



# CLEARWATER DEFENDER

## NEWS OF THE BIG WILD

A PUBLICATION OF  
FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

ISSUED QUARTERLY  
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### Why Weitas Deserves Wilderness Designation Brett Haverstick

*Let us not compromise any further, not out on the land,  
nor in our own hearts and minds.*

*-- Michael Frome, author *Chronicling the West**

The proposed Weitas Creek Wilderness is approximately 260,000 acres of wild country located in the middle of the Clearwater National Forest. The west boundary is about 70 air miles east of Lewiston, Idaho, and the east boundary is approximately 50 air miles west of Missoula, Montana. The roadless area is bounded to the north by the North Fork of the Clearwater River and to the south by the Lolo Motorway. The size and rectangular shape of the area tends to promote solitude.

The area is underlain by a coarse-grained quartz monzonite of the cretaceous Idaho batholith. Mountain-tops are mostly rounded and deeply weathered. There are relatively few, large areas of exposed rock and barren ground, and soils are highly erosive. Elevations vary from 7,100 feet at Rock Garden to 2,400 feet at the mouth of Weitas Creek.

Weitas Creek is biologically very productive and perhaps the most important proposed Wilderness on the Clearwater National Forest because it is a low elevation, broad river valley. The region is considered to be a mesic forest refugium in which certain amphibians, insects and plants persisted through the Pleistocene glaciation period. Since then, the moist and mild weather found in the many canyons has provided high genetic diversity.

Along with climate and topography, large forest fires in the early 1900's have had a major influence on the area's present vegetation. The proposed Wilderness is a dominant cedar-hemlock-pine forest, with a small interior section of western spruce-fir found between Cook Mountain and Raspberry Butte. Even aged stands of lodgepole pine are primarily found at higher elevations, along with carex and beargrass. Numerous brush fields are found below 4,000 feet in elevation and are used by big game as winter forage.

Weitas Creek provides the most important wildlife habitat on the Clearwater National Forest. Biologists

**See Weitas page 4**



*Weitas Creek Provides Crucial Habitat for Elk*  
Greg Freistadt Photo

## U.S. Route 12 Billboards

We would like to thank the ID Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Palouse Group of the Sierra Club, the Great Old Broads for Wilderness and citizens for their efforts and contributions towards the public's Highway 12 billboard campaign. There are 3 billboards on the highway opposing the transport of mega-loads. If you would like to make a donation so that we can continue defending the Clearwater Basin from Big Oil, please write a check to Friends of the Clearwater or visit <http://www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/get-involved/donate>. Thanks very much.



We don't just hug trees...  
We talk dirty to them too.

Friends of the Clearwater

We would like to thank Copy Court of Moscow for donating laminated signs for the anti-mega load rally we organized in September on Memorial Bridge in Lewiston. They also recently donated the humorous bumper-sticker (see above) to sell and help raise money for this same campaign. They cost \$2. Contact (208) 882-9755 if you would like to place an order.

## Happy Trails Will Boyd

**Thank You For Your  
Leadership and Dedication  
The Past 5 Years!**



## 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 commodity extraction and industrialization on public lands.

Friends of the Clearwater is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit 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

On September 22nd the autumnal equinox passed before us and with it came a change, not only across the landscape, but also in our office. After an action-packed summer filled with education workshops, monitoring projects, tabling efforts and quiet hours on the trail the outreach program has now shifted to giving presentations in the classroom, recruiting students for internships and re-designing our web site. To all those that participated in workshops, volunteered in the field or office and spent hours collecting signatures and sharing information at the farmer's market, "Thank you very much!" Our outreach program made a difference in the community this summer because so many of you were willing and able to contribute time, energy, ideas and knowledge. We greatly look forward to cultivating new relationships and strengthening our ties to the wildland community as ole' man winter approaches.

Our final outdoor seminar of the field season brought us to Bald Mountain Lake, headwaters to the magnificent Weitas Creek. Equipped with backpacks, rafts, scientific instruments and workbooks funded by the Mountaineers Foundation, a group of us spent two days exploring the physical and biotic properties of the lake, discussing the value of intact ecosystems and watersheds and reflecting on what it must have been like for Lewis & Clark to traverse these same mountains over two hundred years ago. If you were unable to attend, please join us next year as we will conduct a 2nd workshop on the lake and further develop our knowledge of this invaluable sub-alpine ecosystem and heritage-rich ridges and skies.

