



CLEARWATER DEFENDER

NEWS OF THE BIG WILD

A PUBLICATION OF
FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

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WINTER 2018, NO.1

Adios National Forests? Forest Planning, Public Involvement & the Wild Clearwater

Gary Macfarlane

Forest planning is a big topic. Right now the Forest Service is doing an informal public involvement process before the draft forest plan and alternatives are available for public input. The insert in this newsletter gives information about what you can do at this time to be involved in this step of the forest planning process. Please read it and act. FOC will be holding meetings and workshops this coming year in preparation for the expected release of the draft forest plan late this year. This draft plan will be the last chance the public will have to provide input.

There are three things to know about the new forest planning process. In brief:

- 1) The issues that forest plans deal with are some of the most important and interesting topics to citizens. Protection of roadless areas as recommended wilderness, determinations of eligible wild and scenic rivers, broad decisions on what areas may be open to motorized vehicles (including backcountry areas that should be closed to motorized vehicles), and the amount of logging that could be expected are all part of forest plans.
- 2) The Forest Service makes the public involvement process in forest planning a real slog. There are long meetings during the day that most citizens can't attend. There are numerous steps, some of which have informal public input periods, that confuse people as to when their input is most valuable. It seems the process is designed to confuse and/or bore people into not participating because it lasts so long.
- 3) Though important recommendations and allocations are made in forest plans, the Forest Service is trying to make plans as meaningless and unaccountable as possible.

Looking back over the years gives us an idea how things got to be the way they are now. After passage of the National Forest Management Act in 1976, it took a few years for the Forest Service to come up with the rules under which forest plans would be developed. In 1982, the regulations on how forest plans should be developed and what forest plans



Chuck Pezeshki Photo Credit

Forest Plan must contain standards for soils, water quality, riparian areas, old growth, and fish and wildlife habitat

should contain were finalized. Since forest plans were new, it is probably fair to say the Forest Service didn't really know what to expect. Perhaps the agency didn't really believe that it or anyone else would pay much attention to the plans after they were done, or perhaps many in the FS returned their attention to what they perceived as the agency's main mission at that time - setting up timber sales and other vegetation management. However, court cases in the 90s held the Forest Service accountable for its plans and what it promised to do.

In reaction to these court decisions - brought by conservationists after decades of extremely excessive national forest logging - the Forest Service spent the better part of two decades completely rewriting the 1982 Reagan-era planning regulations rather than focusing on revising forest plans. The reason is obvious - the agency wanted less accountable regulations and plans. Even though the agency lost a couple of court cases in efforts to update the regulations, final regulations were issued in 2012. The new Obama-era regulations are far worse, and essentially, unaccountable compared to the 1982 regulations. While a major, if not *the major* excuse offered by the agency for the new regulations, was it took too long to revise plans. The reality is the new regulations are so

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Roger Inghram Photo Credit

The Clearwater Basin of north-central Idaho has a rich heritage involving the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the historic legislation, and FOC is looking for artists, photographers and authors to help us develop a *50 Years of Wild Rivers!* interpretive art/photo exhibit at the University of Idaho (August 23 - September 5) and the 1912 Center (September 7 - November 5) in Moscow.

Specifically, we are seeking original art and poetry (river-themed), as well as photography for the Lochsa, Selway and Middle Fork Clearwater Rivers, St. Joe River, Rapid River, Middle Fork Salmon River and/or another river segment in Idaho protected under the law. Pictures of rivers in the Clearwater that qualify for protection but have not, yet, received it, are welcomed too. This includes Kelly Creek, Cayuse Creek, Weitas Creek, Little N. Fork and main N. Fork, plus the S. Fork Clearwater. **Learn more page 7.**

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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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Our legal fund to protect the Clearwater Ashley Lipscomb

Friends of the Clearwater (FOC) has established a legal fund to defend unprotected federal roadless areas in the Clearwater Basin. We are seeking an additional \$20,000 to hire a staff attorney to challenge an influx of proposed roadless area timber sales on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

The United States is 2.3 billion acres in size. Approximately, 58 million acres of roadless lands in the country are left on the national forests. Of the 9.3 million acres of roadless areas in Idaho, the Clearwater Basin has 1.5 million acres. These rare landscapes provide crucial habitat for lynx, wolverines, and northern Rockies fisher, while providing cool, clean water for bull trout, salmon, and west-slope cutthroat trout. Roadless areas provide opportunities for solitude, and protect drinking water sources, as well.

Ecological cycles have governed nature for centuries. However, humans have created management plans to achieve 'desired future conditions.' Root-rot, insect and disease, and natural fire cycles are part of forest function, but we are taught to fear these important natural processes.

Despite these values, the Idaho Roadless Commission, (appointed by Idaho's governor), is making precursory decisions for current and future management of Idaho's roadless wildlands. Skewed towards industry and county commissioner perspectives, this group profits from management hinged on development. Aided by the Forest Service (FS), they are using the Idaho Roadless Rule (IRR) as a vehicle to drive areas with wilderness characteristics out of existence.

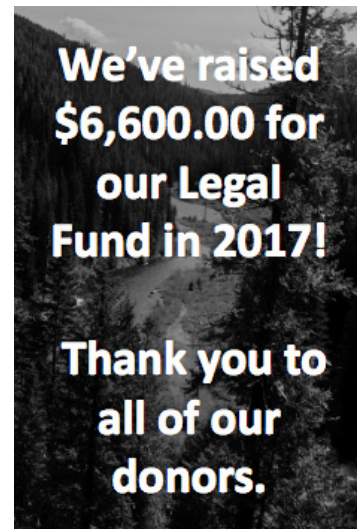
The IRR contains built-in loopholes that allow 'temporary' road building in inventoried roadless areas to facilitate development and extraction, at the discretion of federal agencies, with the advice of this commission. However, the rule "does not authorize the building of a single road or the cutting of a single tree..." Any decision for development, including mineral extraction and logging, must go through a site-specific analysis, as required by federal laws and management plans.

FOC is the only group likely to continue litigating roadless area timber sales, given our commitment to operate within the administrative process, and if necessary, the legal realm to protect wild places on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

Legal representation will:

- Aid in field monitoring trips, with a specific eye towards potential litigation.
- Strategize on legal and administrative avenues to keep areas truly roadless.
- Be prepared to represent FOC in ongoing litigation efforts.

