



# CLEARWATER DEFENDER

## NEWS OF THE BIG WILD

A PUBLICATION OF  
FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

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### **Of Wolves, Elk and Wilderness: The battle in the River of No Return Guest Opinion Dana Johnson, Wilderness Watch**

It's January in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness—the largest contiguous expanse of Wilderness in the Lower 48. From the south, the Middle Fork of the Salmon River makes its way north for over 100-miles until it joins the Main Salmon. From there, the river cuts west, unimpeded, carving one of the wildest canyons on the planet. Rising roughly 6,300-feet from the river bottom, old forests, rocky bluffs, and jagged crags connect with a massive network of ridges and drainages—refuge for the undomesticated. The elk have moved to lower elevations, browsing on south facing slopes, while mountain goats and bighorn sheep navigate the windswept scree and crags above. A mountain lion leaves its solitary trail in the snow.

Anyone who has spent time in wilderness in the depth of winter knows that the stillness is striking. The absence of noise makes any deviation from the status quo an acute jarring of the senses—the present moment demanding full, visceral attention. Avalanches pierce silence like a shotgun. Wolves project their long, mournful howls across the ridges. Trees, bending under the growing weight of winter, abruptly snap. Always, the crystalized silence settles once again awaiting the next carnal interruption. This January is different. Helicopters approach over the ridges and into the heart of the wilderness, their mechanized thumping growing in intensity. Herds of panicked elk flee across their wintering grounds, legs scrambling to maintain the impossible trajectory. The helicopters hover and swoop until close enough for the passengers to take aim. The net-gun fires—one is hit. The helicopter touches down long enough for the passengers to jump and then returns to a hover over the entangled, waiting animal. She is “processed.” This scene replays over and over. When the helicopters leave, 64 animals will return to their wild companions carrying something new and out of place.

This year, in January, the Forest Service authorized Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) to make 120 helicopter landings in the River of No Return Wilderness to place radio telemetry collars on 60 elk. To our knowledge, this is the most extensive helicopter intrusion ever authori-



**The Forest Service recently authorized the Idaho Department Fish & Game to land helicopters in the River of No Return Wilderness.**

FOC File Photo

rized in wilderness. IDFG said the project was necessary to study an elk-population decline that has occurred since the return of gray wolves to the wilderness. The objective of the project is to gather data that will inform IDFG's decisions concerning hunting, trapping, and “predator control” actions in the wilderness. Wilderness Watch, Friends of the Clearwater, and Western Watersheds Project filed suit in Federal District Court on January 7th—hours after receiving a copy of the signed special use permit authorizing project implementation. Within the next three days, while the suit was pending and before we could get before the judge, IDFG inundated the River of No Return Wilderness with repeated helicopter flights and landings. And, even though it was abundantly clear that IDFG was not authorized to harass and collar wolves, IDFG nonetheless “mistakenly” captured and collared four wolves. Those 60 elk and four wolves now have collars transmitting radio telemetry data, including precise location points, to IDFG—an agency with an unapologetic history of wolf extermination efforts and a current plan to “aggressively manage elk and predator populations,” including exterminating 60 percent of the wolves within the Middle Fork Zone of the River of No Return Wilderness. As I write this article, IDFG, along with Wildlife Services, is carrying out aerial wolf gunning activities in the “Lolo Zone” area north of the River of No Return Wilderness.

See helicopter invasion page 4

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1	HELICOPTER INVASION
PAGE 3	BOARD MESSAGE
PAGE 6	CLEARWATER ROUNDUP
PAGE 8	FOREST ECOLOGY
PAGE 10	FIGHTING FEES
PAGE 11	LAND EXCHANGE
PAGE 12	LOLO PASS
PAGE 13	GATHER TOGETHER
PAGE 14	FISHER & LYNX
PAGE 15	GIVING THANKS
PAGE 16	EVENT CALENDAR



Derek Farr Photo Credit

Three days before Thanksgiving over three-hundred citizens packed a gymnasium in Grangeville, Idaho to deliver comments to Senator Jim Risch (ID-R) concerning potential legislation to complete the Upper Lochsa Land Exchange. A vast majority of attendees continued to voice their opposition to the proposal. FOC maintains that the only way the public interest will be served in this boondoggle is through the pursuit of a complete purchase option. In December 2015, Congress re-authorized the *Land & Water Conservation Fund*, a potential vehicle to make that happen. Read more about the meeting on page 11.

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## FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

THE CLEARWATER DEFENDER  
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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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## **Hello from Eva Hallvik FOC Board Treasurer**

I was clapped into becoming a board member for Friends of the Clearwater this last November 2015 at our annual potluck. I sat humbly in the 1912 Center, which was full of educated people with great passion, awareness and dedication. I felt a sense of pride to be invited to help serve an organization that I have witnessed uphold the highest integrity and fortitude in helping to protect what little and precious wildlands humanity has left wild. The clapping is a long tradition of community involvement and camaraderie that FOC has used to publicly celebrate a new FOC board member. Several of us were clapped-in that evening.

I received an undergraduate degree in Creative Writing from the University of Idaho in 1989. I became part of FOC around 1995 when I was hired as the first ever outreach coordinator. I had just recently returned to Moscow, Idaho (headquarters for FOC) after serving in the Peace Corps in Lesotho - the middle of South Africa - for four years. After working as a garden and nutrition extension agent in a drought-worn land, the richness of Clearwater country seemed even more important to help protect. My idealism was high.

Lesotho had once been full of the wildlife we imagine in Africa, from elephants and giraffes to rare muskrat-like little critters, and all of the deer-like animals in between. Unfortunately, due to poor planning and other unforeseeable events the once rich and diverse land of Lesotho became barren. Witnessing the devastated land and impoverished people impressed upon me the need and importance to help protect the wildlands from the folly of man in my home state.

I was twenty-five years old when I returned to the United States from my Peace Corps service. I am now nearly twice that age and yet my young idealist self still prevails. I remain grateful for the endurance of Friends of the Clearwater and the organization's ability to help protect what I think is some of the most precious Earth and wildlife remaining. My adventurous spirit has led me to more adventures on my superhero mission to help make this a better world and to protect the innocent. I humbly laugh at myself for such grandeur in thinking.

I moved to Washington D.C. in my thirties and worked as a program coordinator for a very small international non-profit agency called Forum for Intercultural Communication. My job focused on a sub-project called Global Woman. The small-town Idaho girl was now off to Washington! I should have been dressed in a bunny suit like Mr. Smith with the attitude that I had to be forthright in my mission to save the world, by being honest and level-headed. I arranged meetings with senators, heads of state, various departments, chair people, etc. I sat in conferences

with women business leaders of the U.S. and foreign ambassadors. And everywhere I went I dropped the phrase, "no roads in Idaho," as I drove from meeting to meeting in my 4x4 Toyota pick-up. I used to run a landscaping company while in Moscow, called the "Incredible Growing Women."

