



CLEARWATER DEFENDER

NEWS OF THE BIG WILD

A PUBLICATION OF
FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

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WINTER 2013, NO.1

Federal Protection Is Warranted For The Imperiled Wolverine Gary Macfarlane

The big news is that wolverines are now officially proposed for listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act! The US Fish and Wildlife Service made the announcement on February 4, 2013. This is good and bad news; good, in that maybe now they will receive the attention they deserve. It is bad news, however, that wolverines are threatened. Furthermore, it looks like there will be no initial habitat protection measures.

The status of wolverines in Idaho and in the greater Clearwater country (north of the Salmon River to the upper St. Joe), in particular, is an interesting story. Since the late 1980s, when the first systematic attempts were made to collect data on wolverine distribution in Idaho, it has become clear that wolverines need wild country. The first study in Idaho began in the 1990s by Jeff Copeland, then a student of Dr. Jim Peek at the University of Idaho. That study was centered around the Sawtooth Mountains and revealed that wolverines travel far. One wolverine traveled to the Lochsa and back, apparently crossing the Salmon River near the Cove-Mallard area.

Censusing techniques that snag hair samples have found wolverines in the Clearwater country. In a 2002 report by Predator Conservation Alliance titled, "Keeping the Wild in the West: A Multi-Species Carnivore Initiative for the American West," the authors noted the Clearwater region was one of the few known population areas for wolverines in the lower 48 states. The two main population areas are the Glacier/Bob Marshall country in Montana and the Big Wild in Central/north-Central Idaho. The Clearwater country is the northern half of the latter area.

Little is known about wolverines in Idaho, or almost anywhere else, for that matter. They have been traditionally thought of as a wilderness-dependent species. Indeed, a scientist stated, "Habitat requirements appear to be large, isolated tracts of wilderness supporting a diverse prey base, rather than specific plant associations or topography." {Banci, V. 1986. cited in Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) Biology and Management: A Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography, Butts, T.W. 1992. USDA Forest Service Northern Region}.



Crucial Wolverine Habitat Exists In The Clearwater National Park Service Photo Credit

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Plan assessment (2012) states:

According to Copeland and Yates (2006) a primary concern presently facing land management agencies is the potential impact of human activities, primarily winter recreation, on wolverine reproductive denning. Per Beucking (1998), "...female wolverines tend to select reproductive den sites that are remote and difficult to access." Copeland and Yates (2006) further state that the movement of kits to less suitable habitat as a result of interface with winter recreationists may result in detrimental energy expenditures, stress and susceptibility to predation, exposure, competition for den sights, or other negative impacts. Motorized winter recreation may present a threat to wolverines; studies are ongoing to determine the extent and nature.

Desired wolverine habitat conditions include remote mountainous, subalpine forest habitats, regardless of structural stages, where motorized human disturbance is unlikely, particularly during denning and nursing period (February–May).

See Wolverine page 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1	WOLVERINE LISTED
PAGE 2	WILD BOOK REVIEW
PAGE 3	OUTREACH CORNER
PAGE 5	TAKE ACTION
PAGE 6	CLEARWATER ROUND-UP
PAGE 8	EVENTS CALENDAR

The Environmental Justice by Adam M. Sowards

In his youth, William O. Douglas roamed the eastern foothills of the Cascade Range near Yakima, Washington. Marked by family tragedy and personal challenge, he turned to the wild to seek answers, develop strength and build confidence. He would go on to earn a scholarship to Whitman College and then a law degree from Columbia University. Douglas would eventually become the second youngest person to be appointed to the US Supreme Court.

With road development threatening more and more wild places, Douglas went on to lead two campaigns that captivated the attention of America: the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Hike (1954) and the Olympic Beach Hike (1958). Both campaigns were successful.

Douglas's charismatic personality, along with his connections to leading conservationists, journalists, and politicians in Washington D.C., put him at the forefront of the environmental movement in the 60's and 70's. His emphasis on establishing Committees of Correspondence across America still resonates today.

If there was ever a mountain of a man, it was William O. Douglas.