Legal representation has been stretched thin, given the increased assault on public lands in today's political realm. FOC has been working with a local environmental attorney to conduct in-depth research on the IRR and the roadless commission. Our goal is to fill the administrative record with examples of how roadless areas have been, and could be, degraded by future commercial logging operations, and how the FS considers them when making wilderness recommendations in Forest Plans. This information should help future legal challenges. **For more information about ways to give contact ashley@friendsoftheclearwater.org.**



FOC File Photo



FOC File Photo

Ashley with FOC member Pat Rathmann

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long on process it will take even more time to revise a plan under them. Forest Service planners have admitted as much.

The current process for plan revision will combine the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests into one plan, since the two national forests were combined administratively about five years ago (NOTE: as many both inside and outside of the agency expected, the combination does not seem to be working very well). As the alert included in this newsletter notes, there are serious problems with the preliminary direction taken by the Forest Service in preparing a revised plan for the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests. Again, stay involved and provide input. Although it seems the Forest Service wants to ignore input of conservation-minded citizens, it would be hazardous for the agency to do so, especially if enough concerned citizens raise their voices.

Public Involvement?

The Forest Service has some dirty tricks it uses to minimize the impact of citizen involvement in decision making on our national forests. One is to flood citizens with complex issues and various formal and informal public input processes. Forest planning is the best example of this. Day-long or two-day long meetings are planned during the workweek when most citizens can't attend. Lengthy documents are released at various times that appear, to the average reader, to be repetitive. Involvement in this process seems a daunting task, intended to wear people out, so many people will choose not to become involved (NOTE: for this reason, FOC prepares alerts and synthesizes the lengthy documents). Another trick is to issue public comment periods during the holidays when families gather together. That is what happened with this recent forest planning alternative document.

A final way the agency is being disingenuous is by rewriting its regulations so that public comment periods can be shortened, particularly for site-specific projects like timber sales. In essence, this is a way to administratively weaken the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Currently, there are two kinds of site-specific analyses documents under NEPA. Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) are used for large projects that have a significant impact. Large timber sales fall into this category, as do large mines and off-road vehicle decisions across an entire national forest. Environmental Assessments (EAs) are done for projects, which the Forest Service believes have an impact, but not a significant impact. Development of new campgrounds, programs to spray herbicides across the entire national forest, and an increasing amount of timber sales, are usually done under EAs. Things that are categorically excluded (CE sometimes

called a CATEX) from an EIS or EA are supposed to be projects that have no impact, individually or cumulatively. Things like putting in a new outhouse at a campground, painting a ranger station, and most mineral exploration (unfortunately) are done under a CE.

A short comment period on the regulations to change NEPA were due on February 2. The irony is that the Forest Service may be required to do an EIS for the rule change. If so, it would be a tacit admission these changes will have a significant impact on the environment! EAs and EISs could be a thing of the past on national forests, except for forest plans, if these changes in regulations become as extreme as some officials may wish. (NOTE: Currently, timber sales up to 3000 acres that used to be done under an EIS might be included as a CE under the 2014 Farm Bill provisions under certain circumstances).



Read about suction dredge mining on the
S. Fork Clearwater page 6

Around the Clearwater

The Forest Service just released its draft EIS for the massive Little Boulder Timber Sale in and around Boulder Creek near Deary. It would log about 1500 acres (see previous discussion about NEPA). Comments are due on March 5, 2018. This is in the same area as the recently completed Cherry-Dinner Timber Sale. This area is home to a struggling population of steelhead that spawn in the Potlatch River and its tributaries. There are also a few stands of old trees, a rare occurrence on the Palouse Ranger District. Some of the areas scheduled for logging are very near the river and in some of these remaining old stands.

The Forest Service is also doing a large sale near White Bird called Center-Johnson. Public involvement is over. The agency will prepare an EA for this sale and a draft decision in the near future.

Last year did see a drop in the timber sale volume on the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests, thanks to your efforts and those of other conservation-minded

people. The average sold between 2000 - 2009 was about 34.7 million board feet. The average between 2010 - 2017 was about 50 million board feet. Even under the lower numbers of the 2000s, the Forest Service failed to meet water quality and fish habitat requirements of the Forest Plans. A reduction in sale volume and the attendant road building is needed.

However, the Forest Service is going the opposite direction in the forest plan revision process and its site-specific decisions on timber sales. The agency wants to triple the cut on the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests (150 million board feet) in the near future. The goals for the next year or two are also significant increases (see the chart below). Nationally, the Forest Service wants to increase volume sold annually to 4 billion board feet. The trend has been upward. In 2001, it was 1.5 billion board feet. Last year, the agency nationally sold nearly 3 billion board feet.

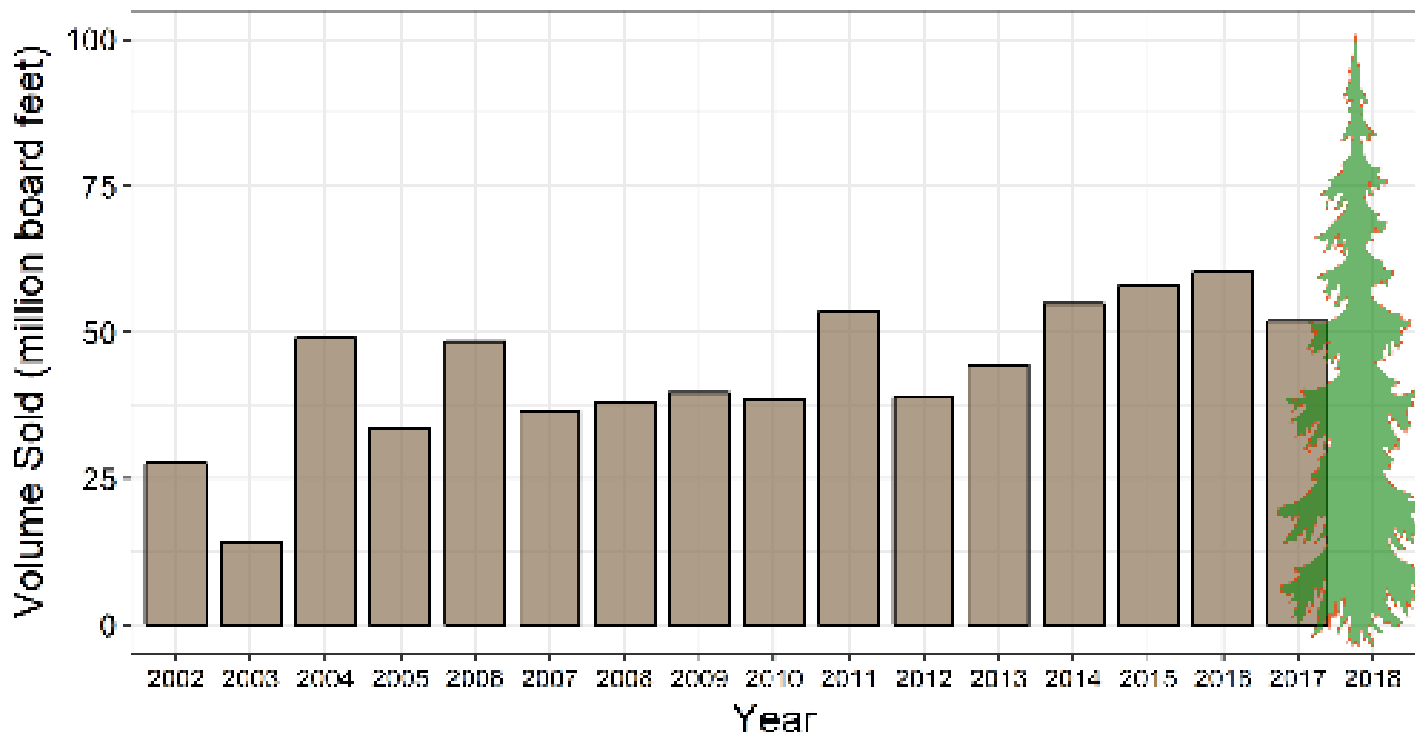
The Nez Perce National Forest Travel Plan is still not out in final form. The plan would only deal with motorized and non-motorized summer use on roads and trails in the Nez Perce National Forest. It would not deal with snowmobiles in winter or mechanized (mountain bikes) travel in summer. The plan has been ready for release for over a year. Apparently, it is not a priority for the Forest Service. The same is true about the Clearwater National Forest Travel Plan. Judge Lodge ruled on a lawsuit brought by FOC, Alliance for the Wild Rockies and Sierra Club that the Forest Service failed to take into account impacts to wildlife, and required the Forest Service to redo the plan. We are still waiting.

