



# CLEARWATER DEFENDER

## NEWS OF THE BIG WILD

A PUBLICATION OF  
FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

ISSUED QUARTERLY  
SUMMER 2016, NO.2

### **The Selway: A Wild and Scenic River** **Guest Opinion, Linwood Laughy**

In over 60 years of calling Clearwater Country *home*, I never thought I would see a clearcut slashed across north central Idaho's Wild & Scenic Selway River hillsides. However, today, along a four-mile stretch upstream from the Selway's confluence with the Lochsa, visitors can see three large clearcuts – for years to come, visual scars. Up close, acres of chaotic logging debris.

In 2011, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest officials declared themselves “lacking authority” to stop the turning over of the contiguous Wild & Scenic Lochsa-Clearwater, US Highway 12 corridor to Big Oil as an industrial truck route for gargantuan Asian-made equipment being transported to Canada's tar sands. Instead, thanks to continuous citizen vigilance and protests by members of Friends of the Clearwater, the Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho Rivers United and many others, resulting in a movement that garnered national attention and legal action by Advocates for the West, a U.S. District Court halted the megaloads.

Now it seems the Selway corridor is up for grabs. In 2014 the Johnson Bar fire burned hillsides and ridges along the lower river creating a mosaic blend of some dead and some still living green trees. In 2015, forest officials approved large clearcuts on two swaths of private land, both under scenic easements purchased by American taxpayers. The USFS also enabled a third Selway corridor clearcut on Idaho Department of Lands' acreage. Thus, today, three completed cuts.

Also in 2015, USFS officials approved additional large-scale logging projects, to begin in May 2016, within the Selway corridor. However, in March 2016, plaintiffs Friends of the Clearwater and Idaho Rivers United, again represented by Advocates for the West lawyers, claimed forest officials had violated the National Forest Management Act, the National Environmental Protection Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in approving these additional projects. Three days before logging was to begin, a federal judge found the plaintiffs had met all four legal requirements for the granting of a requested preliminary injunction—including the strong probability FOC and IRU would win their case on the merits. The following week the Nez Perce-Clearwater's forest supervisor announced she was rescinding the Record of De-



**Clearcuts on private and state land mar the landscape along the famed Wild & Scenic Selway River corridor. A federal judge recently granted an injunction request brought forth by Advocates for the West on behalf of Idaho Rivers United and Friends of the Clearwater, which stopped more clearcutting on federal lands in the corridor.**

Alpha One Photo Credit

cision that had authorized the project.

Yes, the unfolding Lochsa-Clearwater-Selway Wild & Scenic story is about megaloads and clearcuts – plus sediment, threatened and endangered fish, the application and current status of USFS Wild & Scenic corridor plans, and upholding the ‘outstanding values’ of Wild and Scenic Rivers. Yes, this story is about the failure of federal government officials to uphold federal law, and about the absolute necessity for conservationists to demand – at times using experienced environmental legal muscle – adherence to the law.

For those particularly vehement in their criticism of “those damned environmentalists,” I raise a question: If America is a nation of laws, which laws should the federal government itself be allowed to violate? If our government can violate the National Environmental Policy Act or the Clean Water Act or the Endangered Species Act, that same government could ignore laws protecting gun rights or personal property rights or voter rights.

Environmentalists who force the federal government to obey federal laws protect not only the environment, but also the public interest and the legal rights of all Americans.

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FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

THE CLEARWATER DEFENDER  
IS A PUBLICATION OF:

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



David Hall Photo Credit

Congratulations to the Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment (NPE) for receiving the City of Moscow 2016 Mayor's "Earth Day Award" for their work as a local non-profit organization. NPE strives to educate and promote activism within the Nez Perce Tribe and beyond. The group is committed to "protecting Tribal Treaty rights within their original ceded area and usual and accustomed places." Pictured above (left to right) are Lucinda Simpson, Moscow Mayor Bill Lambert, Vonda Bybee and Elliott Moffett. Lucinda and Elliott also serve on the Friends of the Clearwater Board of Directors. Friends of the Clearwater considers the Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment a strong ally, and we are fortunate to be able to work with them on issues we all care about. Learn more at [nimiipuuprotecting.org](http://nimiipuuprotecting.org)

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**Take a stand  
Ashley Lipscomb**

What is *standing* and why is it so important? Pondering creative ways to package a “Forest Watch” program, without watering down our core programming, brought about a three-fold idea of what standing really means to wildlands protection.