This summer marked the 6th year we worked with Wildlands CPR to record wildlife movement and restore costly and unnecessary roads to their wild condition on the Clearwater National Forest. From May through September the two motion-detector cameras we set up near the Little Boulder Creek campground revealed that black bear, white-tail deer, elk and other species frequent the area despite the network of logging roads and off-road vehicle traffic. After road ripping and slope restoration work this fall, we will set up cameras in the area again next summer and compare wildlife movement pre- and post-road removal. The reduction in road density should connect habitat, increase wildlife activity in the area and reduce sedimentation levels in the streams, which feed the Potlatch River and supply spawning grounds for steelhead. If you are interested in participating in next year's project please contact our office and we will gladly put you to work!

Hopefully you got a chance to visit our outreach

table in Friendship Square at the Moscow Farmer's Market the past six months. With the help of Helen Yost and others, we were able to interact and share valuable information with the public regarding wolf recovery, the upper Lochsa land exchange, off-road vehicle damage and moving mega-loads on Highway 12. Many of the 3,000-plus signatures opposing permits being issued for the transportation of these illegal loads up the Wild & Scenic River corridor were collected at the market! If you have not had the chance to sign the petition go to <http://www.fightinggoliath.org> and/or visit us in the office. We will gladly point you in the right direction and answer any questions you might have.

When the needles of the western larch turn a soft yellow you can find us in the academic classroom. We are fortunate to have two highly respected institutions in our community, and have participated in six different lectures at the University of Idaho and Lewis-Clark State College this semester. In September we talked to students about the history of public lands in the Clearwater Basin and how that influences bioregional planning efforts in the area. In October we teamed up with the Northern Rockies Rising Tide of Missoula to lead discussions on the global impacts of Tar Sands development in Alberta, Canada and how it affects wildland and rural communities in north-central Idaho and throughout Montana.

Lastly, we were able to speak to three different freshman classes on the importance of roadless areas, wild rivers and the need to protect endangered species and promote biodiversity. With dozens of students signing up to volunteer for FOC, it appears that we have some young, bright minds eager to work towards protecting Wild Clearwater Country.

*With the help of Dr. Fred Rabe we have officially submitted our proposal to the Forest Service to designate 49 Meadows as a Research Natural Area.*



**Wildland CPR Rippin' the Clearwater  
FOC File Photo**



## Weitas cont. from page 1

have identified approximately 20,000 acres of key big game winter range and the Johnny Creek and Fourth of July Creek drainages are crucial elk calving grounds. The creek bottoms, canyons, and ridge tops contain habitat for elk, mule deer, wolves, black bear, moose, cougar and numerous bird species. Rare and sensitive species like the lynx, wolverine, fisher and Columbia spotted frog can be found here as well.

Weitas Creek and Cayuse Creek primarily drain this quarter of a million acre roadless area. Both drainages have areas of narrow but flat stream bottoms, with some meandering sections occurring in Cayuse Creek. Many of the smaller streams within the watershed have steeper gradients, V bottoms and extremely steep side slopes. Known as blue-ribbon trout streams, Weitas and Cayuse Creek contain bull trout, west-slope cutthroat trout and remnant redband trout, which are land-locked steelhead because of the downstream damming of the N. Fork of the Clearwater River.

In addition to the previously mentioned Lolo Trail and Lewis and Clark routes, the area has a rich heritage. Nine pre-historic sites have been located and the Nez Perce Tribe traditionally uses the area for various purposes. Hiking, backpacking, primitive camping, photography, horseback riding, hunting and fishing are popular forms of recreation. Primitive trails provide the major means of access since cross-country travel is very difficult due to dense vegetation and rugged terrain.

The threats to Weitas Creek are real. Building roads and logging heavily forested drainages are very appealing to the timber industry. Motorized recreation groups are constantly seeking more access, despite the impacts that motorcycles and four-wheelers are already having. The failure of the Forest Service to protect wild-life habitat and uphold their forest plan has exacerbated the situation.

In their 1987 Forest Management Plan the Forest Service did not recommend this area for Wilderness. They did however state that if the area was designated Wilderness, the un-maintained portion of the 555 route should be included in the Wilderness. In our proposal we have adopted this recommendation. Because of its biological production and numerous primitive values, Weitas Creek needs to be incorporated into the National Wilderness Preservation System.