In these times of budget uncertainty, the Forest Service has found a new way to waste money. No longer needed agency lookouts and cabins, many of them in the backcountry, are being upgraded and turned into rental sites without going through an environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act. In most instances, especially in the backcountry, the costs of upgrades and maintenance greatly exceed the rental fees. Alternatives to this could include letting the unnecessary structures fade back into the wild.

The fire budget is largely wasted. With the exception of some fires in some Wildernesses some of the time (the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wildernesses are usually the exceptions), and even fewer in non-designated backcountry, fire policy is little better than it was in 1934, when Elers Koch, a noted Forest Supervisor, questioned the need to fight fires in the backcountry. He was specifically talking about the Pete King Fire in the Lochsa River. Department of Interior agencies currently spend far less on fire suppression than the Forest Service, and Interior's costs have not increased to the same degree. In 1985, the Forest Service suppression budget was double that of Interior agencies. In 2016, it was over four times as much. In 2017, it was nearly five times as much.

FOC is increasing its legal efforts to better address issues surrounding off-road vehicles, excessive logging and road building, and preparing for the forest plan. We are looking to hire a staff attorney. If you want to contribute to that effort, contact 208-882-9755, via mail at PO Box 9241 Moscow, ID 83843 or ashley@friendsoftheclearwater.org.

Annual Timber Volume Sold - Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests



Keeping Watch: Vigilance on the S. Fork

Guest Opinion

Pat Finnegan

President Clearwater-Snake Trout Unlimited Chapter

Despite decades of mining and logging impacts, the South Fork of the Clearwater River and its' tributaries continue to support numerous aquatic species, including Snake River spring chinook salmon, Snake River fall chinook salmon, Snake River steelhead trout, red band trout, west slope-cutthroat trout, bull trout, western pearlshell mussel and Pacific lamprey.

During recent years, recreational suction dredge mining, whereby miners use a motorized pump mounted on a floating platform to 'vacuum' gold bearing sediments from the streambed, has been popular. Especially if concentrated and unregulated, suction dredge mining can degrade aquatic ecosystems by destabilizing streambeds, increasing turbidity and mobilizing elemental mercury from past mining activities. For many years, well dispersed suction dredge mining was conducted seasonally in the South Fork via permits issued by the Idaho Department of Water Resources, with little fanfare and minimal apparent impacts.

In 2013, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) clarified Clean Water Act obligations, recognizing that National Pollution Discharge Permits would be required for individual suction dredge operations on the South Fork and other streams within designated critical habitat ranges for threatened fish species. By the summer of 2014, the politics heated up, with miners and politicians protesting EPA requirements. During 2015, miners chose to operate without authorization in the South Fork, and the respective regulatory agencies failed to implement an effective enforcement strategy. Concentrated, unregulated suction dredge activity led to undercut stream banks, sediment plumes over ¼ mile long, garbage, large fuel cans left unattended on stream banks and other abuses.

Living nearby, I traveled through the South Fork canyon frequently and noted these abuses as they unfolded. Pursuant to further documentation by Forest Service fisheries and minerals staff, Idaho Conservation League initiated federal lawsuits against two miners who operated illegally during 2015.

Having fished and snorkeled throughout the South Fork over the years, I was aware that aquatic insects and cold water pockets supporting salmon and steelhead parr (between fry and smolt stage) were numerous and widespread during the suction dredge season. Additionally, I caught and released bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout; and, while snorkeling, I observed extensive western pearlshell mussel beds. Believing this magnificent aquatic resource was threatened by the activity I saw in 2015, I was immediately interested when contacted by the Idaho Con-

servation League about compliance monitoring during the 2016 suction dredge season.

In late spring of 2016, the Forest Service and US Bureau of Land Management completed an Environmental Analysis that included consultation with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to enable the approval of reasonable Plans of Operation submitted by miners. Approved plans allowed the EPA to issue National Pollution Discharge permits to respective miners. Concomitantly, the Idaho Department of Water Resources implemented the South Fork Clearwater River Special Supplement that attached additional stipulations to suction dredge mining activity.

The analysis determined that although juvenile salmon and steelhead are widespread throughout the South Fork during the summer, spawning seasons and migration by adult steelhead, salmon and bull trout do not coincide with periods of low summer flows and high water temperatures between July 15 and August 15 (the prescribed suction dredge season). In addition to season timing, the Environmental Assessment-preferred alternative allowed only a limited number of suction dredge operations (15 max.) spread along a 47-mile reach to be opened on the South Fork. This proposal, if enforced, would affect at most between 0.2% and 0.4% of the wetted stream area. Further, the proposed regulatory framework would require that each site proposed for suction dredge mining be evaluated and adjusted by agency biologists to eliminate or minimize impacts, and be inspected weekly to assess compliance.