Reviewed by Brett Haverstick

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FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

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

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

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

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Reaching Out To You Brett Haverstick

First and foremost, happy new year. We hope that you got a chance to unplug over the holidays and spend time with your friends and family. I, for one, was able to get out of the area and see the ocean. Living in north-central Idaho is a wildland wonderland, but we don't have a view of the Pacific!

We are proud to announce that we have two interns this semester. Noah Hoff, of Washington State University, is serving as our *Community Organizing Intern*. Reba Eggert, of the University of Idaho, will be working with Gary to put together a *2012 Clearwater Basin Wildland Fire Assessment Report*. Lastly, Jeremy Jenkins, a former intern and GIS-specialist, will be working with Gary on various projects.

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to the *Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse*. Founded in 2009, the market is designed to promote local charitable giving in the Moscow-Pullman area during the holidays. As a participant in the recent December market, FOC raised \$924.22! We would also like to recognize FOC board member Diane Prorak for her work in getting us involved with this event.

Circle your calendars for **Friday February 15**. Our good friend Dr. Freb Rabe is hosting a *Hoodoo Roadless Area Potluck* at his house to celebrate the publication of another roadless area booklet. The house party will feature a power-point presentation of the area, also known as Kelly Creek, and copies of the booklet will be available for you to view or take home. Please bring a dish or something to drink. The party is family friendly.

On **Tuesday March 5** we are proud to sponsor *North American Predators: Management of Large Predators Across North America Over The Last Thirty Years*. University of Idaho professor emeritus Dr. Jim Peek, who chaired an international committee of biologists that conducted the study, will deliver the presentation in the Great Room of the 1912 Center. The program begins promptly at 7pm. You don't want to miss this!

On **Saturday March 9** grab a friend and come out to hear some live music in the Great Room of the 1912 Center. The *2013 FOC Benefit Concert* will feature a number of musicians from the greater-Moscow community, ranging from blues to folk to rock n' roll. Sliding scale admission at the door, \$1 raffle, plus a cash bar and finger foods. Go to www.saveourhomeland.us/foc for event details. Music will be playing between 7pm and 12am.

From **March 31 - April 6** a select group of Lewis-Clark State College students will be participating in the *Hell's Canyon Institute*, a yearly experiential program offered through the college which explores the geology,



Jeanne & Fritz Playing At The 2012 Annual Meeting
FOC File Photo

ecology, natural history and politics that have shaped the deepest gorge in North America. We are excited to spend a day with this year's students and speak with them about the Hells Canyon Greater Ecosystem and where it fits into the visionary Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA).

Last but not least, we will be teaming up with University of Idaho professor Tami Goetz and her students for a *3-day backpacking trip up the Selway River* sometime in **mid-April**. This will mark the third consecutive year that FOC will work with students that are developing their outdoor leadership skills, while simultaneously providing them with a forum to learn about the Wilderness Act, 1964 and the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, 1968. This stuff is much more exciting when you do it in the wild!

We are looking for volunteers to help us with the **40th Moscow Renaissance Fair**, which is scheduled for **Saturday May 4 and Sunday May 5, 2013**. As we do every year, FOC will have a yummy crepes booth that will need help setting up and taking down. Where we need the most help, however, is working a 3-hour shift inside the booth over the course of the weekend. This entails cooking, serving and interacting with the public.

If you are interested please call
(208) 882-9755. Thanks!

Wolverine cont. page 1

Thus, scientists have been concerned about possible impacts from winter recreation, especially snowmobiles, on the species when females den and give birth. There is little solid information, though, and the research cited previously suggests there might be problems and concerns. Ongoing studies in the Payette, Boise and Sawtooth National Forests may reveal more information on this specific topic. However, much of the funding for those studies comes from the recreation industry and snowmobile groups. This fact alone, regardless of how professionally those studies are conducted, could affect the way any results are viewed. Indeed, preliminary findings of these studies seem to contradict other research.

As noted above, wolverines have been documented in the Clearwater region. We knew they were definitely here when one was illegally trapped in the 90s as a result of access due to the infamous Cove-Mallard timber sales. There is great habitat for the species in the wilderness and roadless areas throughout the Clearwater.