***Tell Clearwater NF Supervisor Rick Brazell you want to see Weitas proposed as Wilderness by the FS.***

***12730 Highway 12  
Orofino, Idaho 83544***

## We Already Miss Walkin' Jim Stoltz Sioux Westervelt

The Earth lost a brave and dedicated warrior when Walkin' Jim Stoltz passed away September 3, 2010. He was 57 years old--much too young to die, but what a legacy he left us and we must carry his message forward. With his deep voice and sparkling eyes, he brought us music inspired by the wild places he strode through and the animals he encountered.

We were fortunate to have Walkin' Jim come to Moscow this past March. He had been here before and had great affection for the wilderness of Idaho rivers and mountains. He traveled light and always with words of encouragement for people to do everything in their power to protect wild places. On the table beside his artwork and CD's there was a pile of postcards to be completed and mailed to politicians. We must never stop communicating for the wild, he said, and he believed that phone calls and direct mailings make a greater impact on politicians than emails.

"The folks in Congress do not know wilderness. They do not know the value of an unblemished skyline or the sight of a grizzly bear galloping across a mountain-side. You need to tell them about these things. You must share your feelings about life and nature and how precious they are. Those who are making the decisions need to know. We can't just tell them once. We must keep telling them until the Northernn Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act becomes reality."

Walkin' Jim walks among us no longer, but his spirit lives forever in the songs he left us:

*And if you wonder where I've been,  
I'll be high in the mountain wind,  
walkin' in the track of the lion once again*



***A Happy Walkin' Jim  
FOC File Photo***

## Bumping Down The Selway At Low Flow

### John Crock

My friend Scott Nuismer believes you should go on at least one stupid adventure every year. Each year he comes up with yet another take on a new form of suffering, and, unfortunately for me, I'm easily persuaded. Last year, he and I walked from Nez Perce Pass on the Magruder Corridor road to Lost Horse Pass along the very crest of the Bitterroot Mountains. Nearly all of the 70-some miles were off-trail boulder hopping and scrambling with—literally—our left feet in Idaho and our right feet in Montana. Sore feet, scraped shins and heavy packs were great in 2009, but so passé in 2010, so Scott had to come up with a new adventure. "Let's float the roadless section of the Selway River in the fall, from Paradise to Selway Falls."

Naturally, I said yes and we decided that the first week of September would be a convenient time for both of us. We began watching the river levels drop and drop and drop, but a rainstorm a few days before we launched brought the river up a few inches. Gary Macfarlane graciously volunteered to help with the shuttle, and after parking my truck at Selway Falls, Gary, Scott and I drove over to the put-in at Paradise. The river gauge at Paradise registered 0.65 feet and we were optimistic that our boats would actually float. While Gary drove Scott's truck home, Scott loaded up his 10 ft whitewater canoe and I my inflatable kayak with gear for the trip. We had a few hours of light left and Scott and I decided to get a few of the 48 miles to Selway Falls behind us. One thing quickly became apparent: there are a lot more class 2 and 3 rapids at 0.65 feet than there are at the 3-4 foot level where most people run the river. I almost swam on an unmarked class 3 and we decided to trust our eyes and not the river guide map. We found a nice bar, set up camp, and put a stick in the water to see if the level would change.

The next morning, the day dawned and the stick was a few inches more out of the water. We broke camp and immediately passed a pair of river otters that slid down the bank and splashed into the water, only to resurface and watch us as we floated past. Later, a black bear on top of a small point scurried away as we passed. We bumped along, got out and dragged our boats off rocks, stopped and scouted rapids. Galloping Gertie, a class 3 rapid at normal levels, looked unrunnable, so with a couple of carries, we portaged around it. A class 4 went with no problem and we made camp with 13 miles behind us.

The next day, we passed another black bear on the shore, probably feeding on the spawned-out salmon that we saw lolling in the eddies with strips of skin and flesh hanging off. There were more otter tracks and slides on the

beach, and a golden eagle watched us pass from a cliff top. Green Eggs Rapid (class 3) and Ham Rapid (class 4) both went smoothly. A false sense of "We've got it made" began to fill us as more and more streams added their 1 cubic foot per second of water to the Selway. We camped just upstream of the confluence with Moose Creek and hiked the Selway trail to scout a few miles of the next day's rapids, the most sustained and difficult section.