I have mostly made my way through this life as a Licensed Massage Therapist. I believe that if I can help every person that I come in contact with in some way be more peaceful in their body, then maybe they will live more peacefully on the body of this great planet Earth, and respect themselves and each other and all sentient beings.

I recently moved back to Moscow (for the fourth time) after spending the last two years in Kauai, Hawaii and the three summers before that in rural southeast Alaska. I am now working on writing my first novel that has a lot to do with wolves. While in Alaska, I was graced to live closely with a couple wolf hybrids that we named Bodhi and Sattva. They were amazing beings and I am now determined to change the bad reputation that wolves get and to help protect them. Our wolf brothers were shot and murdered by some ignorant neighbors in the foothills of California.

I remember hearing that bears used to be talked about like wolves are now. But when Theodore Roosevelt was president he showed great compassion for preventing a bear from suffering and respecting its life. The image of bears changed into the "Teddy bear" after that. I wish for something like this to happen with our wolves. [www.theodoreroosevelt.org/site/c.elKSIdOWIj8H/b.8684621/k.6632/Real\\_Teddy\\_Bear\\_Story.htm](http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/site/c.elKSIdOWIj8H/b.8684621/k.6632/Real_Teddy_Bear_Story.htm)

We have a long ways to go, and we have come a long way already. Keep walking steady and strong, drawing strength from all things wild. Have compassion for and forgive all things tamed.



**Glad to have you back in Moscow Eva!**  
**FOC File Photo**



**helicopter invasion con't from page 1**

IDFG's activities, authorized by the Forest Service, constitute an affront—the latest in a long line of affronts—on wilderness. Our complaint sets forth the legal framework for this position, and you can read it on our website. We'll post additional case filings as they become available. With the limited space here, I'd like to step beyond the case filings and address the legitimacy, relevancy, and urgent necessity of wild spaces—of nature's own wild order.

Our intelligence as a species has always been a double-edged sword. Scientific and technological advances have allowed the human population to increase rapidly and exponentially, which in turn has significantly taxed the basic elements needed for our survival. Indeed, an alarming number of our non-human counterparts have recently made their untimely departure to the world of extinction. Computers, Wi-Fi, and cell-phones have made it easier to stay connected, organize for causes, and access information, yet we find it more and more difficult to disconnect from the pressures of modern life and to meaningfully connect with other people and the land around us—the real world. Ed Abbey duly noted that “[h]igh technology has done us one great service: It has retaught us the delight of performing simple and primordial tasks—chopping wood, building a fire, drawing water from a spring.” There is a profound reason for this delight. We are rapidly losing something immeasurable and very old. Something that runs much deeper than our new-world focus on recreation. Something much deeper than our abstract economic and scientific labels. Something that is not compatible with helicopters, drones, satellite collars, industrial clear-cutting, motorized and mechanized transport, corporate sponsorships, Facebook, and text messages. We are destroying this very old thing—sometimes with the best of intentions.

The drafters of the Wilderness Act saw this threat. In 1964 and the years preceding, these wilderness visionaries knew that the rapid expansion of the human population coupled with the rapid progression of technology and mechanization was inevitable. They also knew that this trajectory posed significant irreparable harm to our last wild places and to our own human existence. They understood that even though they could not know all of the forms that our technological advancement might take, they could define its opposite, the wild baseline, and put forth a firm intention to protect the wild above all else. They envisioned and promoted various human uses of wilderness, including scientific and recreational uses, but they expressly subjected each of those uses to compatibility with a primary purpose: the preservation of wilderness character. And what is wilderness? What is wilderness character? The drafters provided this definition of wilderness:

“A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and

his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.”



**The hush of winter along the main Salmon River**

**FOC File Photo**

In a speech promoting the wilderness bill, Howard Zahniser, drafter of the Wilderness Act, did not mince words when describing the essence of wilderness and the fundamental purpose of the Wilderness Act: “We describe an area as wilderness because of a character it has—not because of a particular use that it serves. A wilderness is an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man. (Untrammelled—not untrampled—untrammelled, meaning free, unbound, unhampered, unchecked, having the freedom of the wilderness).”

Luckily for us, and due in large part to wilderness designation, we still have pockets of untrammelled, primordial space—landscapes protected from our relentless industrial and technological growth and from our unending conquest to defy physical space. With 7.4-billion people now on this planet, and with our insatiable appetites for consumption and control, the pressures against these primordial spaces are mounting. The wildernesses of central Idaho are comparatively and contiguously massive. We have a real opportunity, and a real obligation, to protect this wild space from the types of intrusions inflicted by IDFG, and authorized by the Forest Service, this past January.

Compounding the legal and moral precedent of allowing intensive helicopter intrusion into the heart of the River of No Return Wilderness, IDFG's current elk (and wolf) collaring project is part of its broader plan to manipulate wildlife populations in the Wilderness to enhance elk hunting opportunities—an agenda that is fundamentally antithetical to preserving “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man.” And this is only the beginning. IDFG stated in its project proposal that it will need five to 10 years of successive helicopter-assisted collaring in the wilderness to obtain valid data. Its ultimate goals are clearly spelled out. IDFG's Elk Management Plan calls for restoration of elk population levels to those observed in the 1990s—before the return of wolves to the wilderness and before the restoration of natural predator/prey dynamics—and for “aggressive” predator control activities to achieve this end.

IDFG's motives and actions in this case should not tarnish the value of scientific study of wilderness, generally, or human enjoyment of wilderness. Quite to the contrary, wilderness provides a unique opportunity to observe an untrammelled ecosystem with scientific curiosity, and wilderness is the best place to immerse oneself in the wild. These pursuits are expressly contemplated by the Wilderness Act, but not at the expense of wilderness itself. We need wilderness much more than we need more information about wilderness. And, if that information leads ultimately to control of wilderness, it does not preserve wilderness. Through the Wilderness Act, we made the decision to limit our power, to exercise restraint and humility. Wilderness is a place where we've decided to let time move slowly, let distances remain great, let wildness do its thing without interference, and let danger and uncertainty exist without temperance. We would have much to learn if we could only resist our urge to meddle.