Ecologically speaking, trees (standing and downed) provide crucial habitat for wildlife and bank stabilization for healthy rivers and tributaries. Spending time hiking (standing) on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests provides first-hand knowledge that can aide in public comment opportunities. Lastly, our membership can gain legal standing in the courtroom as a declarant if they spend time in a particular area and feel “harmed” by a project proposed for that site.

Friends of the Clearwater is hoping to use this unique approach to further promote how the law works and how citizens can become more involved. We hope to work with university students this fall to develop interactive maps on our website with placed-based information for project proposals in different parts of Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. This will hopefully lead to more people *taking a stand* for the largest undeveloped watershed complex in the Lower 48!

We’ve been focusing on growing our membership this past winter and spring. Thanks to Charles and Leslie Ray for helping organize a presentation at the HUB Mountain House in McCall, Idaho that focused on the connections between the Frank Church- River of No Return Wilderness and Clearwater Country. Thirty people, including boaters, retired federal employees and wildland lovers, joined us!

We are grateful to Ron and Cay Marquart for hosting 18 people at their lovely home in Boise. Ron shared a slideshow of his most recent annual backpacking trip into the vast Meadow Creek Roadless Area. He topped it off with a humorous, but important, discussion on essential backcountry survival skills. FOC hopes to travel south again in October.

Let’s toast to Eric and Jan Jensen for hosting the first rousing “Wine and Wilderness” tasting event this past April. Several Paso Robles California wineries donated libations, including Herman Story Wines, Denner Vineyards and Villa Creek Cellars. It was such a good time that we are planning another tasting in 2017. Eric and Jan plan to pick out Pino Noirs from Anderson Valley, California! Thank you to the Palouse Wine Tasters for lending glassware, and to Bill Voxman for donating beautiful landscape prints for purchase at this spring’s gathering.

As we float into summer, remember to lace up your hiking boots, throw on your backpack, snap photos, and tell FOC what you see out there in wild Idaho. Let’s continue to *stand* on the landscape and protect Clearwater Country. Thank you for all your wonderful support!



“Wine & Wilderness” was a huge success!  
FOC File Photo



Thanks to everybody in McCall that came out!  
Charles Ray Photo Credit

**RIVER ODYSSEY  
WEST ADVENTURES  
RAFFLE**

Win a 1-day rafting trip on the Wild & Scenic Middle Fork Clearwater River and spend the evening in a glamping tent at the River Dance Lodge in Syringa, Idaho

**Tickets are 2/\$5**  
**Purchase tix at any FOC event**  
**Trip is redeemable 7/1/17 - 8/31/17**

Winner will be announced at the FOC “Annual Meeting & Gathering”  
11/5/2016

## Monitoring the Clearwater

### Guest Opinion

#### Ty Styhl, University of Idaho student

My family and I relocated to Moscow last July so I could finish my education at the University of Idaho. Most of my life I lived in the dry, rugged mountains of south-east Idaho, far from the rolling, wheat-covered hills of the Palouse. With the rigors of college and the demands of family, my ability to venture into the mountains, which are seemingly in Moscow's backyard, was limited. Therefore, when Brett with Friends of the Clearwater approached me this past semester to assist in timber sale monitoring, I excitedly accepted the new opportunity. The prospect of meeting like-minded individuals and exploring the new and unknown was reason enough to participate. Yet, my motivation was much deeper.

As a fifth generation Idahoan, I have a strong passion for the wilds of Idaho, and feel an innate responsibility to protect and conserve the place that my great-grandparents called home, and one day, great-grandchildren will call home. Using monitoring as a tool, FOC and their volunteers can effectively demand accountability for the management of our public lands by assessing the necessity and legality of logging operations.