The next morning, the float bags in Scott's canoe looked flat. A whitewater canoe has float bags in the bow and stern to keep it from filling with water in the rapids and turning into an unmanueverable 500-lb log. I grabbed the air pump for my inflatable kayak and starting pumping. Nothing happened. We pulled the bags out and, lo and behold, a wood rat (we think) had shredded, not just chewed, the undersides of both bags. Without float bags, Scott couldn't paddle his boat. We had been stopped dead by a rodent.

Moose Creek is about 22 miles upriver from Selway Falls, and we couldn't carry our boats and gear in one load. We would have to carry a load, walk back, pick up another load and carry it, meaning that the 22 miles left were really 66 miles. We decided to carry our boats and gear 3 miles past the most difficult rapids, hoping we could float a few easy sections of the river to speed up the outbound carry.

I had a patch kit and glue for my inflatable kayak, and we used the kit to fix tears in the float bags. However, we had more tears than patches. After we had carried the boats 3 miles, it occurred to us that we each had a patch kit for our inflatable mattresses. We used up both of those kits and let the glue cure. Miraculously, the bags held air.

The next morning dawned bright and clear, and the bags still had air. After a few miles, the gradient of the river dropped and we paddled through deep, clear pools that disappeared into blueness, then made a quick drop through rapids. The patches held and as we neared camp, an osprey flew slowly upstream over the river.

The next day we made it to my truck, where 2 warm beers were our reward. I can't wait to see what Scott dreams up for next year.



*Selway Solitude*  
Scott Nuismer Photo

## Around the Clearwater Basin

### Gary Macfarlane

The big news is the Forest Service finally released the draft Upper Lochsa Land Exchange environmental impact statement for public comment. Unfortunately, the Forest Service has not listened to citizens who favor a purchase rather than an exchange. The comment period will last for 90 days and FOC will send out information on meetings once the details become known. The meetings are expected after the first of the year.

On other issues, the Forest Service has been in a holding pattern. As of press time, it had not yet released the final version of the Clearwater National forest travel plan. The Forest Service is also delaying the final Nez Perce National Forest travel plan because it was necessary to release a supplemental draft travel plan beefing up the analysis of wildlife issues. It seems our comments raised some important points and forced the Forest Service to redo part of the draft plan. Sadly, the Forest Service is proposing to weaken wildlife protection standards to allow more motorized use.

There have been a bunch of proposals in the Selway and Middle Fork Clearwater drainages as of late. They were not anticipated but are part of the backroom deal making initiated by Senator Crapo. While some of these proposals are positive—replacing culverts for fish passage—others involve more logging. We are watching these proposals carefully. We expect to see bigger and more potentially damaging logging proposals in the future.

There are a lot of small proposals to explore for gold, mainly in places that were hard hit by historic mining activity. However, there was a proposal to explore in the Kelly Creek proposed wilderness and that could raise serious issues in the future.

The Forest Service has proposed opening a road year round just north of the Gospel Hump Wilderness to access the Sourdough lookout. The current road would be closed at Tenmile Creek. This road was closed in a decision made in late 80's for wildlife habitat protection. Opening it now would create serious problems and would result in more miles of open road.

Finally, the Forest Service has proposed to continue grazing in one of the most overgrazed and fragile places on the Nez Perce National Forest that flows into the Salmon River. Even though slight reductions in numbers have been proposed, they won't solve the problem of grazing on steep slopes. In these places, cattle use the streams as travel ways and cause significant damage. FOC joined with Western Watersheds Project on submitting comments on this proposal.

# WILD CLEARWATER COUNTRY RADIO SHOW

Every Wednesday 4-5 p.m. PST  
on KRFP Radio Free Moscow  
at 92.5 FM or [www.krfp.org](http://www.krfp.org)

### Correction

*In the last newsletter article titled "As Big N' Wild As It Gets" it was noted, "9% of the U.S. public lands south of Alaska remain roadless." It should have said "Approximately 9% of U.S. public lands south of Alaska remain in a roadless and wild condition." Also, it was noted that 20% of the national forest system is still wild roadless country and qualifies for wilderness designation. With 55 million of 190 million acres of national forest land in the wild and roadless condition the figure is closer to 30%. Thanks to Howie Wolke for catching these errors.*



*Two of Our Dedicated Members*  
Marsha Schoeffler Photo



## A Jolly Good Time Steve Paulson

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The 2010 annual meeting on November 6th was another great success. There was abundant music and food in the room, along with new plans and old stories, young faces and long-time friends and family. A good time was had by the approximately 65 people in attendance. Numbers were down from last year, but membership is at an all-time high with just over 800 people.