I fear that with each passing generation, our memory of truly wild landscapes will fade. I can't imagine a world where that long, mournful howl of the wolf doesn't stop me in my tracks. I can't imagine a world where a fresh griz track doesn't make every hair on my body stand on end and make the sound of a single falling pine needle strike the intensity of thunder. I can't imagine a world where a handheld device tells me—shows me—what to expect around every corner, or a world where once fiercely wild animals roam the wilderness with collars on their necks—their every movement transmitted to a computer, manned by a human who works for an agency that does not value things it cannot control. If anything must be controlled, for the sake of wilderness, it is us.

**Editor's Note: Dana Johnson is staff attorney for Wilderness Watch. Learn more at [wildernesswatch.org](http://wildernesswatch.org)**

## Citizens rally in Boise in response to aerial gunning of twenty wolves

### Brett Haverstick

Between the “accidental” collaring of four wolves in the River of No Return Wilderness, and the recent aerial gunning of twenty wolves on the Clearwater National Forest, it's hard to have any respect for the Idaho Department Fish & Game (IDFG). The agency is hell-bent on turning wild country into game farms for hunters and outfitters. The science doesn't support their actions, and neither do many Americans. The day is coming when IDFG no longer have jurisdiction of wildlife in federally designated wilderness, nor have the authority to manage carnivores, including wolves, on federal public lands.

Approximately, seventy people demonstrated on the steps of the Idaho state capitol building in Boise in response to the recent aerial gunning monstrosity. FOC was proud to spearhead the rally, with help coming from Western Watersheds Project, Defenders of Wildlife, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Predator Defense, Wildlands Defense, Center for Biological Diversity, Oregon Wild and Endangered Species Coalition. People traveled from as far away as Portland, Seattle, Spokane, Moscow and Idaho Falls. There was an assortment of men, women and children in attendance. The peaceful demonstration was picked up by numerous media outlets, including television stations in Boise and Missoula. See rally photo on page 16.

Many people could not attend the rally, particularly with such short notice, but that didn't stop them from writing letters to the editor, and making phone calls to IDFG and Governor Butch Otter's office. The FOC office also received phone calls from citizens living in Tennessee, New Mexico and California. The calls were friendly ones of support, of course!

Not to be forgotten in all of this, the USDA Wildlife Services were the agents contracted by the IDFG to complete the aerial gunning. This is the same agency that gunned down the “Wedge Pack” in Washington a few years ago, and the same tax-payer funded federal agency that has used helicopters to slaughter wolves and coyotes in other parts of Idaho and the West for decades.

If you have not seen the award-winning documentary, *EXPOSED: USDA's War on Wildlife*, I highly recommend that you do so. FOC worked with Predator Defense and allies last fall to screen the movie throughout Idaho. It was a successful film tour that educated people about this rogue and reckless agency that kills millions of native animals every year in America. You can learn more by visiting [www.predatordefense.org/exposed/index.htm](http://www.predatordefense.org/exposed/index.htm). It's time to abolish the predator control program of Wildlife Services.

**Adios National Forests:  
An armed assault on public lands  
in Oregon and implications  
for the Clearwater  
Gary Macfarlane**

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Are there lessons to be learned from the incident where armed secessionists took over a National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon? I see a few. There was public opposition to the armed takeover, and that public opposition expressed some support for public land. Nonetheless, Scott Silver, of Wild Wilderness, told me most Americans knew nothing about livestock grazing on public lands and national forests prior to the incident. Now, what citizens think they know is largely wrong. Two themes seem to emerge:

1) I would posit that most Americans have some sympathy for public lands ranchers, even though they disagree with the armed insurrection. Thus, the armed takeover was a largely success for the secessionists in the court of public opinion, though if Cliven Bundy keeps talking, it may neutralize much of what they gained (NOTE: For another view, see [www.thewildlifeneeds.com/2016/02/04/bundy-gang-won/](http://www.thewildlifeneeds.com/2016/02/04/bundy-gang-won/)).

2) Most Americans now wrongly believe that ranchers have some kind of rights to graze on public lands and the Federal Government's grazing regulations and administration are probably too inflexible and too often ignore the on-the-ground expertise and common sense possessed by the ranchers. The truth is grazing permits are not rights and federal agencies too often defer to livestock interests over the public interest. (See for example <http://www.peer.org/campaigns/public-lands/public-lands-grazing-reform/blm-grazing-data.html>).

What does the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge have to do with the Clearwater country? Well the Forest Service especially but also the Bureau of Land Management, and occasionally the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service are doing their part to ensure that special interests hold sway over the public interest. In other words, watersheds, wild forests, wilderness and habitat will be sacrificed as the agencies refuse to follow the law. It is a disease of unaccountability, based in part of the agencies' fear of the extremists--not only those with guns but those with financial power and those in Congress who also support the plunder and theft of public lands. It is also a problem based upon a marketized mindset of the agencies--everything on public land must make a profit for special interests. It falls to citizens to hold so-called public servants accountable to the public.

## Timber Sales

The bad and ugly news is that the FS is proposing to expedite logging in areas, including roadless land, as a result of the fires of 2015. The worst time to log is after fires. Human disturbance at that time is very destructive to soils and watersheds. The Forest Service proposed a massive 40-million board foot sale covering nearly 3000-acres, that would log 400-foot wide corridors along 113-miles of roads. This proposal would log so far from the road corridor itself, it would destroy over 800-roadless acres. To top it off, the Forest Service was going to categorically exclude this from analysis under an environmental assessment or EA. In other words, there would be no accountability. Public outcry caused the Forest Service to decide to do a cursory environmental assessment (EA). The decision will be forthcoming soon without much chance for public review, however, under supposedly "emergency" circumstances.

The same is true for a couple of so called emergency salvage sales as well - Woodrat and Lolo Creek. The public is not being given much of a chance to review those proposals either. Further, the Forest Service is proposing seven timber sales that will be categorically excluded from analysis. Add to that the fact that the Forest Service carved miles of dozer line into roadless areas supposedly to fight the fires of 2015. The truth is most of that mileage was nowhere near any fire, and the fires were moving in the opposite direction.

The objections, filed by FOC, Idaho Rivers United (IRU), Jeff Juel and Harry Jageman resulted in a letter from the Regional Office of the Forest Service laying out additional requirements to drop some units in sensitive areas like the wild and scenic river corridor. However, the final decision just came out and the sale remains a huge threat to the Selway and Middle Fork. As of press time, IRU and FOC were analyzing a potential court challenge with the excellent services of Advocates for the West.

We met with our fine attorneys at Bricklin-Newman to discuss the Clear Creek Sale. The Forest Service recently made a decision and we are looking into our legal options. Past *Defender* articles have pointed out how this massive sale would occur in an area that does not meet water quality objectives. The Nez Perce Tribe is also looking at options due to the fact that the tribe's fish hatchery in the creek could be affected by any reduction in water quality. We are also reviewing the recent decision on the Orogrande Timber Sale with an attorney to see if we can prevent logging in another roadless area.