Editor's Note: Prior to the proposed listing of the wolverine, groups in Montana have been doing important work. See next article.

Further Trapping Won't Recover The Wolverine
Guest Opinion

Arlene Montgomery, Friends Of The Wild Swan

Wolverines, rare carnivores, are facing huge threats from climate change and habitat loss. They resemble a small bear that is custom built for high-elevation mountain living. They have large, crampon-clawed feet designed for digging, climbing, and walking on snow, and an extremely high metabolic rate. Their double fur coat includes a dense inner layer of wool beneath a cover of frost-shedding guard hairs and is the reason trappers target the animal.

Once prolific across the West, the wolverine population in the lower 48 is now down to no more than 250-300 individuals. Montana has the highest concentration of wolverines in the Lower 48, but only account for about 100-175 individuals. A substantial number of the remaining wolverines in Montana are likely unsuccessful breeders or non-breeding subadults. This means Montana's "effective population" of individuals who are able to breed is significantly smaller, perhaps less than 40.

So rare are these native carnivores that in December 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated the wolverine a species that warrants protection under the federal Endangered Species Act, but they



Wolverines Are Incredibly Agile And Graceful
US Fish & Wildlife Service Photo Credit

failed to provide that protection to them. The Service determined that an already small and vulnerable population of wolverines in the lower 48 will continue to decline in the face of climate change, which is causing a reduction in suitable wolverine habitat in Montana (wolverines depend on late spring snow and cold temperatures) and increasing the speed at which isolated populations vanish. Warming temperatures are also increasing the distance, and thus, fragmentation between islands of suitable habitat.

Trapping is a major source of wolverine mortality in Montana and has had significant negative effects on wolverines inhabiting Montana's small, isolated island ranges. In one study, of the 14 wolverines tracked in the Pioneer Mountains during a three-year period, 6 were killed in traps, including four adult males and two pregnant females. As a result of trapping, the wolverine population in the Pioneers was reduced by an estimated 50%. In another study of wolverines on the Flathead National Forest, trapping killed five times more wolverines than natural causes in a population that can ill afford it, killing nearly two-thirds of the wolverines being studied in just five years.

Eight conservation groups represented by the Western Environmental Law Center petitioned, then were forced to sue, the Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to close the wolverine trapping season before December 1, 2012. When the agency failed to do so, the District Court in Montana issued a Temporary Restraining Order stopping the trapping season.

Editor's Note: To learn even more about this imperiled species check out our web site:

<http://www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/wolverine>

**Army Corps of Engineers Lower Snake River
Programmatic Sediment Management Plan
Public Comment Deadline March 26**

The Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) has released a draft environmental impact statement to address the continued accumulation of sediment in the lower Snake River. ACE has adopted Alternative 7 as their preferred alternative, which calls for dredging of the river at the Clearwater/Snake confluence and near the Port of Lewiston and Port of Clarkston.

You can submit a public comment at psmp@usace.army.mil or mail them to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District, PSMP/EIS, Attention: Sandy Shelin, CENWW-PM-PD-EC, 201 North Third Avenue, Walla Walla, Washington 99362-1876. The deadline for comments is Friday, March 26.



**Continued Subsidies On Lower Snake Is Fiscal Chaos
Save Our Wild Salmon Photo Credit**

**Idaho Transportation Department
US 95 Thorncreek Rd. To Moscow Project
Public Comment Deadline February 23**

The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) has released a draft environmental impact statement for the realignment of US 95 between Thorn Creek Road and the southern city limits of Moscow. ITD has chosen E-2 as their preferred alternative, which would take the highway along the base of Paradise Ridge, before meeting up with the current roadbed near the city limits.

You can submit a public comment at comments@itd.idaho.gov or mail them to Office of Communications, P.O. Box 7129, Boise, ID 83707-1129. Comment deadline is Saturday, February 23.

The Paradise Ridge Defense Coalition is up and running and is opposed to the E-2 alternative. Learn more at <http://www.paradise-ridge-defense.org>.