The potluck was the highlight of the evening. I heard several people exchanging recipes. For the first year ever, there may have been too much good food! My plate and stomach were not big enough to sample even half the dishes.

Jeanne McHale entertained the crowd on piano. She played some old standards like “Sweet Georgia Brown”, “Pennies from Heaven”, “Caravan”, “Danny Boy” and “Old Man River”; in addition to a few of her own songs, “Stimulus Package” and “The Blues Ain’t Nothin’ But a Failure to Plan Ahead.” The Silent Auction and other donations raised \$1,860.00. Every penny will go towards protecting our Big Wild.

The meeting’s Board of Directors “election” reinstated Jill Johnson, Tabitha Brown and me to each serve another two-year term. Laura Earles was newly elected to serve on the board. Welcome, Laura! The remainder of the board is James Tarter, Diane Prorak, Chris Norden, Wes Bascom and Jeanne McHale. Will Boyd has stepped down; best of luck to you on your next adventures in education, Will. Thanks for your many past and future hours devoted to the Big Wild. We will be patiently waiting for your return. If any of you have an interest in serving on our board in the future, we invite you to contact one of the above board members and/or attend one of our quarterly meetings to get a feel for how we do business.

Gary Macfarlane, FOC’s Ecosystem Defense Director, spoke about the past year’s accomplishments and on-going projects: 1) A successful lawsuit that put the Grey Wolf back onto the Endangered Species Act; 2) Working with the community to oppose the Highway 12 mega-loads; 3) Providing comments for the Upper Lochsa Land Exchange Draft Environmental Impact Statement; 4) Analyzing and critiquing the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests’ Final Environmental Impact Statements for their new Travel Plans; 5) Helping citizens in Kamiah prepare for a potential lawsuit to uphold the Clean Water Act; 6) Editing maps for use by congressmen/women in the House of Representatives to get the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act passed. You can

get timely updates about these issues by signing up for The Big Wild Bi-Weekly email news feed at <http://www.friendsoftheclearwater.org> or by contacting the office at (208) 882-9755.

The award ceremony this year was special. Our Volunteers of the Year went to Ronnie Hatley, Julia Piaskowski and Dana Johnson. The Great Old Broads for Wilderness, the Palouse Group of the Sierra Club and the Friends of the Palouse Ranger District were chosen as Conservation Groups of the Year. Helen Yost received an Excellence in Defending the Wild Clearwater award. Borg Hendrickson and Linwood Laughy were selected as the Conservationists of the Year and Fred Rabe was honored with the coveted Macfarlane Plank.

Dr. Fred Rabe, professor, mentor, wildland ecologist, conservationist, researcher, photographer, author and botanist was also ceremoniously given a Pendleton wool blanket, the “Chief Joseph,” and then he signed the Macfarlane Plank before addressing the crowd. Besides being one of the pre-eminent scientific experts on beaver ponds, high elevation lakes, peatlands, streams, tide pools and vernal pools, he has devoted years of energy trying to preserve, protect and educate people about these precious places. He has written over 35 articles concerning aquatic ecology in refereed journals. You can preview his work at: <http://uidaho.worldcat.org/profiles/prorak/lists/2094639>

Thanks to all for making this annual meeting a fun time by attending, bringing friends and family and food and auction items, and donating money to preserve our wild land and animals.



***Great Crowd At The Annual Meeting***  
Marsha Schoeffler Photo



*Look For This Billboard on Highway 12*  
FOC File Photo

FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
WINTER 2010

HOLIDAY POTLUCK  
FRIDAY DECEMBER 17TH  
COME CELEBRATE WITH US!  
CALL OFFICE FOR DETAILS

WINTER WONDERLAND HIKE  
SATURDAY JANUARY 29TH  
EASTSIDE MARKET 8:00AM  
SNOWSHOEING LOCATION TBA

FIRE HEARTHS & HISTORIC TRAILS  
PRESENTATION BY GENE & MOLLY EASTMAN  
WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 9, 2011  
1912 CENTER MOSCOW

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