When I began monitoring during July 2016, I was not optimistic. I anticipated numerous unauthorized miners, operating without permits and unregulated by the respective agencies. But instead, during both years I witnessed an aggressive inspection protocol by the agencies and undeniable efforts by most of the suction dredge miners to comply with State and Federal regulations. While I anticipated hostility from the miners, I was instead treated fairly. I accompanied agency biologists, minerals staff and law enforcement personnel on official inspections. Although most miners complied with permit conditions, deviations were swiftly corrected, and agency officials stopped operations by miners who failed to comply after a warning (one each during 2016 and 2017).

I have much concern about the potential impacts to aquatic resources by suction dredge mining activity; but, it is my impression that this activity can be effectively managed to eliminate or significantly reduce adverse impacts if it is aggressively regulated and closely monitored. Given the threats to our native cold-water ecosystems, I don't think any consumptive resource use can be allowed without regulation and enforcement. As we look ahead to Idaho's 2018 suction dredge season, miner's rights organizations continue to lobby for deregulation.

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests
Forest Plan Revision - Development of Alternatives
Important Public Comment Period - Comments Due February 28

The Forest Service is seeking public comment on the development of alternatives for the Forest Plan Revision, which will set management direction for these two National Forests over the next 10-30 years. The agency currently wants feedback on **four main issues**: recommended wilderness and wild/scenic rivers (protected areas), recreation opportunities, desired conditions and logging levels. The public comment deadline is February 28.

The Wild Clearwater Country is the northern half of the *Big Wild*, which contains the largest remaining roadless, and undeveloped stretch of wildlands left in the Lower 48. There are approximately 1.5 million acres of crucial roadless wildlands on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests that remain unprotected. These areas are highly vulnerable to road building, logging, and off-road vehicle abuse. Weitas Creek, the largest contiguous roadless area (260,000-acres) on the Clearwater, is threatened with development as well. It is critical that people tell the Forest Service to *recommend Weitas as Wilderness* during the Forest Plan Revision!

Protected Areas

The Forest Service has indicated in their proposed action (Forest Plan Revision) that only about 20% of the entire roadless base on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests would be recommended as wilderness. Only Congress can designate an area as Wilderness; if an agency recommends an area, however, it is managed as defacto wilderness, therefore, giving the area temporary administrative protection.

Unfortunately, Upper N. Fork, Pot Mountain, Weitas Creek, Fish/Hungry Creek and Cove-Mallard won't likely be recommended. Cayuse Creek (part of the Weitas Creek Roadless Area) would become a Special Management Area, opening it to off-road vehicle abuse. Half of Meadow Creek Roadless Area could be recommended as wilderness, while the other half could receive lesser protection. This area should not be carved up; the entire wildland is a logical addition to the adjacent Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Kelly Creek or Hoodoo Roadless Area, which the Forest Service may recommend for wilderness, could also be fragmented by off-road vehicles and snowmobiles. The Forest Service

has refused to consider additions to the Gospel-Hump Wilderness like Johns Creek. Speaking of Johns Creek, the Forest Service should only do the eligibility analysis in the forest plan for potential Wild and Scenic River candidates. All rivers preliminarily identified as eligible should be carried forth.

Join Friends of the Clearwater in advocating for full protection of all 1.5 million acres, in the form of recommended wilderness, and/or as non-motorized, non-mechanized backcountry areas. No road building, logging, or development should occur in the roadless base.

Keeping Wilderness wild is another important issue that can get overlooked. The Forest Service must administer Wilderness as per the Wilderness Act, both in spirit and intent. Current administrative methods too often leads toward commercialization, administrative motorization, development, and ecological manipulation of Wilderness. The current proposed action is a muddle regarding Wilderness.

Recreation Opportunities

Opportunities for recreation is an issue the Forest Service is also currently considering in their development of alternatives for the new forest plan. It is critical the agency provides ample opportunity for non-motorized/non-mechanized recreation on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. Current Forest Service direction favors more and more motorized and mechanized recreation, at the expense of important fish and wildlife habitat and non-motorized/mechanized forest users. Mountain bikes conflict with traditional uses on backcountry trails, impact soils, increase erosion, and potentially fragment habitat. The Forest Service also ignores the threat of increasing commodification.



Advocate for Weitas as Wilderness!

FOC File Photo

Desired Conditions

A third issue of focus is desired conditions. How does the public want the forest to look over the coming decades? Will forest management favor natural processes or will it favor more "restoration" and active "vegetative management?" Because the forest plan is an agreement with the

public, it is imperative for measurable and enforceable standards to be included to ensure agency accountability and forest function. The wildlands of the Clearwater Basin are typically wetter, still contain ancient forests and older forests trending toward old growth, and have sensitive soils (Idaho Batholith). These lands offer the best habitat for large carnivores anywhere in the northern Rockies, including Canadian Rockies (2001, Carroll, et.al.). They also provide crucial habitat for threatened Chinook salmon, steelhead and bull trout. Existing riparian buffers that do not allow logging a certain distance from streams and restrict road building must be maintained, better yet improved, in the new forest plan.

Standards for water quality are critical, too. Many roadless watersheds in the Clearwater are intact and possess high water quality because they have not been roaded and logged - they need to stay that way. There were, however, hundreds of landslides in other watersheds on the Clearwater in the mid 90's due to poor management practices and weather events. In order to prevent erosion and more landslides in places like these, the new forest plan must also not allow road building and logging on sensitive soils and steep slopes to maintain watershed integrity. Grazing also needs to be limited to protect watersheds and wildlife habitat.

The forests of the West evolved with wildland fire, and the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests are no exception. The fire regime for this region is one of long-intervals, with little to no large fires, followed by intense, stand-replacing fires. Following the large weather and climate-driven fires of 1910 and 1934, much of the region endured cooler and wetter decades for the middle of the 20th Century. Therefore, we have not seen fires like those since. "Fuel loads" on these forests today are not abnormal, either, despite what you have been led to believe by the timber industry, politicians and mass media. And since "fuels" are not the primary driver of fire-behavior, forests do not need to be thinned or "restored" to prevent "catastrophic wild-fire." The fire regime for the forests in the northern Rockies may change a bit, however, (more frequent-higher intensity), due to a warming planet.

The best available science suggests that fire-behavior, particularly in the northern Rockies, is specifically driven by drought, warm temperatures, low humidity and wind. Forest Service suppression efforts are largely not responsible for fires eventually going out. Cooler temperatures, wetter conditions, higher humidity and days with less wind, however, are mostly responsible.