The dates were set for late May and a half-dozen volunteers were set to learn valuable timber monitoring skills within the Clearwater drainage. Once my daughters returned from school, we piled in the truck, dogs and all, and set out for new adventures. The weekend weather forecast was bleak, but our spirits were high and positive energy pushed us forward. Our destination was Johnson Bar, a campground nestled along the eastern bank of the Selway River, where the remainder of the monitoring cohorts had already congregated. Upon arrival, we were greeted with smiles and friendly faces. We passed around introductions and communally dined on homemade chili and cornbread. As the sun set, we gathered around a fire and listened to FOC member Linwood Laughy tell stories of Nez Perce and Clearwater Country history.

Early the next morning we had a camp-cooked breakfast with coffee and set off for the first round of monitor training. We arrived to a proposed 300-acre timber sale unit, organized our gear, and curiously listened to Karen Coulter with the Blue Mountain Biodiversity Project explain protocols, data management and safety considerations. We then filed off the dusty road and into the forest (proposed timber sale). Karen immediately began identifying plants of special interest and plant communities that are used to determine successional stages of forest growth and habitat types. As we pressed on, we found and recorded animal signs. Black bear, rocky mountain elk, and pileated woodpeck-



A very big thank you to Karen Coulter of the Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project! FOC File Photos

ers certainly frequented the area. We took measurements of old growth trees and identified them, with Karen providing instruction and assistance when needed. Similarly, we took photos of downed old growth logs and snags as a reference, since these forest features provide essential nutrient cycling and microhabitats. Farther into the hike, we recorded canopy closure, slope and aspect, riparian buffers, past logging activities and old growth trees. After making a loop back to the forest road, we gathered and reflected about whether the proposed logging sale was justified, with each individual extending their thoughts and recommendations.

I hope that our monitoring effort will help halt the proposed logging operation. The area that we explored was teeming with wildlife and wonder! Thick understory and towering overstory provided a sense of separation from our modern world and a sense of serenity. Logging the area will surely corrupt that essence. Idaho deserves its perpetual beauty, as our state motto suggests. Yet, I too often see clear cuts, skid roads, and other scars left behind from logging. The utilitarian view of our natural resources should be one of the past. Our children and grandchildren are entitled to the same opportunities that we have today: the opportunity to escape city lights, reconnect with nature’s simplicity and appreciate the great expanses that surround us in our great state. *Esto perpetua!*

Big thanks to Karen Coulter, Linwood Laughy and all those that participated and made the forest monitoring training possible.



Ty Styhl Photo Credit

**Field Monitoring Opportunities**

1. Pre- and Post-Timber Sales
2. Off-Road Vehicle Abuse
3. Wilderness Character
4. Suction-Dredge Mining

If you are interested in any of these please call our office at 208-882-9755.

**Your efforts help us keep it wild!**

**Other Spring 2016 happenings**



Congratulations to Gary (left) for receiving the Kootenai Environmental Alliance’s *Art Manley Lifetime Conservation Award* in recognition of his “sustained efforts in furtherance of conserving, protecting and restoring the environment.”  
KEA Photo Credit



Members of the Kootenai Environmental Alliance and Friends of the Clearwater demonstrated in front of the Idaho Department Fish & Game office in Coeur d’Alene to draw attention to the aerial gunning of wolves in Idaho.

Della Munich Photo Credit



Thanks to the Palouse group - Sierra Club and everyone that volunteered at our Moscow Renaissance Fair crepes booth!

Tom Hansen Photo Credit

## Around the Clearwater

### Gary Macfarlane

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#### National Issues

The theme of “Adios National Forests”, suggested by FOC Board Member and retired Clearwater National Forest fish biologist Al Espinosa, was intended to convey the dire threats assaulting public lands from many quarters, including legislation intended to privatize, commodify and commercialize public lands. Looking at the big picture in Congress, there have been a plethora of bad bills reported on in past *Defender* issues. While most have yet to pass (thankfully), the fear remains that last minute deals could help dismantle the public land system.

