harass, capture, and domesticate a population of bighorn sheep that is currently fairly wild. Next, the project would involve killing predators in designated Wilderness. And finally, the project would have the Forest Service abdicate its requirements to protect wilderness character under the federal Wilderness Act to a state game agency that is not required to protect that wilderness character. While Wilderness Watch doesn't oppose all proposed bighorn translocation and reintroduction projects, this project certainly cries out for strong opposition.

The Wildernesses at risk include the Four Peaks, Hellsgate, Mazatzal, Salt River Canyon, and Superstition Wildernesses on the Tonto National Forest, from which most of the bighorn sheep would be snatched, and the Pusch Ridge Wilderness on the Coronado National Forest that would be the recipient of the purloined bighorns.

Bighorns in the Santa Catalina Mountains, where the Pusch Ridge Wilderness is located, disappeared in the late 1990s, and reintroduction has occurred since that time. That disappearance, however, begs the question of why and whether that cause or causes (such as changing habitat or other conditions) have made the Santa Catalina Mountains unsuitable to support a viable population of bighorn sheep now. This is just one of scores of questions that were not addressed or analyzed in either the Tonto National Forest or Pusch Ridge EAs, but should be thoroughly analyzed in a much more complete environmental impact statement (EIS).

The project is also unfortunately typical of three recent disturbing trends in Wilderness:

- **The project typifies the over-reliance by the federal wilderness-administering agencies on motorized access in Wilderness, especially access by helicopters.** Most of the federal agencies justify motorized access inside Wilderness as the “minimum tool” for a wide range of projects. This reliance, coupled with a growing institutional loss of traditional skills in the federal agencies (knowing how to use packstock, for example, or use crosscut saws instead of chainsaws, or travel and live for several days in the backcountry rather than fly in and out in a day) means the wilderness-administering agencies increasingly turn to helicopters for projects inside Wilderness that can and should be done without motors.

- **The project illustrates the willingness of the federal agencies to abdicate their responsibilities under the Wilderness Act to state agencies on issues of wildlife.** State game agencies often erroneously contend, and the federal agencies all too often unquestioningly agree, that the state agencies can do whatever they want for wildlife management in federal Wildernesses and by whatever means they wish. While the Wilderness Act allows the states to manage wildlife in Wilderness, the law does not in fact provide the broad authority for which many states might wish.

- **The proposal is yet another example of bighorn sheep projects that are incompatible with Wilderness.** Bighorn sheep are a popular species with many hunters, and state game agencies are usually quite eager to gain the revenue from selling more hunting licenses for bighorns. Other current problematic bighorn sheep projects have been proposed in Zion National Park and the High Uintas Wilderness, both areas in Utah. The construction of permanent 14,000-gallon water containment structures (“guzzlers”) in the Kofa Wilderness in Arizona (which Wilderness Watch blocked in the federal courts) was purportedly to artificially boost bighorn sheep populations there. Additional bighorn “management” proposals exist elsewhere as well.



**The tranquil Superstition Wilderness of Arizona**

**Stephen Peel Photo Credit**

The Forest Service issued a short Environmental Assessment (EA) and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for this project. It is to this document that Wilderness Watch and our allies filed the formal objection. Regional Forester Calvin Joyner agreed with us that the analysis was inadequate and instructed the Tonto National Forest to conduct the additional analyses that we requested. Joyner wrote, “Based on my review, I find that the analysis presented in the EA and supporting documentation does not adequately address Forest Service responsibilities under the Wilderness Act and other guidance that requires coordination with States related to wildlife and fish management in wilderness.”

Joining with Wilderness Watch in the formal objection are Friends of Wild Animals (FOWA), Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter, WildEarth Guardians, and Supporting and Promoting Ethics for the Animal Kingdom (SPEAK). Cyndi Tuell, an attorney with FOWA, prepared the 29-page objection.

**Editor’s Note: Kevin Proescholdt is the Conservation Director for Wilderness Watch. To learn more about this issue please visit <http://wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#Bighorns>.**

## **FOLLOW FOC ON FACEBOOK**

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## **Wild Book Review** *Recovering A Lost River Removing Dams, Rewilding Salmon, Revitalizing Communities*

Published in 2011, author Steve Hawley courageously embarks on a crusade to breach the lower four Snake River dams and bring wild salmon home. Whether it be touching on heroic acts of past monkey wrenching, flying to Alaska to bask in the annual salmon runs up the Kasilof River, or spending time near the Salish Sea to learn about the plight of the Orca, Hawley delivers a witty, sarcastic and riveting story behind the destruction of one of the world’s most productive salmon watersheds.

The author tells the tragic story, unbeknownst to many, of the damming of the lower Snake River in the 1960’s, and the flooding, of what was considered by many at that time, to be the most important archaeological site in the modern world: the Marmes Rockshelter. Located near the confluence of the Palouse and Snake Rivers, and studied by archaeologists from Washington State University, the site had been used for shelter, storage and human burial for approximately 11,000-years. But there’s no stopping progress!

Many people that advocate for the breaching of the lower four Snake River dams are familiar with industry’s solution, the **4 H’s**: Restoring **H**abitat, Funding **H**atcheries, Reducing **H**arvest, and Maintaining **H**ydropower (at any cost). In speaking with a fisheries specialist during an interview for the book, Mr Hawley came across a 5th H: **H**orseshit, since the effects of the dams on wild salmon has always been understated, masked, or even worse, ignored.

**Reviewed by Brett Haverstick**



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**FOC File Photo**



Fred Rabe Photo Credit

FOC member and University of Idaho professor emeritus Dr. Fred Rabe recently published, *North Fork: Glimpses of geography and natural history of roadless areas in the North Fork Clearwater River Watershed*. This marks the 7th publication by Fred and FOC that deals with building grassroots support for the permanent protection of irreplaceable roadless areas in the Clearwater Basin. There are approximately 1.5-million acres of unprotected roadless wildlands in the Clearwater. We are very appreciative of Fred's knowledge and dedication, and thoroughly enjoy working with him. If you would like to have a copy, please email us at [foc@friendsoftheclearwater.org](mailto:foc@friendsoftheclearwater.org). Booklets are \$10 plus \$5 shipping. Keep it wild!

## FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER CALENDAR OF EVENTS SPRING 2015

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