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TRANSITIONS Journal of the IEPLC

The Inland Empire Public Lands Council is a non-profit organization dedicated to the transition of the greater Columbia River ecosystem from resource extraction to long term community and biological sustainability.

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Rep. George Nethercutt: Listener?

By John Osborn, M.D.

A nation that spent most of 1995 engrossed by the O.J. Simpson murder trial and ignored Congress using the budget process to grind up our environmental laws is grumpily awakening to the budget mess in the nation's Capital. One Congressman in the cast of politicians is the Speaker-slayer, Rep. George Nethercutt of Spokane.

A year ago the "Gingrich revolution" was just beginning. Tom Foley, congressman from eastern Washington, was no longer Speaker of the House. Eastern Washington voters replaced Tom Foley with George Nethercutt, a publicly soft-spoken and courteous campaigner.

Early in January, 1995, I traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with newly elected Rep. Nethercutt, and to monitor the impact of the Congressional budget process on forests. For the past 10 years I have spent vacations on Capitol Hill, prompted in part by the way in which Congress's budget process is abused while setting the nation's forest policies. A trail of stumps and ruined streams leads from our clearcut forests to hallways and backrooms of Congress. If you want to know what government agencies really do, then ignore their rhetoric. Look at their budgets.

Rep. Nethercutt welcomed me into his office in the Longworth Building. We sat down: the television was on one side of Nethercutt and I was on the other. He looked at the TV as I spoke. Then looked at me. Then back to the TV. I attempted to convey the historic proportions of the transition underway in the Columbia River region. Leadership is needed, I said, to protect and restore our forests and fisheries and to help rural communities through a period of disruptive change. "Do you fish?" I asked. No. "Hunt?" No. "Do you know anything about the clearcutting and toxic metal pollution upstream from Spokane?" No. Finally Nethercutt turned away from the television and asked, insistently, "What do you want from me?"

On March 1, I returned to Capitol Hill to testify before the Senate Subcommittee on forest policy, chaired by Sen. Larry Craig (R-ID). Over on the House side of the Hill, the Logging-without-Laws Rider was being shoved through committees. Nethercutt supported this. The Logging-without-laws rider was attached to a budget bill like a bomb on a Christmas tree, and signed into law by a flip-flopping President Clinton. Now our public forests are falling to lawless logging.

On June 1, another meeting with Rep. Nethercutt was held, this time in Spokane. Nethercutt insisted that "salvage" logging would not lose money, disregarding conservative estimates that taxpayers would lose hundreds of millions of dollars. He attempted to defend his own rider on a budget bill, so-called "Section 314", that would effectively censor scientists, subvert public process, and gut the Columbia River region's planning process.

Most of Nethercutt's constituents value the high quality of life here: our forests, our world class fishing, hunting, and lovely lakes. Nethercutt's Sec. 314 and Logging-Without-Laws destroys the Columbia River region's forests and fisheries. At the same time, Nethercutt's actions will cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

How to explain Nethercutt's decisions? Follow the money. Money still gushes from timber companies, and especially from the Northern-Pacific-based corporations: Boise Cascade, Potlatch, Plum Creek, and Weyerhaeuser. Money, the mother's milk of politics, binds together the corporate-government complex with the goal of keeping a lock-hold on decisions about our public forests and fisheries.

So let us return to George Nethercutt's question from last January: "What do you want from me?"

First, stop intergenerational theft. Commit yourself to sustaining our forests. As Republican Gifford Pinchot recognized, preserving forests through "wise use" can only occur with careful planning. Careful planning requires using — not discarding — the tools of sound science, economics, and fair and open public process. Science-based planning is the only way to avoid continued malpractice that is destroying the Columbia River forests and fisheries — one of the most magnificent river ecosystems in the world.

In short, George Nethercutt, provide the healing leadership that we also asked repeatedly of your predecessor, Tom Foley. You campaigned on being a listener, not a speaker. Listen to more than the Lords of Yesterday, George Nethercutt. Listen to the land and to the people.

(1) *In extremis:* Columbia River fisheries and forests

Rains devastate N. Idaho forests and watersheds Officials blame clearcuts, roads in wrong places for most of damage

Jesse Tinsley/The Spokesman-Review

District Ranger Art Bourassa walks away from a massive slide on Quartz Creek in the Clearwater National Forest.

By Ken Olsen

Staff writer

The casualty list runs from Sandpoint to Lolo, Mont., and the roster is far from complete.

Early estimates suggest triage will cost taxpayers millions.

It's the worst damage to North Idaho's forests most experts have ever seen: Roads overloaded with water from recent storms fell off mountainsides, walls of mud and debris tore up logged and unlogged watersheds.

In Clearwater National Forest, federal officials frankly admit the devastation was aggravated by too many clearcuts and roads built in the wrong places.

At least 28 roads are closed due to more than 100 slides, slumps and washouts. Some of the roads probably won't reopen next summer, the U.S. Forest Service said.