Representative Labrador (R-ID) has a bill, *HR 2316*, that would let states and local entities manage portions of the national forest system under a “pilot program” without following most environmental or public participation laws. This is a step toward stealing public lands from all American citizens. The bill just passed the House Natural Resources Committee but has not yet passed the full House. You can contact House members at [house.gov](http://house.gov).

The House Energy Bill, which is going back to the Senate as *S 2012*, contains bad provisions that would essentially repeal the Wilderness Act. Wilderness Watch noted, if passed, the bill would:

- “Allow almost unlimited damage or manipulation to Wildernesses if there are any remote connection to hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, or wildlife management;
- Permit such damaging projects as dam construction, construction of ‘temporary’ roads’; logging or chaining if done for wildlife browse; motor vehicle driving; bulldozer and backhoe use; construction of cabins if done for any connection to fish or wildlife; and much more;
- Effectively strip the wild from Wilderness by allowing managers to engage in any and all sorts of habitat manipulation projects, including logging, burning, chaining, dam building, or similar projects, as well as predator control or any other action designed to provide more game species;
- Prohibit environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for any of the above damaging projects;
- Remove the wolf in the Great Lakes States and Wyoming from the protections afforded under the Endangered Species Act; and

- Expedite mining on public lands without meaningful environmental review.”

The Senate is considering this legislation and there may be a conference between the House and the Senate. You can call or write your senators today at [senate.gov](http://senate.gov) and tell them to reject this awful bill outright because of the wilderness-damaging and wildlife-harming measures and because the legislation, itself, will lead to more pollutants.

The Western Slope No-Fee Coalition recently alerted citizens to a couple of pieces of legislation by asking this question, “Is Congress trying to pass the bill as stealth legislation, feeding us, a little at a time, provisions that we would never swallow if we saw the whole thing?”

For example, the Coalition noted that Representative Bishop (R-UT) “introduced *HR 4680*, which deals with the National Park Service’s Centennial but slipped in amongst the language about the Parks” are some disconcerting provisions that would raise fees on seniors and change the way funds from senior passes are allocated, giving most of it to the Park Service rather than the more poorly funded BLM and Forest Service.

The Coalition noted that *HR 5129*, introduced by Representative LaMalfa (R-CA) “is mainly concerned with revisions to the way commercial outfitter-guide permits are issued. But hidden among provisions to streamline permitting for outfitters is stealth language that would authorize charging ordinary, non-commercial visitors a special recreation permit fee for all use of ‘special areas.’ Since neither ‘special’ nor ‘area’ is defined, this would open the door to declaring everyplace ‘special’ and require everyone to have a permit, and pay a fee, just to be there.”

You can call or write your House member today at [house.gov](http://house.gov) and let them know that we are citizens, not customers of the federal land management agencies. Such efforts to commodify public lands is, yet, another step toward eventual privatization.

#### Clearwater Issues

Aside from the good news about the Johnson Bar proposed salvage sale in the wild Selway drainage, there is other news about the logging program on the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests. As of press time, we had heard there are some major changes in other proposed salvage sales, which could reduce the potential damage from those sales. We will be reviewing those decisions when they come out in the very near future.

The Nez Perce Tribe recently filed a lawsuit on the Clear Creek Timber Sale. The Tribe was concerned that logging and road building would harm water quality in Clear Creek, which also supplies water for a fish hatchery. We applaud this legal effort. FOC is discussing legal options with

our attorneys on the Clear Creek timber sale/project as well. Largely due to concerns over Clear Creek, the Tribe also withdrew from the Clearwater Basin Collaborative (CBC) earlier this year. The Tribe, while expressing appreciation of the relationships within the CBC, noted that the Clear Creek Timber Sale “is at cross purposes with the Tribe’s own resource-conservation work and priorities.” Past *Defender* issues have documented serious problems with how collaborative groups may help facilitate circumvention of environmental and public involvement laws.

As of press time, we learned that the decision on what trails would be open to motorized use in the St. Joe Ranger District has been finalized. We are currently reviewing the decision because it affects Grandmother Mountain and a portion of Mallard-Larkins.