The years 2014 and 2015 saw the largest volume in timber sales on the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests since and including 2000. In spite of failing water-



sheds, the Forest Service wants to “substantially increase” logging in the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests (which is the goal of the Clearwater Basin Collaborative, and from which the quotation was taken).

### Wildlife

The Idaho Department of Fish & Game and the federal agency Wildlife Services just completed the helicopter gunning of twenty wolves in the upper Lochsa and North Fork Clearwater. This kind of activity harms other wildlife, ignores all science on predator/prey relationships and is not based on habitat information. Simply put, elk are declining in the Clearwater for habitat related reasons--trying to change the habitat will likely create watershed problems--and killing predators won't boost elk numbers in any significant way. We are working with allies to see what can be done.

There is good news for lynx. In January Judge Winmill ordered Idaho officials to develop trapping restrictions that prevent protected Canada lynx — one of the rarest cats in the United States — from being illegally hurt or killed across more than 20,000 square miles of the state's Panhandle and Clearwater regions. In 2014, the Center for Biological Diversity, WildEarth Guardians, Western Watersheds Project, and Friends of the Clearwater filed a lawsuit against the Idaho Department of Fish & Game, the department's commissioners and Gov. Butch Otter for allowing trapping in lynx habitat. Plaintiffs were represented by the Center for Biological Diversity and Western Environmental Law Center, with Celeste Miller serving as local counsel.

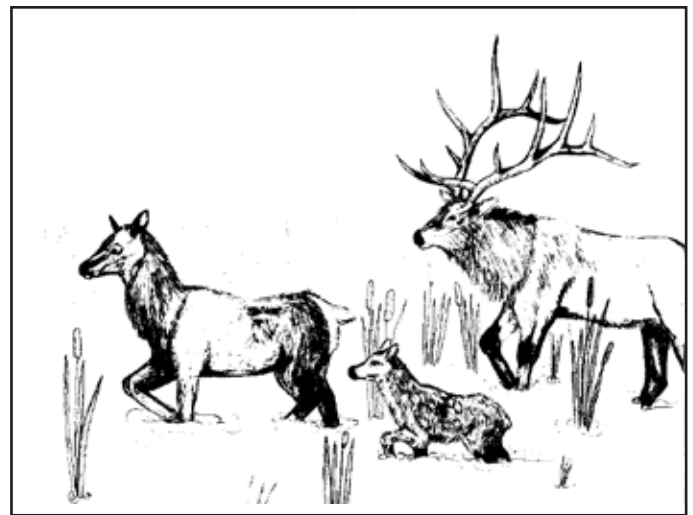
Lynx, which may number as few as 100 in Idaho, are classified as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act. As a result, trapping of a lynx is illegal, regardless of whether the cat is killed, injured or released. The court found that because it is likely lynx will continue to be caught in traps meant for other species in the Panhandle and Clearwater regions, Idaho must alter its trapping regulations to prevent future lynx trapping. The court ordered the state to submit a plan within 90-days with terms that will truly protect lynx in northern Idaho. Modifications under the plan may include restrictions on the size of foothold traps that can be used, prohibiting the use of traps designed to kill — such as Conibear body-gripping traps and neck snares — and requiring trappers to check their traps every 24-hours instead of the currently required 72-hours. The ruling also strongly suggested the State consult with plaintiffs on protection measures.

Friends of the Clearwater thanks Andrea Santarsiere, staff attorney of Center for Biological Diversity and Pete Frost, an attorney with the Western Environmental

Law Center, and Celeste Miller for their work on this case. We should learn more soon.

### Wreckreation?

The St. Joe Travel Plan's draft decision does not adequately protect roadless areas like Grandmother Mountain and Mallard-Larkins. FOC filed an objection with other conservation groups. We are also planning on objecting to the Nez Perce Travel Plan, which just came out. Meadow Creek is one key area where the Forest Service's draft decision is worse than what it was previously proposing. The entire area should be allocated to non-motorized use.



Artwork by Emma Gerrish

### **A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THAT DONATED TO OUR SILENT AUCTION**

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WE HOPE WE HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN ANYONE!

## **Wildfire Misinformation**

### **Guest Opinion**

### **George Wuerthner**

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Conservationists, if they wish to succeed in legislating more wilderness and parks in the West, must actively counter the misinformation and flawed logic surrounding forest health, thinning and wildfires. It may seem counter-intuitive, but fighting the fear of fire is, often, the best way to promote new wilderness/park designation.

There is an on-going effort by some in Congress to attach riders to exempt thinning proposals from environmental analysis, which will threaten existing proposed wilderness with new logging. Again these efforts are based on faulty understanding of forest ecology and wildfire behavior.

For example, recently a spate of county commissions in Oregon passed resolutions opposing the proposed Crater Lake Wilderness that would protect 500,000-acres of mostly high elevation forests surrounding, and north of Crater Lake National Park.

One of the common justifications given for opposition by these largely rural county commissioners is that wilderness designation will prevent forest thinning, and by their way of thinking, contribute to large wildfires. And in their worldview, unmanaged forests are “unhealthy” forests.

The problem is two-fold. First, most of our forests around the West are not “unhealthy” as suggested, and second, thinning/logging can’t and won’t preclude large fires. Beyond these initial problems is the fact that occasional large blazes contribute to forest ecosystem health.

#### **Example of flawed rationale for opposing Wilderness**

For instance, the Klamath County Oregon Commissioners recently passed a resolution opposing the Crater Lake Wilderness proposal based in part on their misperception of fire and forest issues.

[www.heraldandnews.com/news/local\\_news/commissioners-oppose-crater-lake-wilderness-proposal/article\\_28944f5f-bb55-594d-b8ff-1a1d1e1b96ad.html](http://www.heraldandnews.com/news/local_news/commissioners-oppose-crater-lake-wilderness-proposal/article_28944f5f-bb55-594d-b8ff-1a1d1e1b96ad.html)

“Much of the forest within the proposed area is categorized as high risk for catastrophic fire,” the resolution reads. “We the Klamath County commissioners support and continue to enjoy Crater Lake National Park, but strongly oppose Oregon Wild’s proposal to designate a 500,000-acre “Crater Lake Wilderness Area.”

“I’m really concerned about forest health. We have

not done a good job as a country, and certainly as a state, of really having proper forest management,” said commissioner Kelley Minty Morris. “Our forests are susceptible to fire much more than they should be.”