**US Fish & Wildlife Service
Proposal To List The Wolverine
Public Comment Deadline May 6**

On February 4, 2013, the US Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to list wolverines in the lower 48 states as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (see related article). Comments will be accepted until May 6, 2013 on this proposal. Below are some points you might want to consider:

- Encourage the US Fish and Wildlife Service to list wolverines as threatened, as proposed.
- Some research has shown wolverines can be displaced by winter recreation, especially snowmobiles, though other research suggests that some recreation use can be tolerated. Wolverines do avoid roads, when possible. The USFWS should be encouraged to develop conservation measures that take these threats into account.
- If listed, wolverines will be protected from trapping. However, accidental trapping is a threat to wolverines. Now that wolf trapping is occurring in Idaho and Montana, the US Fish and Wildlife Service must develop conservation measures that eliminate the potential for accidental capture and killing in traps.
- Any personal experience you have had with wolverines in the backcountry could be relayed.

Send comments to Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R6-ES-2012-0107; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

To learn more about the proposal and/or to submit an electronic comment go to:

<http://www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/usfws-proposal-to-list-the-wolverine>



**Citizens Surveying Paradise Ridge Alternative
FOC File Photo**

Around The Clearwater

Gary Macfarlane

It has been a busy winter for those working on a myriad of conservation issues with Friends of the Clearwater (FOC). The following are brief summaries of some of the issues with which we have been involved over the past several weeks.

Public Land Theft

As Yogi Berra reportedly said, "It's déjà vu all over again." The latest proposal by the state legislature is to follow the Utah legislature and seek to steal from the American citizens most of the public land in Idaho. It is far broader than the 200,000-acres of national forests certain counties wanted to take control just over a year ago. As reported in the Fall 2011 issue of the *Defender*:

The "quid pro quo" collaboration groups are inadvertently giving cover to proposals like these. In back-room deal-making found in collaborative groups, wilderness designation is traded for other favors. This makes wilderness legislation a commodity to be bought and sends the wrong signal that wilderness is a liability, that wilderness designation must be coupled with increased commodity extraction or devolution of public lands to local entities, and that the real decision-making on public lands should be made outside of the democratic public arena. Furthermore, one has to wonder why any so-called conservation organization would give credibility to someone like Idaho County Commissioner Skip Brandt, who calls people concerned about the ecological integrity of our national forests "whack jobs."

The current proposal would steal all public land except national parks and designated wilderness (military land and tribal lands, which are not technically public land, would also be exempt). If you want to contact your state legislator about this or any other issue, you can find that contact information at <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/howtocontactlegislators.htm> or you can download the legislative directory at: <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/>. It is time the conservation community come together and forcefully resist these horrible ideas.

Mining

The worldwide banking crisis has led to an increase in the price of gold. Currently, it is around \$1,700.00 an ounce. There have been many exploration proposals recently, mainly on the Nez Perce National Forest near historic Florence (Salmon River drainage) and

Elk City (South Fork Clearwater drainage). In the former area, it seems to consist mostly of small ventures that may or may not actually proceed. Exploration in the latter area has been taken over by a venture capital company from Vancouver, BC called Premium Exploration. It could turn into something very big and bad. A few years ago, local residents of Elk City, along with FOC and others, successfully fought the Buffalo Gulch mine proposal. Premium's proposal is merely an expansion of the earlier Buffalo Gulch project and goes from Crooked River to Elk City.

FOC and the Alliance for the Wild Rockies filed an appeal against the latest exploration proposal and so did the Idaho Conservation League. Fortunately, the Forest Service has decided to withdraw the Friday Minerals project as a result of the appeals. The BLM is preparing an Environmental Analysis for a similar proposal in the same area.



**Old Mining Tailings On S. Fork Clearwater Tributary
FOC File Photo**

There is also the issue of the placer mining claims on the North Fork Clearwater. This appears to be more a local venture capital scam/public land grab than any real mining effort. The Forest Service is actually doing the right thing on this issue, contesting it in front of an administrative law judge from the Department of the Interior. FOC filed a friend of the court brief detailing potential impacts from suction dredge mining. We were just notified that our brief has been rejected.