FOC and AWR filed an objection on the Nez Perce National Forest Travel Plan. Idaho Conservation League (ICL) and the Wilderness Society filed a separate objection. Both objections were concerned about proposed motorized use in roadless Meadow Creek, a potential addition to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. A final decision is not expected until later this summer.

The draft decision of the Clearwater Travel Plan has been released. However, it only deals with a portion of the Clearwater National Forest the agency recommended as Wilderness in 1987. The Forest Service is foot-dragging on complying with the judge’s order on our lawsuit victory on the travel plan from 2015.

FOC objected to a proposal by the Forest Service to allow suction-dredge mining on the South Fork Clearwater. That river is closed to recreational suction-dredge mining until practices are implemented and permits obtained to protect water quality and fish habitat. While the Forest Service put some mitigation measures on this type of mining in the final decision, less destructive forms of mining could have been pursued. Last year, miners openly flaunted agency closures. Only two have been charged by the EPA and not until the past two weeks. We will follow this issue.



Suction-dredge mining continues to threaten the S. Fork Clearwater

FOC File Photo



A view of the Fourth of July Creek drainage in the spectacular Weitas Creek roadless area

FOC File Photo

### **A guide to interpreting Forest Service terminology**

- 1. Harvest** = Logging, clearcutting
- 2. Thinning** = More logging
- 3. Salvage** = Even more logging (post-fire)
- 4. Forest Health** = Code for logging and thinning across the National Forests
- 5. Restoration** = Decommissioning a few miles of roads or replacing culverts to justify extensive logging
- 6. Ecosystem Services** = Managing for logs
- 7. Collaboration** = Efforts to log more by undermining our public land laws
- 8. Stakeholders** = Industry or groups that participate in collaboratives
- 9. Citizens** = People who don’t count
- 10. Access** = Motorized use only, year-round

## Our great-grandchildren's Idaho Guest Opinion, Rifka Helton

Growing up wild in Idaho, our family lived immersed in the rhythms of Nature. Parented to appreciate every rising sun, quaking aspen and limey fruticose lichen, the Clearwater was the centerpiece of our magical sanctuary and feasting grounds. For years, Dad foraged and mom prepared the native game, pheasant, grouse, wild fishes and buckets of huckleberries plucked and dropped into Folgers cans.

While spearheading decades of family outings and wilderness adventures, professor emeritus Dr. A.W. Helton served the University of Idaho as a research plant scientist from 1951-1986. Whether for work or play, his 35mm camera was ever near, and he managed to capture the heart and soul of an era. For decades the slides remained closeted and forgotten.

In 2001, Dad's Kodachrome images of 1950s and 1960's Idaho were discovered and *My Father's Idaho* was born. Preservation of the collection, via digital archiving, giclee printing and movie making, took place in southern Idaho. In the fall of 2015, Moscow got its first peek at the archive, when 52-framed prints (now on view at Edward Jones/Moscow) were presented by the Moscow Chamber of Commerce in a 6-week exhibition, ending October 30, 2015. Soon after, plans were initiated to include *My Father's Idaho* as a "Special Collection and Archive" in the University of Idaho Library. Idaho Public Television's segment on the project was also nominated for a regional Emmy.

At first glance, 15-years ago, I was instantly inspired by the autos, clothing and pristine vistas of our recent history. I knew Dad had captured *precious gold*. As a professional musician, I was inspired to compose "Songs for Idaho." As eldest daughter of the photographer, Red Helton, it has been a privilege to work alongside him, shaping the presentation of his images, recording his stories and collaborating on a multimedia presentation for all ages. Dad says "Idaho is the artist" and I couldn't agree more!

Over the years, the show has played in campgrounds, galleries and even the beautiful Shore Lodge, in McCall. If you are interested in bringing *My Father's Idaho* to your town, please visit [myfathersidaho.org](http://myfathersidaho.org) or write to [myfathersidaho@gmail.com](mailto:myfathersidaho@gmail.com).