In the above quotes, characterizing the forests at “high risk” of “catastrophic fire” demonstrates a failure to understand the normal fire ecology of the region’s forests, which naturally burn at mixed to high severity. They are not at “risk” from fire—they require large stand replacement fires to maintain healthy forest ecosystems.

#### **Conservationists need to counter the misinformation about fire**

The opposition to wilderness based on fears of wildfire is becoming more and more frequent around the West, and is, in my view, a direct consequence of the timber industry and in some cases, state and federal agencies that are promoting logging as a panacea to fires. The thinking goes if we only “managed” (read log) more forests, we could prevent large wildfires.

On the surface this fits nicely in the “fire suppression has led to fuel buildups” story-line that is commonly repeated by agency folks, timber industry, and politicians. The idea that we need to manage our forests due to forest “health” and wildfire issues is also a common starting assumption of most forest collaboratives around the West, thus indirectly also feeding the fear of fire.

And unfortunately conservation organizations have not invested enough time and energy in countering the misinformation and educating the public about what constitutes a healthy forest ecosystem (hint: a healthy forest ecosystem has lots of bugs, disease and fire) and why common prescriptions like thinning are unlikely to preclude large fires.

#### **Forests not unhealthy**

Most of the proposed wildernesses around the West, for better or worse, are the “rocks and ice” lands that were not suitable for forest exploitation. These forests are found in steeper terrain and often are moister and lie at higher elevation areas. They are dominated by spruce, lodgepole pine, aspen, various fir species, in some places larch, hemlock, and other species. The common denominator of all of these forests is their typically long fire intervals, often in the hundreds of years between major blazes.

In between these periodic blazes, the forests are accumulating snags and down wood which foresters in particular, due to their bias towards wood production, try to portray as “unhealthy” characteristics.

However, the ecological perspective is to see these



dead trees as important components of a healthy forest ecosystem and critical wildlife habitat. Bark beetles, disease (like root rots), mistletoe, as well as large stand replacement blazes are all a normal part of a healthy forest. Periodic mortality from these factors is actually critical to maintaining the forest ecosystem. They are not indications of “unhealthy” forests, rather the prevailing view is what is unhealthy.

When they do burn the fires tend to have mixed to high severity where-by a substantial percentage of trees are killed. (Though it is important to note that in nearly all of the large fires in the West, the bulk of the area in the fire perimeter does not burn at high severity).

### **Thinning & logging effects on large fires exaggerated**

Notwithstanding the fact that trying to preclude large fires leads to degraded forest ecosystems, due to the long rotation between fires that are the normal situation in these forest types, and that climate/weather is the driving force in fires, the assumption that reducing fuels will preclude such fires is flawed. There are three major points to consider.

First, the science demonstrating that fuel reductions are effective at alternating fire spread and behavior in high elevation forests is ambiguous at best. There are plenty of examples around the West where large fires have burned through previously logged forests, even clearcuts. The reason has to do with the weather variables that create large fires, which includes extended drought, low humidity, high temperatures and high winds. In particular, the high winds blow burning embers over, through, and around any fuel reductions, making them ineffective.

Second, thinning effectiveness is quickly negated by rapid regrowth of vegetation and trees. Thinning can also open the forest to greater wind and solar penetration that dry fuels.

Third, due to the long intervals between fires and the unpredictable nature of fire ignition, the chance that any blaze will actually encounter a fuel reduction project is extremely small.

Most review articles that have looked at fuel reduction effectiveness have concluded that under severe fire weather conditions, fuel reductions do not work.

For these reasons it is questionable whether widespread thinning is a wise strategy from an economic and ecological perspective.

The only way to protect homes and communities is to reduce the flammability of the home site or what is called the home ignition zone. That is the key to making citizens safe from wildfire.

### **Conservation response needed**

What is needed is a major education effort on the part of conservation organizations countering the starting assumptions driving resistant to the designation of wilderness areas. Unless conservation organizations repeatedly counter the assumption there are “unhealthy forests” that “need” restoration, and that thinning/logging cannot prevent large fires, we will likely find more and more opposition to wilderness proposals.

In essence fighting this misinformation is a critical part of any wilderness advocacy effort.

We need to inform the public that long intervals between fires in most ecosystems is the standard fire frequency, thus fuel built up as well as the resulting mixed to high severity fires are the “norm.” We need to question whether fuel reductions (with the exception of in the immediate area around homes and communities) are an effective strategy for ensuring citizen safety or even to prevent large blazes. Finally we must always assert that bark beetles, mistletoe, wildfire, and other ecological processes are what maintain healthy forest ecosystems.

**Editor’s note: George Wuerthner is an author, ecologist and wildland photographer. He was a contributing author and editor of *Wildfire, A Century of Failed Forest Policy*. He has also worked for the US Forest Service and other federal agencies.**



**Salvage logging on the national forests is a hoax**

**George Wuerthner Photo Credit**

## The saga of fighting fees on public lands

### Guest Opinion, Scott Phillips

That distant rumbling you hear is the sleeping dragon of privatization awakening from a long nap and preparing to fly. Unless citizens act soon and decisively, the dragon's allies in Congress will succeed in converting us from owners of the public domain into mere customers who must purchase a pass just to take a walk in the woods.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), which since 2004 has prohibited the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management from charging us a fee just to picnic on a roadside, walk through federal lands, or camp in dispersed areas, expired in 2014 and is now on its third short-term extension. The current sunset date is September 30, 2017. Both houses of Congress have vowed to use the time to reform FLREA's many 'weaknesses and inconsistencies'. But as Kitty Benzar, Executive Director of the Western Slope No Fee Coalition (WSNFC) based in Durango, Colorado points out, they are going in very different directions.

In the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) held a hearing last September at which she excoriated the agencies' inappropriate fees, fee programs for high levels of administrative overhead, and the use of private entities as gatekeepers between citizens and our public lands. I think we're getting ripped off," said Murkowski. She is reported to be working on legislation that will rein in agency FLREA abuse.

But across Capitol Hill in the House it's a whole other story. Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT) has published draft legislation that would 'modernize' the current law. It would actually gut FLREA of any restrictions or prohibitions on what fees the agencies can charge, encourage the agencies to out-source recreation to private companies, and incentivize those companies to build privately owned 'improvements' by giving them 30-year permits – a de facto transfer of ownership from public to private. As if 'de facto' ownership is not bad enough, Bishop's bill would authorize federally built and owned recreation infrastructure to be sold outright to private hands. With the two chambers taking such diametrically opposed approaches, we could end up with yet another D.C. stalemate, likely resulting in further extensions of FLREA.