It is very important for the new forest plan to recognize the critical role of wildland fire, particularly in the backcountry, and to limit "salvage logging" so that post-fire landscapes are not roaded and logged, depriving crucial habitat for myriads of insect, bird, rodent and small mammal populations. "Snag forests" are some of the rarest for-

est types on the planet. The hundred-year failed suppression policy of the government has also come at a great expense to taxpayers.

Logging Levels

The last of the main issues the Forest Service is currently taking comment on is the amount of road building and logging that would occur on both forests. The proposed action would increase annual timber harvest on the forests from current levels (30-50 million board ft). to 150 million board ft. Yes, the agency is proposing to increase logging 3x!! Irreplaceable roadless areas could be logged and, thus, lost forever. The new plan would allow logging in riparian areas that are currently off-limits to development. Standards for protection of soils, water quality and fish/wildlife habitat would also be eliminated or severely reduced. There would be no hard standards for the protection of old growth, snags or large trees and other important forest components. The only things emphasized are the flexible guidelines ("adaptive management") and other flowery language, which offers little accountability. All of this combined would allow the Forest Service to pretty much do anything it wants, in terms of logging and permitting off-road vehicle abuse, all across the national forests.

At nearly 4 million acres, the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests have tremendous biodiversity, from low-elevation habitat with coastal disjunct species in wet cedar forests, to wind-swept ridges with mountain hemlocks and mountain peaks. It is home to threatened and imperiled species like bull trout, Chinook salmon and west-slope cutthroat, Canada lynx, fisher, wolverines, gray wolves and the even rarer grizzly bear. It offers important habitat for elk herds, mule deer, black bears, cougars, big horn sheep, mountain goats, bald eagles and harlequin ducks. The Forest Service's proposed action would greatly threaten all of these species and their habitat. FOC's *Citizen Alternative* does not, and instead, includes measurable and enforceable standards in the forest plan.




Gerry Snyder Photo Credit

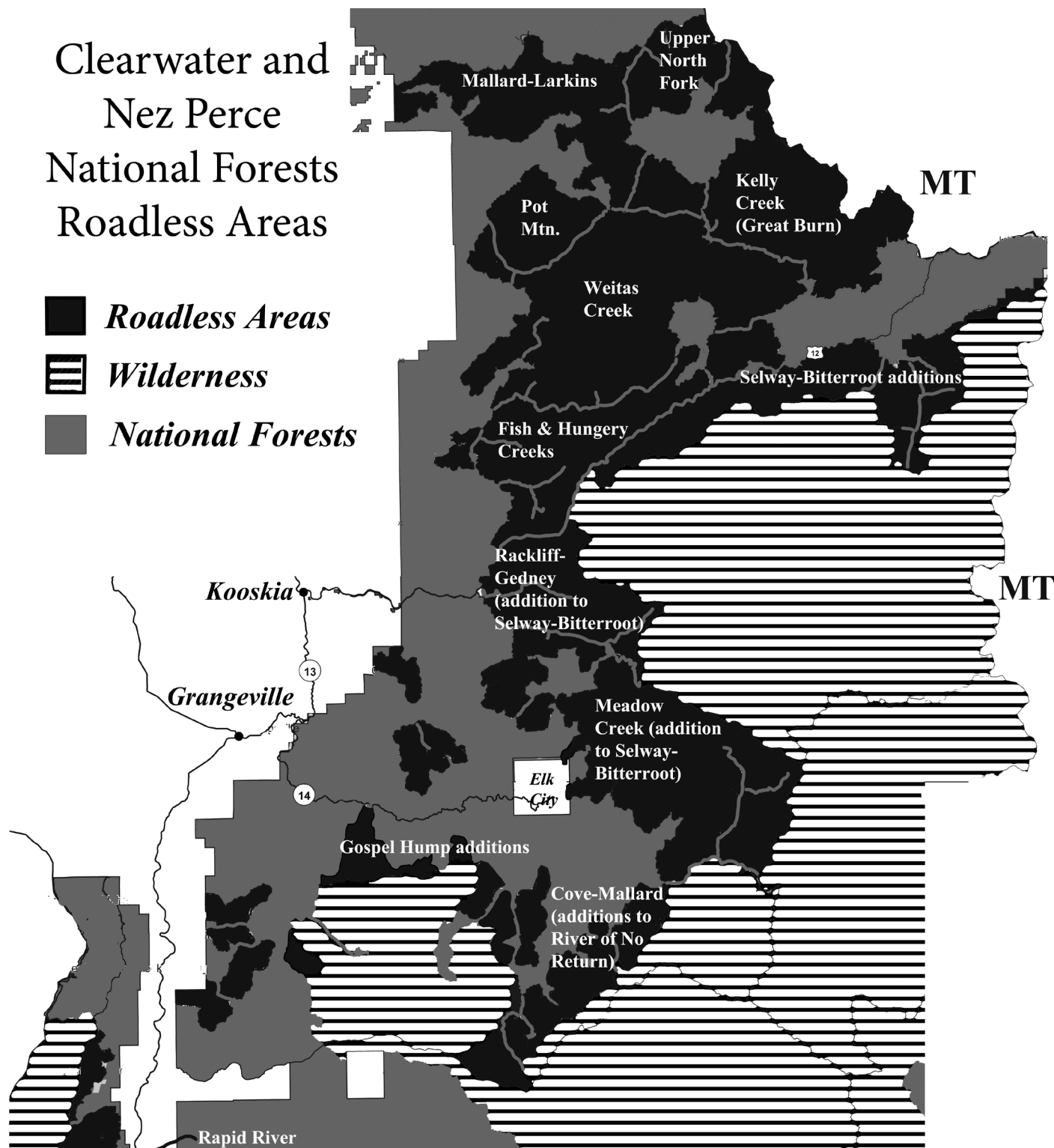
Five Lakes Butte (left) is located in the vast and wild Mallard-Larkins Roadless Area, which has a long history of support for Wilderness designation.

This landscape is dramatic, with steep rocky ridges, deep canyons, rich forests and an abundance of sub-alpine lakes and old growth.

There are 1.5 million acres of roadless wildlands on the
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests that need protection!
These public wildlands contain crucial fish and wildlife habitat.
Tell the Forest Service to recommend these areas as wilderness or
to designate them as non-motorized/non-mechanized backcountry areas.

Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests Roadless Areas

-  *Roadless Areas*
-  *Wilderness*
-  *National Forests*



The public comment deadline is February 28. Please send them to:

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests
Zach Petersen, Forest Planner
903 3rd Street
Kamiah, Idaho 83536
or email them to fpr_npclw@fs.fed.us

The below chart compares the existing Forest Plan (middle column) with the new proposed action (right column), and our *Citizen Alternative* (left column). Please consider telling the Forest Service to list our vision as an alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which is expected December 2018.