### \* *My Father's Idaho* Tour Schedule

August 16 Genesee, ID 7:00pm Senior Center  
August 17 Troy, ID 7:00pm Lions Club  
August 23 Potlatch, ID 7:00pm Depot  
August 26 Moscow, ID 5:00pm East City Park

\* Thank you Latah County Community Foundation for providing a generous grant for the tour!



Elk River hunting camp in the 1950's  
Red Helton Photo Credit



The author along the S. Fork Clearwater in the 1970's  
Red Helton Photo Credit



FOC members Lynne Nelson and Bob Barry recently hosted a house party in Palouse, WA. that featured a showing of *My Father's Idaho*. We want to thank Bob & Lynne for opening up their beautiful home to us! We also want to thank Rifka Helton for the wonderful program that touched everyone's heart in the room. Keep Idaho wild!

Monica Bando Photo Credit



## Lost friends

We lost a great friend and ally recently, Guy Knudsen. I had the great fortune of working with this brilliant and compassionate man. He and Dana Johnson represented FOC on a timber sale lawsuit a few years ago. Guy did this work out of the goodness of his heart. In fact, my recollection is that he contacted us upon hearing about the lawsuit; he wanted to help. He



always had time to meet about the lawsuit in spite of his busy life. Besides being an attorney, he was also a professor of microbial ecology and plant pathology at the University of Idaho. While I didn't know him as well as I would have liked, I was impressed by his broad scope of knowledge and his kindness, a rare trait in one so brilliant.

He was also an accomplished musician. I know many wish they could have heard him play one more time. My condolences go out to his family, his wife Louise-Marie Dandurand, and his children, Liam and Céline. The family generously requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be sent to Friends of the Clearwater. Guy was truly a man for the ages.



David Hall Photo Credit

Our community lost a dear friend with the recent passing of Dave Skinner. Amongst many things, Dave was involved in starting the Palouse Prairie Foundation. He served on the board for a number of years, holding offices of President and Secretary. Dave was also a member of FOC. We offer our condolences to his family.

**Editor's Note: If you are concerned with the potential further loss of native Palouse Prairie, please contact the Palouse Prairie Foundation at [ppf@palouseprairie.org](mailto:ppf@palouseprairie.org) and the Paradise Ridge Defense Coalition at [prdchighway95@gmail.com](mailto:prdchighway95@gmail.com)**

## Summer solstice benefit concert



Smokin' Mojo played two sets of the blues!



Thank you Brad & Sandye for hosting FOC!

We would like to extend a warm thank you to Brad and Sandye Crooks for opening up their home, and hosting the FOC 2016 "Summer Solstice Benefit Concert." The weather was wonderful, and the day was filled with music, food, family, friends and new acquaintances. We couldn't think of a better way to celebrate summer and protecting wild country.

All of the musicians that played were excellent, and we greatly appreciate their time and efforts for raising money for Friends of the Clearwater. Al Chidester was dynamite while playing his guitar and fiddle. Gerry Cortwright and Kate Schalck played some beautiful music as well. Smokin' Mojo followed with two sets of blues featuring classic covers like, "The Thrill is Gone" and others. They also belted out some of their originals too. Smokin' Mojo and Al Chidester have played multiple benefit concerts for FOC over the years and we can't thank them enough.

We want to extend appreciation towards the Moscow Food Co-op and Panhandle Artisan Bread Co. for supporting the benefit concert. The huge food spread was that much nicer because of their generosity.

FOC has been very fortunate over the years to work with many musicians, and we hope to work with more in the future. Stay tuned for an announcement about a potential 2016 Halloween benefit concert.

## Wildlife Services challenged in court

In what has become a sick annual tradition, earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Wildlife Services" aerially gunned down 21 wolves in wild Clearwater country, in what the agencies call "the Lolo zone." This death toll added to aerial gunning counts of 19 wolves in 2015 and 23 in 2014. It also added to the dozens of wolves killed by Wildlife Services at the behest of livestock ranchers around the state each year—and the hundreds of wolves now killed by private hunters and trappers each year. FOC and allies have decided to fire back.