Short-term extensions would be preferable to Bishop's bill, which would instead repeal FLREA's specific prohibition fees for:

- 1) Parking or picnicking.
- 2) General access.
- 3) Dispersed areas with low or no federal capital investment.
- 4) Walking, boating, horseback riding, or hiking through federal lands or waters without using facilities or services.

The fee issue might look relatively unimportant on the surface but be assured, its ramifications demand our focused attention. Fees are the tip of an ugly iceberg and this maxi applies: If it can be commodified, it will be commodified. Once it is commodified, it will almost certainly be privatized.

USFS and BLM fees improperly or illegally imposed are a cancer. Left unchecked, they will metastasize into further commercialization and privatization. Charging fees raises concerns for social equality, free public access, forest economics and industry subsidies.

Fees are appropriate only for the use of facilities with high levels of federal capital investment, such as campgrounds with potable water and high-end marinas/boat ramps. National Park entrance fees are historically accepted.

There should never be a fee to use a trail. Fees are especially egregious for visits to designated Wilderness. Charging a fee to enter Wilderness clamps a "trammeling" effect on the experience and sidesteps the Wilderness Act's prohibition on commercialization. Wilderness should not be about grubbing dollars.

The BLM and Forest Service have abused their fee authorities, which are tied to the use of 'amenities'. Allowing the agencies to retain fees they collect can spur them to build even more and unnecessary amenity infrastructure.

Federal agencies are perversely treating recreation as if it were a commodity like timber mining or grazing. They outsource recreation management to the private sector and treat the public as if they were customers instead of owners of our national heritage. Strong congressional oversight is needed.

There is a crucial therapeutic (mental and spiritual) component of an unencumbered walk in the woods or a paddle down the creek. We need the psychic rejuvenation of quality outdoor recreation time. Body and soul increasingly require an antidote to our wired, loud, hyped and commercialized world. Encountering a 'Stop Pay Here' sign can negate the excitement of the natural recreation experience.

Visit the WSNFC website at [westernslopenofee.org](http://westernslopenofee.org) to learn more. Tell your legislators that they must support legislation that would appropriate additional funds for federal agencies to be good stewards of our land. Legislation should establish a sound, fair fee structure that would only authorize agencies to charge fees for the use of developed facilities, and prohibit fees for undeveloped federal land and waters.

**Editor's note: Scott Phillips is the Fee Issues Chair of the Sierra Club's Recreational Issues Team. He is a retired Outdoor Recreation Specialist with the Forest Service.**

**“Those people didn’t elect me”**  
**Guest Opinion**  
**Shelley Dumas & Janice Inghram**

The horse was already out of the barn and way down the road before north-central Idaho residents learned about the Lochsa Land Exchange. The backroom MOU (Memorandum of Upheaval) had been signed by nefarious agents of the Forest Service (FS) and Western Pacific Timber (WPT) with the intent of trading prime, popular, public land on the Palouse Ranger District for private, cut-over, junk-yard acres in the upper Lochsa. For many Idahoans (and Americans) who have maintained some allegiance to the FS despite its many boondoggles, this sneaky deal was the worst betrayal of all. It is generally accepted that it would be a resource coup to have the whole upper Lochsa checkerboard block “managed” with some ecosystem tender loving care. Instead we have a chess board manipulated by dark kings and black knights who can move and control in any direction with impunity, using the American people as pawns.

Even with the advantageous head start by the FS and WPT, retired Palouse District FS employees and public land advocates quickly organized to head the culprits off at the pass. With clear science, clean logic and solid economics, the group countered the fiction of the exchange proposal with facts. When Idaho County commissioners shifted the focus to keep the exchange parcels within Idaho County, more public land advocates joined the fight. During the 2011 public comment period, over 90% of respondents said NO EXCHANGE. When the Idaho County commissioners then appointed a task force to study the issue and, ostensibly, identify acceptable acres for exchange, the group recommended NO ACTION-NO EXCHANGE.

Seeing that this debacle had very little support, Senator Risch (“Mr. Neutral”) requested the FS abandon its administrative strategy in favor of a legislative solution - and then Mr. Risch nested on the issue for 2.5-years without a peep. Sensing growing irritability and dissatisfaction with his do-nothing approach, Mr. Risch announced a public hearing would be held in Grangeville - suspiciously scheduled two days before the Thanksgiving holiday. Undoubtedly, Mr. Risch thought he would find a more receptive audience in Grangeville than Latah County - but just to make sure, there were over a dozen city/county/state law enforcement officers in attendance.

Prior to the Nov. 24 public meeting, an unexpected game-changing prelude occurred on Nov. 17 when Sandra Mitchell, executive director of Idaho Recreation Council, summoned her motorized troops via “word of mouse”, for a pre-meeting also in Grangeville. WPT’s lawyer Andy Hawes was given carte blanche and trotted out his numerous maps and reasons why WPT would be a good neighbor within its privatization scheme. At the end of his casual “I’m-One-

One-Of-You” presentation, all 30+ people, one by one, expressed immutable distrust of WPT and its proposal. When asked how she would alter her by-invitation testimony at the 11/24 hearing, Mitchell explicitly stated she would reiterate the collective mood of the participants: NO TRUST, NO EXCHANGE.

On 11/24, 300+ people crowded into the gym on a stormy night. Most were Idaho County Republicans and most signed the available NO EXCHANGE citizen petition. All attendees were given an information package by Risch aides at the door that included a comment sheet and a copy of WPT’s proposed legislation for the exchange, a “transparent” illustration of Mr. Risch’ legislative “neutrality.”

At the onset of the proceedings, Sen. Risch emphatically stated he was absolutely neutral on the issue, and that he was only interested in facts, not emotion.

There were brief comments by the standard-bearers on both sides (Otter and Tidwell were distinguished by their absence), followed by two-minute testimonies from 35 people (recreationists, ranchers, land-owners, business owners, Nez Perce tribal members). Thunderous applause was given to the 86% who expressed NO EXCHANGE sentiments:

- 1) When public land is sold or privatized, it is gone forever.
- 2) WPT is untrustworthy.
- 3) Easements don’t work.
- 4) Easements/access privileges can be taken away.
- 5) Protect wildlife values.
- 6) Citizens are willing to pay extra taxes to protect public lands while ensuring the county tax base.
- 7) Investigate other recreational destination avenues for increasing county revenues.

The passionate but polite bashing was uniform for those who have not been listening or acting on the public’s behalf during the past 11-years (FS, county commissioners, state legislators, congressional delegation and WPT). A revealing post-meeting response came from an Idaho County commissioner who was asked what he thought of the negative comments leveled directly at the commissioners. His reply? “Those people didn’t elect me.”