The Idaho Panhandle National Forests to the north reports extensive damage to 200 miles of roads in the Bonner's Ferry District alone. The havoc raised by mudslides is worst in the St. Maries and Avery Ranger Districts—cutting off the road between Avery and Wallace and blocking other byways.

The forests appear to qualify for emergency repair money

from the Federal Highway Administration.

"This is not a good picture," said Art Bourassa, district ranger on the North Fork of the Clearwater National Forest, as he pointed to a slide.

"I wish we didn't have a road up there," he added, pointing to a new road in a recently logged area 20 miles east of Dworshak Reservoir.

The rainstorms turned the road into an avalanche that charged through a clearcut and took out a piece of another logging road below it. The debris tumbled into the North Fork of the Clearwater River.

Not far away, raging Isabella Creek punched out a 100-yard-long, 10-foot deep curve on an older road, clear down to bedrock. It is the only road to the popular Mallard-Larkins Pioneer Area.

It definitely will be rebuilt, officials said, starting with a rock barrier to shield the next road from the creek.

Hardest hit was Quartz Creek Road, buried under a massive slide 600 feet wide and 60 feet deep.

It blocks the easiest access to an active timber sale.

But removal of the dirt and debris, and repair of the road,

Continued on next page

Old forests east of Cascades in jeopardy

•Scientists tell Congress that old growth timber has been heavily logged and isn't likely to survive another 100 years

By Kathie Durbin

of The Oregonian staff

A century of logging has reduced old-growth forests east of the Cascades to fragile islands too small to support native wildlife, an independent panel of scientists has concluded.

Six scientific panels briefed members of Congress on their findings Thursday in Washington, D.C. The scientists urged the U.S. Forest Service to stop all logging of old-growth forests and individual old trees in Eastern Oregon and Eastern Washington immediately so the tattered forest ecosystem can survive.

The scientists also said the agency should halt all logging and road-building within broad streamside areas and entire watersheds critical to salmon. They said livestock grazing along streams should end so that degraded rivers can heal.

The Clinton administration will heed the recommendations as it begins writing a new environmental impact statement for managing and restoring the damaged eastside forests, said Mark Gaede of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The outlook for survival of the eastside old growth is grim even if the recommendations are followed, said David Perry, a professor of forest ecology at Oregon State University who served on the seven-member panel.

"I personally think it has only a moderate or low probability of surviving another 100 years because of the threat of fires and insects," Perry said. "This threat of natural catastrophe makes it doubly important to protect all the remaining old growth that we have."

Continued on next page

Damage: Lesson in how to not manage a forest

Continued from previous page

will cost an estimated \$1 million.

Many of the slides and washouts happened on steep slopes with unstable soil. They involve roads built four to 40 years ago.

This is a grand-slam education on how not to manage forests today, officials said.

"Everything up to four to five years ago was heavily clearcut," Bourassa said. "That probably isn't sitting with what Mother Nature planned."

As for roads, "some shouldn't have been built, based on location, drainage and stability," he said.

In areas like Skull Creek and Quartz Creek, "there were too many roads, too close together."

That management won't be repeated, he said.

The Forest Service knew long before Bourassa arrived here six years ago that several of those roads were risky because the soil is so unstable. "But if we didn't build in medium- to high-risk areas, we wouldn't have a road down the North Fork corridor," a major timber-hauling route, Bourassa said.

Those risks are never figured into the cost of a timber sale,

but they are risks taxpayers will now pay for, environmentalists said.

Former Forest Service employees contend the current devastation is also partly a result of logging the same watershed year after year, instead of giving it time to heal.

Without those trees, there is nothing to drink up rainwater and prevent erosion, said Al Espinosa, who was chief fisheries biologist on the Clearwater for 20 years.

For example, there are no roads above the Quartz Creek slide.

Yet this watershed has sustained 200 million board-feet of logging since 1965, much of it done in the name of salvaging white pine.

In 1979, the most valuable white pine was taken from the north slope by helicopter, leaving primarily dead and dying trees on the slope that slipped away last month.

It was salvage logging, advertised then as now as essential to get the trees while they are still valuable.

Spokesman Review

December 8, 1995

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Continued from page 5

Brock Evans of the National Audubon Society said the scientists' report proves that eastside forests are in even worse shape than those west of the Cascades.

"The watersheds containing these ancient forests comprise most of the spawning and rearing habitat for threatened and endangered Columbia and Snake River salmon," Evans said.

But Chris West, vice president of the Northwest Forestry Association, took issue with the idea that the eastside forests can be saved by preserving them.

"If we're going to improve and maintain forest health in the eastside ecosystem, we're going to have to manage the forest," West said. "Study after study has shown that we can't just walk away."

The study includes the first-ever maps showing the location and extent of eastside old-growth forests, roadless areas and key watersheds. Steve and Eric Beckwitt of the Sierra Biodiversity Institute in North San Juan, Calif., drew on mapping data and aerial photographs collected by 75 citizen mappers through the Audubon Society Adopt-a-Forest project and used sophisticated geographical information system software to prepare the detailed maps.