Issue	Citizen Alternative	Existing Plans*	Draft FS Proposal
Roadless and Recommended Wilderness	Fully protects all roadless areas 1.5 million acres (ma.). Recommends additions to the Gospel-Hump Wilderness which the agency failed to study.	Theoretically fully protects 37% (0.56 ma.) Moderately protects another 19% (0.23 ma.).	Likely less than 20% protected. No commitment from the Forest Service as of yet.
Wilderness	Provides specific and accountable direction.	Current direction has extra loopholes for administrative use of motorized equipment and structures.	Vague language and proposed conditions could conflict with wild, untrammelled wilderness.
Climate Change	Reduces carbon emissions and promotes climate stability.	None.	Wrong-headed proposal to log forests under the ruse of climate change.
Fisheries and Watershed Protection	Measurable and mandatory standards.	Measurable and some mandatory standards.	Loopholes that weaken existing direction.
Wildlife Habitat	Measurable and mandatory standards to protect all habitat.	Some measurable and limited mandatory standards for some species.	Loopholes that further weaken existing protection. Limited additional protection for other species.
Logging	Limited to roaded areas that meet water quality and wildlife standards.	Some roadless acreage protected, as is some old growth.	Loopholes allow logging just about everywhere including most roadless areas.

* Includes direction as per the 1993 Clearwater National Forest lawsuit settlement agreement.

50th Anniversary Wild & Scenic Rivers Act Brett Haverstick



Peter Roise Photo Credit

Wild & Scenic Lochsa River

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act! In 1968, Congress originally protected eight rivers in a free-flowing condition in the United States, including three in the Clearwater Basin of north-central Idaho: Lochsa River, Selway River and Middle Fork Clearwater. The legislation sharply contrasted with the dam-building and water-diversion ethos that completely dominated our national river policy up until that time. With the establishment of the Wild & Scenic National Rivers System, rivers could now be protected as *Wild*, *Scenic*, or *Recreational*, depending on the degree of development existing at the time of designation.

The Middle Fork Salmon River was also one of the eight rivers originally protected under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, meaning half the rivers originally protected under the Act are located in Idaho. That's quite a legacy. Unfortunately, today less than 1% of all rivers in Idaho are protected under the Act. That's a real shame.

While the Saint Joe River, Rapid River and main stem of the Salmon River have segments designated *Wild* or *Recreational*, not another mile of main stem or tributary stream in the entire Clearwater Basin has been added to the Wild & Scenic National Rivers System. Fifty years after the legislation was passed by Congress, the N. Fork Clearwater and S. Fork Clearwater have, yet, to be permanently protected in a free-flowing condition. The same can be said for the Clearwater River between Kooskia and Lewiston.

Stay tuned for programming this year to celebrate the 50th Anniversary Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. We plan on organizing field trips, panel discussions, art exhibits and work with allies like Idaho Rivers United and others to highlight this historic piece of legislation.

Editor's Note: The Saint Joe River bounds the north of our mission area, and the main stem Salmon River and Rapid River bound the south and southwest of our mission area. There are other rivers in Idaho not mentioned in this article protected under the Act.

Troubled Waters: The Fight for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Book Review by Brett Haverstick

Co-author Kevin Proescholdt was kind enough to give me a copy of this book in 2014 during the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act. I finally had the chance to read it over the holidays.

Picture a time when a Congressman and woman would fight for permanent protection for a wild area, regardless of the political consequences and personal struggles that it might entail. Recall a period when the House and Senate was functional to the point that all pieces of legislation were deemed important, and dealt with in a timely manner. Think back to when the White House was vocal in supporting legislation that would designate large swaths of country as Wilderness. Remember when the conservation community was united, and determined to protect a landscape without compromising wildness. Yes, times have certainly changed since the spectacular Boundary Waters of northern Minnesota were added to the National Wilderness Preservation System in 1964.

The main focus of *Troubled Waters: The Fight for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness*, however, is the battles fought in the '70's to prohibit logging, snowmobiles, motorboats and motorized portages inside the Boundary Waters Wilderness, which was established in 1964. I realize this may seem confusing, but there is a complicated, yet, fascinating history of how this area was originally protected, and what it took to strengthen protections.

While visiting family for Christmas, I spoke with my father about this book. During one of our conversations he dashed down to the basement, and returned with a cardboard box containing a beautifully crafted wooden paddle manufactured in Duluth, Minnesota. I smiled when he said that he hasn't given me the paddle, yet, because he may have one more canoe paddle left in him. Maybe Kevin Proescholdt will take us out one day in the Boundary Waters. Hope you are reading this Kevin!

Editor's Note: The original protection of this area in 1964 was an exception under the Wilderness Act. Today, there are still threats to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. There are current efforts to allow a foreign mining company with a terrible environmental track record to build a sulfide-ore copper mine on the periphery of the Boundary Waters. One of our allies, Wilderness Watch, is closely following the situation, and asking for support from citizens to fight back this proposal. Kevin Proescholdt is the Conservation Director for the group, and can be reached at kevinp@wildernesswatch.org. The group's website is wildernesswatch.org.

Delisting of lynx based on pending court date, not science

Guest Opinion

**Mike Garrity, Executive Director
Alliance for the Wild Rockies**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) recently released a review of the status of lynx, which were listed as “Threatened” on the Endangered Species list in 2000. Now, in the new world of Trump’s fact-free, anti-science, war-on-wildlife administration, the FWS recommends removing lynx from Endangered Species Act protections completely, writing: “Considering the available information, we found no reliable information that the current distribution and abundance of resident lynx in the contiguous United States are substantially reduced from historical conditions.”

The agency does not even attempt to provide the public with an estimated current population number of how many lynx there are because the agency has no idea. Fish and Wildlife Service has no idea how many lynx there are for one simple reason; the agency no longer monitors lynx populations! What the agency, if it was being truthful, should have written in their report is: “Because we no longer monitor the population of lynx we have no evidence of how many lynx there are and therefore also have no evidence that lynx numbers are declining or increasing or doing anything at all. Also, because we have decided to ignore all of the historical records of lynx presence, we have no evidence of any change from historic conditions.”

Seventeen years ago lynx trapping was outlawed due to the Endangered Species listing, but lynx numbers continued to decline because past and current logging has destroyed the dense mature and old growth forests upon which lynx rely for reproduction and survival. Lynx can no longer be found in the Gallatin Range and lynx numbers are falling in the Seeley-Swan Valley, which is the largest lynx population in Montana. Until 2010 there was also still a resident population of lynx in the Garnet Mountains northeast of Missoula. They had most likely been living there since the last Ice Age, but now they are gone as well.