An equally telling postlude commissioners meeting was held on 12/29 to, once again, discuss the exchange. The chamber was packed with NO EXCHANGE champions. With their usual autocratic arrogance and daddy-knows-best attitude, the commissioners continued to defend their ideological course and persisted with flogging the dead horse of “the majority of voters support us” and “we need to be in control.”

**Editor’s note: Shelly Dumas lives in Idaho County, and has served on the Grangeville City Council. Janice Inghram lives in Idaho County also.**



## **Lolo Pass Winter Adventure Guest Opinion, Mac Cantrell Palouse group-Sierra Club**

On the weekend of February 6th, with nearly five feet of snow already on the ground, ten inches of fresh powder fell upon Lolo Pass. About twenty of us gathered to ski and snowshoe on Saturday afternoon, which expanded to thirty people when we met at Lochsa Lodge for dinner, and to discuss the native Canada lynx that live in this area. It would be an understatement to say that all had a good time with the mountains and meadows covered with gorgeous, fresh snow. But which recreation group had the most fun?

We all met in the warming hut at Lolo Pass, with the snowshoeing group splitting from us cross-country skiers. I heard the snowshoers toured through the meadows near the pass itself, and then did a second tour up through a quiet, dense stand of large, old trees. They would probably claim that they had a better time! But the skiers did a 6-mile loop on the groomed cross-country trails that were graced with a few inches of fresh powder. We toured around the Packer Meadows area and up some slight rises into the adjacent forests. The smooth expanses of the meadows lured us into brief forays of deeper snow. I'm pretty certain us skiers had more fun!

At the end of the day we gathered at Lochsa Lodge with others that did not recreate, and talked about the afternoon fun, with greatly exaggerated stories of epic adventures in previous winters. Eventually all thirty intrepid travelers sat down to a meal that couldn't be beat! Following dinner we were regaled by a discussion led by Gary Macfarlane on the biology of Canada lynx, their history in the west, especially in northern Idaho, and the policies and politics that will hopefully change to enhance their survival. We learned that these gorgeous animals have in some weird way evolved to have jacked up long, hind legs! They are also reclusive, essential parts of our high elevation forest wildlands, and the species needs to remain in our minds when working on management plans for our National Forests and possible expansion of our Wilderness areas.

We all stayed overnight at Lochsa Lodge and were fortified with a great breakfast the next morning, before heading our separate ways—some to ski again at the pass, others directly going home. I think this trip informed and recharged the batteries of everyone. Please set aside the entire month of February for next year's trip to make sure you'll be ready to join us when we decide on a date!

**Editor's Note: We greatly appreciate the Palouse group - Sierra Club and their involvement on a number of issues in the Clearwater Basin. Learn more at [www.idaho.sierraclub.org/#!/groups/ca4p](http://www.idaho.sierraclub.org/#!/groups/ca4p) or contact Al Poplawsky at [alpopsky@gmail.com](mailto:alpopsky@gmail.com)**



**About thirty people gathered for dinner at the Lochsa Lodge after a day of snowshoeing and cross-country skiing**

FOC File Photo



**Snowshoeing in the sub-alpine was beautiful**

Katie Bilodeau Photo Credit



**The cross-country skiing group had a great time**

Diane Prorak Photo Credit

## A time to gather Ashley Lipscomb

A Friends of the Clearwater tradition resurrected itself this winter: community potlucks. Twenty-seven wildland lovers piled into a little house on Lewis Street for FOC's first potluck of 2016. We scratched our heads over helicopter landings in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness and half-joked about Idaho Department of Fish & Game's inability to tell the difference between an elk and a wolf. Murmurings of the Malheur fiasco were still fresh with people saying, "We should have dealt with those secessionists three weeks ago!"

Rounding out the night, we gathered around the living room for local event announcements and a membership/donation appeal. I scanned the room while waiting my turn. Every single guest had one degree of separation from helping FOC achieve its goals: environmental lawyers, law school students, volunteers, scientists, interns, musicians, business owners, activists, FOC board members and our webmaster. FOC is privileged to be surrounded by a strong, skilled community that significantly bolsters our work.

In early January, Gary Macfarlane and I rambled to the Palouse Divide Nordic Ski Area for the John Crock Warming Hut dedication. We crunched to the top of the new snowshoe trail to celebrate John's life with 30 other people. John thought it best to leave his retirement funds to local groups facilitating recreational pursuits and conservation advocacy, including FOC. We hope allocating funds to spread the *Big Wild* beyond our regional bubble serves John's wishes well. It's important to remember others who leave a legacy behind to keep the wildlands work moving forward.

In the future, FOC will also be the beneficiary of a Clearwater country family contribution. Bill Caldwell, an emergency room doctor, turned law student, bequeathed a portion of his estate to us, now kept safe within the coffers of the Northwest Community Foundation. We are grateful for individuals who ensure the financial longevity of Friends of the Clearwater.

Our events calendar is filling up fast. Consider joining Friends of the Clearwater for *Wine and Wilderness*, a fundraiser featuring boutique wines from Paso Robles, California and Bill Voxman's black and white photography. The event will be held April 9th, 2016 from 6:30 to 8:30pm in the Arts Workshop Room of the 1912 Center, in Moscow, Idaho. Wines from "Paso" are heavily sought after and only available in small quantities. Registration is \$50 per person, and ends on March 31. Call the FOC office (208) 882-9755 for questions and registration. We would like to extend a special thanks to Eric and Jan Jensen for suggesting this fundraising event, and to Bill Voxman for donating half the



**Congratulations to the organizers and volunteers of the Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse. The group raised a record-breaking \$32,807.00 for thirty two non-profits across the Palouse. Friends of the Clearwater received \$1,092.61 in contributions. Thank you to everyone that generously donated to us through the market! Learn more by visiting [www.agmpalouse.org](http://www.agmpalouse.org)**  
FOC File Photo

proceeds from the sale of his photographs to FOC.

Friends of the Clearwater will be making stops in central and southern Idaho this March for wildlands programming. Several FOC members have graciously offered to host events in McCall, Boise, and Ketchum, Idaho. We will focus on wildland connecting corridors to Clearwater country, and have a special presentation featuring Ron Marquart's solo backpack trip in Meadow Creek Roadless Area. Maybe you will be inspired to host a home gathering, too!

FOC made positive headway for protecting wildlands, waterways and wildlife in 2015. Now it's time to remain vigilant and collectively work to protect more of Clearwater country. Every member and donation makes us a more robust organization. Consider passing this newsletter on to a young person or potential member, renew your membership, or make a donation for a specific project that concerns you. Our goal is to gain 100 new members this year and raise \$144,000 to protect the wildest country left in the Lower 48. All donations are tax-deductible. Please visit: [friendsoftheclearwater.org/get-involved](http://friendsoftheclearwater.org/get-involved)

FOC is hosting three more potlucks this year, along with more local home gatherings so stay tuned!