On June 1, attorneys filed a federal court case against Wildlife Services for violating NEPA through its Idaho wolf killing actions, represented by attorneys Talasi Brooks and Laurie Rule of Advocates for the West and Kristin Ruether of Western Watersheds Project (a former FOC employee!).

Wildlife Services' killing is conducted under the auspices of a 2011 environmental assessment which purported to analyze the environmental impacts of the agency's wolf-killing across Idaho. But a close review of this EA reveals that it is deeply flawed and woefully outdated.

The EA was written when wolves were still protected under the Endangered Species Act—as it was published the month before Congress shamefully ordered wolves delisted via a legislative rider. Perhaps the most egregious flaw is that it assumed that wolves would either remain listed, or that a 2008 Idaho Department Fish & Game plan to maintain more than 500 wolves would remain in effect.

But that assumption was incorrect. In fact, after delisting, IDFG reverted to an anachronistic 2002 plan drafted by the Legislature, calling for a mere 15 wolf packs, or about 150 wolves, in the state.

To implement that goal, IDFG has instituted liberal wolf hunting and trapping seasons that result in the killing of hundreds of wolves per year (256 in 2015). It has also issued new elk management plans that call for aggressive reductions of wolf populations where elk are not meeting IDFG's artificial population objectives—even in wilderness.

Thus, Wildlife Services did not consider any of these serious cumulative impacts on wolves in approving its wolf-killing operations.

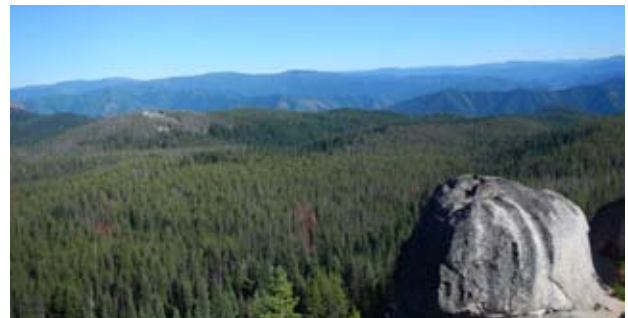
In addition, a wealth of new science in recent years has revealed that killing wolves does not achieve its intended objectives and has unintended consequences. For example, new research has found that common levels of killing wolves actually increases cattle depredation, as intact wolf packs are less likely to predate upon livestock than lone wolves. These findings call into question the basic premise of Wildlife Services' killings for ranchers.

New information has also emerged regarding wolves' importance to trophic cascades, or the effects of large predators that ripple across the ecosystem. For example, the presence of wolves alters elk activity, which in turn alters riparian systems where elk browse. So, removing wolves from watersheds can cause widespread impacts to riparian systems.

For these reasons and others, we are asking Wildlife Services to supplement its analysis of its Idaho wolf killing program and conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement. Importantly, we are asking the court to order Wildlife Services to stop killing wolves in Idaho until it has done so. We're proud to bring some much-needed scrutiny onto Wildlife Services, which has traditionally operated behind the scenes, and hope this action will lead to less persecution of wild Idaho wolves.

**Editor's Note: Thank you to attorneys at Advocates for the West and Western Watersheds Project for representing Predator Defense, Center for Biological Diversity, WildEarth Guardians, Western Watersheds Project and FOC in court. We greatly appreciate their time and expertise. Learn more: [friendsoftheclearwater.org/lawsuit-against-wildlife-services](http://friendsoftheclearwater.org/lawsuit-against-wildlife-services).**

**Before going to print, USDA Wildlife Services released their nationwide wildlife killing numbers. The agency claimed to kill 3.2-million animals, including over 68,000 coyotes, 700 bobcats, 450 bears, 350 wolves and 250 cougars. According to Brooks Fahy of Predator Defense, the total number of animals slaughtered in 2015 is higher than what the agency is reporting.**



The vast roadless terrain of the N. Fork Clearwater drainage makes up a large chunk of the IDFG termed "Lolo Zone."  
FOC File Photo

### **Clearwater Country Report** [friendsoftheclearwater.org/newsroom](http://friendsoftheclearwater.org/newsroom)

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

# NOT ONE ACRE!

## Upper Lochsa Land Exchange

### Senator Risch passes on land exchange legislation

U.S. Senator Jim Risch (R-ID) has announced that he will not pursue legislation to authorize the contentious Upper Lochsa Land Exchange. The Senator's office sent a letter to Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell explaining that public opposition was too strong to trade 39,000-acres of lands near the headwaters of the Lochsa River for other public lands on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. Western Pacific Timber owns the badly cut-over land in the upper Lochsa.