What we do know is that the last estimate of the number of lynx in Montana by Dr. John Squires, a Forest Service lynx scientist, was that there were about 300 lynx in Montana. What the FWS should have done to determine whether the population has declined from historic conditions was ask Montana’s Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks, which estimated there were 700 to 1,050 lynx throughout Western Montana in 1994. This means there has certainly been a decline.

Additionally, as to habitat, the Fish and Wildlife Service’s own scientist, Megan Kosterman, found that 50 percent of each lynx home range must be mature, dense for-

est to provide optimal habitat for lynx to breed and raise kittens and that no more than 15 percent of each lynx home range should be clearcut. Not a single National Forest is complying with this recommendation. What is the impact of that failure on population trajectories? FWS ignores this issue.

The truth is that FWS is only arguing that lynx should be delisted because of a court deadline this week that required that FWS finally, after 17 years of delay, produce a recovery plan for lynx. Rather than produce the court-ordered recovery plan by the deadline, FWS simply filed a document arguing that lynx no longer need any protections under the Endangered Species Act, and therefore FWS does not need to produce a recovery plan. This is a transparent attempt to evade the law. We urge you to contact FWS and demand that they revoke their delisting recommendation and produce the recovery plan that the law and science require.

Editor’s Note: This editorial originally appeared in the *Great Falls Tribune* on January 12, 2018.



USFWS Photo Credit

Lynx lawsuit dismissed in Idaho **Brett Haverstick**

It has not been a good month for Canada lynx. Besides the announcement by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (above article), Federal Judge Lynn B. Winmill recently dismissed a lawsuit brought forth by Center for Biological Diversity, Western Watersheds Project, WildEarth Guardians and FOC challenging the killing of lynx by traps intended for bobcats in the the state of Idaho. The judge originally ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, ordering the state to regulate trapping in the Clearwater Basin and Idaho Panhandle Regions of Idaho. However, after reconsideration Judge Winmill ruled that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service permits trappers in Idaho to accidentally kill or “take” a limited number of lynx while trapping for species like bobcat. As a result, the Idaho Department Fish & Game does not have to restrict trapping in those regions. Plaintiffs are currently considering their options.

**The hubris of collaboration
and industry efforts to “fix” the forest**
Guest Opinion
George Wuerthner

I recently went on a Forest Service tour with a collaborative which demonstrated how ignorance and industrial forestry paradigms dominate most forest management activities, including the mindset of so-called environmental representatives on these collaboratives.

Among the things we discussed was what to do about mistletoe. Mistletoe is a tree parasite that is common in forests throughout the West. Mistletoe forms big clumps in tree branches that look something like a large bird nest. Trees with mistletoe can have many clumps scattered throughout their branches. The seeds for mistletoe are scattered when they ripen and explode sending spores into the surrounding trees.

In general, foresters see mistletoe as a “problem.” Although it can kill a tree, it usually just slows tree growth. Among the tour members, the Forest Service and all the collaborative members were convinced we needed to “thin” the forest to reduce the number of mistletoe “infected” trees.

It never occurred to this forester that mistletoe could do the thinning and do better at picking the evolutionary winners and losers than a forester with a paint gun. The irony never occurred to him that he advocated killing the trees by logging them, so they would not be killed by mistletoe. That’s somewhat like saying there’s too many deer, so we need to kill some, or they might die from wolves.

After the Forest Service forester finished his spiel on why we needed to thin the forest to improve its “resiliency” to mistletoe, I raised my hand, and asked the group “what is the ecological value of mistletoe?” I got some confused stances and silence. Apparently, so immersed in the Industrial Forestry Paradigm, no one, including the so-called “environmentalists” had considered that mistletoe might have some ecological value to the forest ecosystem.

So, I suggested a few things about mistletoe that might be of potential value to the forest. First, mistletoe seeds are commonly eaten by many bird species. In fact, in early Germany mistletoe was known as “dung on a twig,” referring to the perchance for birds to consume the seeds and scatter their droppings to form new mistletoe plants. The clumps are used as nest sites by raptors and squirrels and others seeking hiding places among the boughs. Even when the clumps fall to the ground, they provide cover for many insects. One study found 37 percent more insect-eating birds in areas with mistletoe than areas without.

In addition, trees that grow slowly have denser wood. As a result, these trees, when they die, have a longer life as “down wood” on the forest floor. Their contribution

as biological legacy and for carbon storage is enhanced by mistletoe.

None of these concepts had occurred to the group before, and even after I mentioned them, no one in the group endorsed the idea of leaving trees with mistletoe alone. To all, including the “environmentalists” who are so immersed in the Industrial Forestry Paradigm, the mistletoe was just a forest pest and needed to be reduced, if not eliminated.

I thought about Aldo Leopold’s admonishment in his book *Sand County Almanac*. Leopold was a forester with the Forest Service who went on to the University of Wisconsin where he started the first wildlife biology program in the country. Leopold wrote: “The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant, ‘What good is it? ... To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.’”

The “problem” I see in most forest ecosystems is not too many wildfires, too many bark beetles or mistletoe but a hubris among participants who believe they know enough about forests to prescribe any management at all. The fact that no one in my tour group even wondered, “What role does mistletoe play in the ecosystem?” is emblematic of the problem in our efforts to “fix” the forest. The real threat to our forest ecosystems is not natural ecological processes like mistletoe or bark beetles, but our inability to think like a forest ecosystem, and appreciate that there is a role for everything, whether we understand it or not.



FOC File Photo

Collaboration is a threat to forest ecosystems

If you receive our newsletter but want
1x month e-newsletter updates
about pressing issues visit
friendsoftheclearwater.org/newsroom

Clearwater Country Report

Hello from Ariel Medeiros! FOC Intern

My name is Ariel Medeiros and I'm a student at Washington State University studying Wildlife Ecology. I plan to go to graduate school for wildlife pathology, and hopefully be able to open my own research lab one day. Before coming to the Palouse, I lived in Reno, Nevada where I worked at an animal sanctuary called Animal Ark, which is where I learned what animals are facing due to humans destroying their habitat.

Growing up I was fascinated by nature, and I loved watching Discovery Channel and Animal Planet when they actually had relevant shows on. I loved being outdoors and trying to find animals. After watching *Jane Goodall: Return to Gombe*, I realized that I wanted to work up close and personal with animals. From that point forward, I started looking into things, and that's when I found pathology.