## 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!





US Fish &amp; Wildlife Service Photo Credit

### **US Fish & Wildlife Service agrees to status review for Fisher Brett Haverstick**

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In 2014, Friends of the Clearwater, and allies, filed a notice of intent to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for failing to respond to a petition to protect the northern Rockies fisher under the Endangered Species Act. Earlier this year, the agency (finally!) issued a statement stating, indeed, the imperiled critter may warrant such protection. Scientists within the agency are now embarking on a 12-month status review to determine the next course of action. The agency recently classified the northern Rockies fisher as genetically unique from Fishers in the East and on the West Coast.

The Fisher has rounded ears, a pointed snout, and weighs between 3-13 pounds. It is a member of the weasel family and preys on squirrels, mice, grouse, other small birds and porcupine. It supplements its diet with insects, berries and occasional carrion. Despite its name, it rarely eats fish.

The northern Rockies fisher prefers dense, old growth coniferous forests. Their range once included northeastern Washington, Idaho, Montana, northwest Wyoming and north-central Utah. Today, populations appear to be limited to the border between Idaho and Montana. The best available science suggests only a few hundred fishers remain in the northern Rockies region. Fisher found in the Clearwater may be the healthiest populations.

The plight of this rare carnivore can be attributed to trapping, road building, logging and climate change. Trapping of Fisher is legal in Montana, “incidental” trapping of Fisher in Idaho has dramatically increased, while the species continues to be affected by road building and logging on the National Forests. Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of fires in the region, too, which can affect the denning behavior of this nimble predator. To learn more please visit: [www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/northern-rocky-fisher](http://www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/northern-rocky-fisher)



US Fish &amp; Wildlife Service Photo Credit

### **Federal judge rules Idaho must stop illegal trapping of lynx Brett Haverstick**

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Canada lynx are listed as threatened on the federal endangered species list. In 2014, Friends of the Clearwater and allies filed a lawsuit against the state of Idaho and the Idaho Fish & Game Department for failing to protect lynx from trapping in the state. A number of lynx have been victims of “incidental trapping” in Idaho the last few years. As noted on page 7, a judge recently agreed with our group that Idaho must put restrictions into place that protect this rare cat from being injured, harassed, killed or even released from traps intended for other animals.

The Canada lynx has huge feet, protruding ears and weighs between 15-40 pounds. Its primary prey is the snowshoe hare, with squirrels, grouse and other rodents rounding out its diet. This solitary hunter is largely nocturnal but has more diurnal tendencies during winter.

Lynx depend on dense conifer forests for denning and security. Populations are found in Alaska, and across Canada, as well as parts of Washington, Idaho and Montana. Individual lynx have been seen in Colorado and Utah. There are approximately one hundred lynx in Idaho. A Forest Service biologist had a confirmed sighting along the Lochsa River in the early 2000s.

The future of this long-legged critter is uncertain. Its decline is largely attributed to habitat loss and fragmentation from road building and logging on the National Forests. Motorized recreation is also a threat, particularly snowmobiling. Trapping has always been a threat to the beautiful animal, especially with recreational trapping increasing, overall, in Idaho the last few years.

According to the judge’s decision, Idaho has 90-days to produce a plan that complies with the Endangered Species Act. Trapping restrictions may include the prohibition of Conibear traps, neck snares, and certain leg-hold traps, plus a 24-hour trap-checking standard. The court’s ruling affects the Idaho Panhandle and Clearwater regions. Learn more at [www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/lynx](http://www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/lynx)



## Giving thanks to those that give Brett Haverstick

Friends of the Clearwater hosted its Annual Meeting & Gathering on November 7, 2015. Approximately, 100-people attended the family-friendly event at the 1912 Center in Moscow. There was the usual delicious community potluck, electric silent auction, live music (thank you Jeanne McHale!), board elections and awards ceremony.

We would like to welcome five new members to our Board of Directors: Chris Norden, Lucinda Simpson, Bill LaVoie, Eva Hallvik and Elliott Moffett. Combined, they bring a wealth of knowledge, culture and ideas to our organization. We are very fortunate to have them and we greatly appreciate their time and energy.

This year's award ceremony featured a number of individuals and groups dedicated to preserving our collective heritage. One of those individuals is Keith Hammer of the Swan View Coalition. "The group's work and play is dedicated to conserving community and quiet habitat for fish, wildlife, and people." FOC presented Keith with the "Plank Award" for his strong work over the decades on the Flathead National Forest and throughout the northern Rockies.

Sam Mace, Inland Northwest Director for Save Our Wild Salmon, was presented with an award for the organizations continued efforts to remove the lower four Snake River dams. Sam has been, and continues to be, an insightful and dedicated conservationist working towards the eventual return of a free-flowing lower Snake River. Sam was one of the main organizers behind the *2015 Free the Snake Flotilla & River Recreation Day*. The picture she was awarded is from the Selway drainage, which is the most intact ecosystem and anadromous fishery left in the Lower 48. Breaching the lower four Snake River dams would make it that much more productive!

The newly formed Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment was honored with an award for the non-profit's important work in protecting the environment of the traditional lands of the Nez Perce Tribe. Julian Matthews, Paulette Smith and Lucinda Simpson received the award on behalf of the organization. FOC is fortunate to have a good relationship with the group, and we are looking forward to working with them on many issues important to us all.

We would also like to once again thank all the volunteers in our community that dedicate their time, and help us with various tasks in the office and in the field. We can't do what we do nearly as well without your efforts. It's a pleasure working with so many fantastic and hard-working people who care about place. Our collective efforts will only lead to stronger protections for the federal public lands and fish and wildlife in the Clearwater Basin and throughout the northern Rockies bioregion. Keep it wild!



Enjoying a pre-event hike on Moscow Mountain

Fritz Knorr Photo Credit



Keith Hammer with the Swan View Coalition

Fritz Knorr Photo Credit



Thank you to the Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment

Fritz Knorr Photo Credit



Sam Mace with Save our Wild Salmon

Fritz Knorr Photo Credit



**Friends of the Clearwater and allies organized a public rally on the steps of the Idaho state capitol building in response to the aerial gunning of 20-wolves on the Clearwater National Forest. The USDA Wildlife Services, in conjunction with the Idaho Department Fish and Game, has gunned down 62-wolves in the Clearwater over the last three years.**

**Gary Grimm Photo Credit**

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