As reported in the Friends of the Clearwater *Spring 2016 Defender*, Senator Risch held a public meeting in Grangeville, ID in November of last year. Over three-hundred people attended the meeting, with the vast majority speaking in opposition. According to the letter sent to Chief Tidwell's office, 97% of the public comments received by Senator Risch's staff following the meeting were also opposed to the exchange. The letter concluded with, "A critical mass of consensus is essential to resolving this issue. That does not exist now and is not even close at this time."

It's important to note that in his letter, Senator Risch also noted that Western Pacific Timber is already looking at a different proposal(s) than the current one, and that, "Indeed conditions will change and the downside of managing the lands as a checker-boarded operation rather than as a consolidated operation will undoubtedly get worse. Pressure to make a change will not go away but will build."

Friends of the Clearwater continues to advocate for a complete purchase that would result in the 39,000-acres of land returning rightfully to the public domain. While a complete purchase has its challenges, too, it would ultimately resolve the checker-board situation, simplifying on-the-ground-management, and beginning the process of restoring the lands to the important values they once served. Learn more at [friendsoftheclearwater.org/upper-lochsa-land-exchange-not-in-the-public-interest](http://friendsoftheclearwater.org/upper-lochsa-land-exchange-not-in-the-public-interest).



Art by Emma Gerrish

### Hope for the wolverine

Federal Judge Dana Christenson ruled earlier this year that the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) erred in not protecting the wolverine under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ruling was in response to a lawsuit brought forth by a coalition of conservation groups, including Friends of the Clearwater. Earthjustice represented the plaintiffs.

You may recall that in 2013 the federal agency proposed to list the wolverine under the ESA. Agency biologists had concluded that the small population (there are approximately only 300 wolverines in the Lower 48), genetic isolation and the impacts of global warming qualified the species for federal protection. Female wolverines and kits (their young) depend on deep snowpack in the spring for denning.

About a year after the agency's nod towards listing the wolverine as threatened under the ESA, a group of Western states, including Idaho, questioned the certainty of computer models used by the agency to determine the affect of climate change on the species. In 2014, USFWS issued a final decision, and wrongfully denied protection. Learn more at [friendsoftheclearwater.org/court-overturms-government-refusal-to-protect-wolverine](http://friendsoftheclearwater.org/court-overturms-government-refusal-to-protect-wolverine).

### NREPA Introduced in the Senate

The Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA) was recently introduced in the Senate (*S 3022*) by U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). Seven other members of the Senate are co-sponsors. A version was introduced in the House in 2015.

NREPA would permanently protect 1800-miles of rivers and streams under the National Wild & Scenic River System. NREPA would designate 23-million acres of roadless wildlands as Wilderness in Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. Places like Weitas Creek and Meadow Creek roadless areas, along with other unprotected roadless areas in the Clearwater Basin, would be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

NREPA would also connect greater ecosystems through a series of protected biological corridors, giving native species a greater chance to adapt to climate change.



It's time to breach the four lower Snake River dams! Deb Alperin Photo Credit

FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SCREENING OF THE DOCUMENTARY RETURN OF THE RIVER

**Monday September 12 at 6:00pm**

KENWORTHY PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE, DOWNTOWN MOSCOW

W/ PALOUSE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COALITION

FREE THE SNAKE FLOTILLA & RIVER RECREATION DAY

**Saturday September 17 at 8:00am**

CHIEF TIMOTHY PARK, CLARKSTON WASHINGTON

LEARN MORE AT [FREETHE\\_SNAKE.COM](http://FREETHE_SNAKE.COM)