I wanted to intern with Friends of the Clearwater (FOC) because I believe that natural areas should be left to the wildlife that have lived in their habitat for centuries. Interning with FOC has also widened my knowledge about other parts of the natural world, and what our government wants to do with it. In order to save wildlife, I now realize that we need to protect their habitat.

I look forward to my continued work with Friends of the Clearwater!



Ariel Medeiros Photo Credit

Send an email to
foc@friendsoftheclearwater.org
if you want to volunteer or intern with us,
or if you know someone that does!
Thank you!

FOC Benefit Concert: Thanks for the support everybody Brett Haverstick

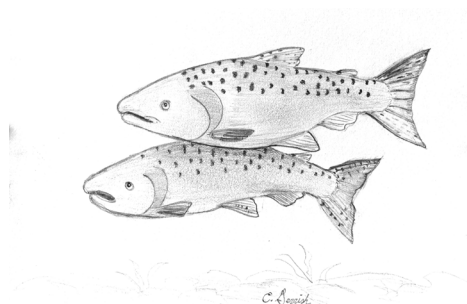


FOC File Photo

While we didn't exactly have snow piled up outside of people's homes this January, the 2018 *Cabin Fever Benefit Concert* was dynamite. The evening was relaxing, the setting was intimate, the crowd was friendly and the music was a perfect combination of political satire and acoustic melodies.

Our staff wishes to extend a warm thank you to local musicians Jeanne McHale and Donna Holmes Parks, as well as Ben Walden and Allison Anders (both pictured above). Jeanne and Donna play in *Henry C. & the Willards*, but that night they teamed up to perform songs that the crowd really enjoyed including, *Take the Dams out Dammit!* Ben and Allison played the second set of the benefit, with Ben playing acoustic guitar and mandolin, and Allison playing acoustic guitar, as well as banjo. Allison has a beautiful voice, too.

We also want to recognize the owners and staff at One World Cafe in Moscow, whom were gracious hosts, and very easy to work with. The lighting in the cafe was excellent, and the little stage in the southeast corner of the main room is perfect for live music and entertainment. Thanks to Henry Willard for being the catalyst for this benefit! All of the proceeds from the benefit concert are going towards protecting the public lands and fish and wildlife habitat of the Clearwater Basin in north-central Idaho!



Original art by Emma Gerrish

FOC 2017 Annual Membership Meeting
Guest Opinion
Janet Torline, Board Member
Kootenai Environmental Alliance

I learned about Friends of the Clearwater (FOC) 14 years ago when I joined the board of Kootenai Environmental Alliance (KEA). KEA's Executive Director at the time, Barry Rosenberg, was a friend and colleague of FOC's Ecosystem Defense Director, Gary Macfarlane, having worked together on forest protection issues for many years. To this day, FOC and KEA help inform and support each other's work.

I live at the base of Mt. Coeur d'Alene, on the western edge of the Idaho Panhandle National Forest. For over 40 years I have witnessed a lot of logging in this area. I have seen watersheds become impaired, wildlife displaced and the forest increasingly scarred by a tangle of roads.

I became a member of FOC in order to stay better informed on how the group was working to keep "public lands in public hands," while holding the Forest Service accountable to the environmental protections ensured by law.

Whenever I hear about FOC's annual membership meeting I always mark it on my calendar but for years there was always some conflict in my schedule. This year I vowed to make the drive and attend the event that I had heard so much about. I am so glad I did!!

A warm and beautiful setting opened before my eyes when I walked in the door. Thirteen tables were festively adorned with *Mother Nature's* forest décor – snowberries, Oregon grape, lichen encrusted twigs and pine boughs. Along one side of the room were tables piled high with sumptuous, homemade fare; a feast for the eyes, as well as the palette.

Along the other walls were numerous auction items, literally something for everyone to want to purchase. It was a challenge to narrow my bidding to only a few choices, especially knowing the proceeds would help fund FOC's work.

In one strategic corner Membership & Development Director, Ashley Lipscomb, tended the bar. Good cheer filled the room of radicalized "gray hairs," up and coming younger environmentalists, and even a few babes in arms. It felt like a tribe I was glad to be part of.

Gary opened the program by listing some of FOC's 2017 successes. It was inspiring to know what this small group of dedicated environmentalists continues to accomplish.

Ashley addressed the strength each member brings to FOC and how, in turn, FOC becomes the voice for its collective membership. It felt good to know how hard the staff works to carry membership concerns forward into action.

Education & Outreach Director, Brett Haverstick, spoke in his usual passionate tone about the campaigns FOC are working on, as well as new projects being developed to help bring awareness and support to FOC's mission.

As I headed out into the snowy night, I wrapped myself in the warmth and fellowship of being part of this grassroots team. I left feeling inspired and supported to face the many challenges looming ahead for our planet. Thank you FOC for all you do!



FOC File Photo

**Ecosystem Defense Director Gary Macfarlane
with former Board President Lynne Nelson**

**BIG THANKS TO EVERYONE THAT
DONATED TO OUR SILENT AUCTION!**

Harriet & David Aiken, Donal Wilkinson, Tanya Gale, Laurene Sorensen, Bill Bonney, Gail Taber, Julene Ewert, Belinda Rhodes, Teresa Baker, Mike & Deb Alperin, Tye-Dye Everything, Bobbi & Sandra Kelly, Palouse Ocularium, Allison Meyer Photography, Mikey's Gyros, Cafe Moro, Wild@Art, Moscow Brewing Co., Pecks Shoe Clinic, Hunga Dunga Brewery, Palouse Bicycle Collective, One World Cafe, Kenworthy Performing Arts Centre, Deep Roots Farm, Allegra, Hodgins Drug, Roots Nutrition & Massage, Hyperspod Sports, Bruised Books, Fish Folks, Gem State Crystals, Maialina Pizzeria Napoletana, Sangria Grille and Cowgirl Chocolates.

**SPECIAL THANKS
TO VOLUNTEER KELLY KINGSLAND
AND ANYONE WE MAY HAVE MISSED!**



FOC File Photo

The 2017 Annual Meeting & Gathering drew a huge crowd - look at all those pesky environmentalists!

FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FOREST PLAN WORKSHOP - RECOMMENDED WILDERNESS

Thursday February 22 @7:00pm

1912 CENTER, 412 E. THIRD, MOSCOW

WINE & WILD RIVERS

Saturday April 7

A WINE TASTING FUNDRAISER FOR FOC - CALL FOR DETAILS!

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS ACT

50TH ANNIVERSARY PANEL DISCUSSION

Monday April 9 @5:30pm

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO LAW SCHOOL, MAIN COURTROOM

Friends of the Clearwater

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