Megaloads on US 12

While a coalition of individuals, organizations and the Nez Perce Tribe were successful in preventing Exxon/Imperial Oil from going up Highway 12, there have been megaloads from other companies that have gone through. We are currently working with others to devise a strategy to deal with the one or two loads that seem to trickle in every so often.



Recent ConocoPhillips Megaload Parked On US 12
Borg Hendrickson Photo Credit

Clearwater/Snake River Dredging

A big environmental impact statement is out for comment on the dredging of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers near Lewiston to remove sediment. This pork-barrel boondoggle is directly related to the megaload and salmon issues. FOC is part of a coalition, including the Nez Perce Tribe, Save our Wild Salmon, Earthjustice, Advocates for the West and Fighting Goliath. Public comments are being accepted until March 26.

A fact sheet can be located at the FOC website at www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/sediment-subsidies. Thanks to Lin Laughy and Borg Hendrickson of Fighting Goliath for uncovering the absurdity, particularly from an economic perspective, of the dredging operation.

Other National Forest Actions

FOC is following the Lower Orogrande Timber Sale, which has risen zombie-like from the grave (FOC's appeal was successful in seeing this decision withdrawn about a year ago). Other timber sales which could cause damage to the national forests include the Adams Camp and Doc Denny in the South Fork Clearwater drainage, the Upper Basin sale, which should have been analyzed as part of the recent Robo-Elk Sale near Elk River, and the Strychnine timber sale east of Moscow, just to mention a few.

We are proceeding with a lawsuit on the ORV plan for the Clearwater National Forest. Along with Wilderness Watch, we are appealing the decision to use helicopters to build a bridge in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

Clean Water

FOC was in court over wetlands pollution on Lawyer Creek, a tributary to the Clearwater River. The Forest Service agreed, after we took them to court, to expedite the clean up of the sewage treatment facilities at Red River and Fenn Ranger Stations. We reached an out-of-court settlement with the agency that was equivalent to a court victory without the time or cost.

National Scene

The election brought little change to Washington D.C. in terms of public lands. Senator Bingaman, who is a public lands advocate, has retired and his strong leadership as chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will be missed. The overall tenor has changed in Congress over the past 30 years. Proposals that even the most ardent opponents of public land conservation would not have forwarded are coming from the main stream of both parties. Some conservation groups have unwittingly offered cover for these proposals that devolve public lands to local entities. Unless changes are made in the current direction, the nation's unique public land legacy will be in greater and greater jeopardy.

Highway 95 Realignment

The highway 95 expansion proposal document is now out. A public meeting was held on January 23 in Moscow. Comments are due February 23. The preferred option is the most damaging. Better options are available. For more information visit <http://www.us95thorncreek>.

<p>VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE</p>	
<p>ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTIONS</p>	
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<p>www.friendsoftheclearwater.org</p>	



Hoodoo Roadless Area: Hanson Meadows on Kelly Creek

Chuck Pezeshki Photo

FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER CALENDAR OF EVENTS WINTER 2013

HOODOO ROADLESS AREA HOUSE PARTY
AT FRED RABE'S, 1715 APPALOOSA RD.

Friday February 15, 6-8pm

BRING A DISH AND BEVERAGE
ROADLESS AREA BOOKLETS AVAILABLE

MANAGEMENT OF NORTH AMERICAN
PREDATORS WITH UNIVERSITY IDAHO
PROFESSOR EMERITUS DR. JIM PEEK

Tuesday March 5, 7-9pm

1912 CENTER, 412 E. THIRD STREET

FOC BENEFIT CONCERT

BRIAN GILL, MARTY YTREBERG, SMOKIN' MOJO
FIDDLIN' BIG AL, KELLY EMO, SAM LYMAN & OTHERS

Saturday March 9, 7-12am

\$5-10 SLIDING SCALE ADMISSION, \$1 RAFFLE, CASH BAR, FINGER-FOODS
1912 CENTER, 412 E. THIRD STREET

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