The scientists found that three national forests—the Colville, Wallowa-Whitman and Winema—had no old-growth patches larger than 5,000 acres. Of seven old-growth patches larger than 5,000 acres in the Malheur, Ochoco and Umatilla forests, only one was protected.

Old-growth ponderosa pine, the most ecologically and economically valuable tree species east of the Cascades, is also the scarcest, they said. Just 3 percent to 5 percent of the original ponderosa pine forest remains on the Deschutes National Forest, 5 percent to 8 percent on the Wihema and 2 percent to 8 percent on the Fremont.

"The geographical extent of old growth forest ecosystems in eastside national forests has been dramatically reduced during the 20th century," the scientists said. "Continued logging of old growth outside current reserves will jeopardize unknown numbers of native species."

EASTSIDE FORESTS

Here are the findings of the Eastside Forests Scientific Society Panel:

- The extent of eastside old-growth forests has been dramatically reduced by logging since 1900. Old-growth ponderosa pine may cover only 15 percent of its original range in Eastern Oregon and Eastern Washington.
- Less than 25 percent of the old growth left on national forests is protected.
- At least 70 percent of the remaining eastside old growth is in patches of less than 100 acres — too small to provide habitat for many old-growth species.
- Many areas designated "old growth" in existing forest plans aren't old growth at all.
- Although large roadless areas are important to such species as bear, elk and wolverine, fewer than 8 percent of roadless areas in the Blue Mountains are protected.

Recommendations

- Halt all logging of mature and old-growth forests to create a "time out" until a protection strategy is developed.
- Cut no individual trees older than 150 years or larger than 20 inches in diameter at breast height.
- Do not log or build new roads in areas where fish face possible extinction or in watersheds that provide the best remaining habitat and gene pools for salmon and resident fish.
- Do not build new roads within roadless areas larger than 1,000 acres.
- Establish wide protected corridors along streams and wetlands, including 300-foot wide buffers along yearround streams.
- Halt all livestock grazing in riparian areas except under strict protective controls.

The Oregonian

The scientists recommended that two panels be established to develop more detailed strategies for restoring forest health and forest landscape.

The American Fisheries Society, the Wildlife Society, the American Ornithologists' Union, the Ecological Society of America, the Society for Conservation Biology and the Sierra Biodiversity Institute sponsored and prepared the report, which was requested by seven House members in May 1992.

It was funded with \$66,000 in grants from the W. Alton Jones Foundation, the Bullitt Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Oregonian

September 10, 1993



Gerry Snyder photo

*Forest Service officials frankly admit the devastation in North Idaho was aggravated by clearcuts and logging roads.
Landslide, Quartz Creek, Clearwater NF, December 1995*

Spokesman Review
August 1, 1993

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December 1995 *TRANSITIONS* 7

More miles of logging roads than streams in NW forests

By Scott Sonner

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Logging-road mileage has more than doubled in Northwest national forests since 1960, far outstripping the pace of street and highway construction in the region, a new report said yesterday.

More than 325,000 miles of logging roads now crisscross public lands in British Columbia and parts of six Northwest states — enough to circle the planet 13 times, according to a study by Northwest Environment Watch, a Seattle-based non-profit environmental-research center.

That's more than the 220,000 miles of public streets and highways in the region, which grew about 25 percent over the past 35 years.

Compared with highways, national-forest roads have proliferated since 1960, more than tripling in Oregon and more than doubling in Idaho and Washington, the report said.

The study by John Ryan and Chandra Shah warns of environmental damage caused by logging roads, including erosion and sedimentation in streams that harm dwindling salmon populations.

It urges a halt to logging-road construction in the Northwest U.S. and zero growth in British Columbia. It applauds Forest Service efforts to remove roads as a central part of watershed restoration in heavily logged national forests.

"Perhaps its most surprising finding is that roads have surpassed streams as the most dominant feature of the landscape in the region," said Alan Durning, the center's executive director and former researcher with Ryan at the Worldwatch Institute in Washington, D.C.

"Today, outside of Alaska, more of the U.S. Northwest is accessible to four-wheelers than to salmon."

The report addresses the region's overall road network — public streets, highways and public logging roads combined — roughly 535,000 miles across British Columbia, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, northwestern California, western Montana and southeastern Alaska.

British Columbia has the longest combined road network, about 190,000 miles; followed by Oregon, 127,000; Washing-

Logging roads
Logging roads on national forests account for more road miles than do public streets and highways in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia, a new report says.*

	Streets and highways	Logging roads	Total miles
Idaho	37.7	33.5	69.2
Oregon	54.2	72.8	127
Washington	72.8	22	94.8
S.E. Alaska	1.8	3.6	5.4
W. Montana	6.4	23	29.4
N.W. California	9.7	12.5	22.2
U.S. Northwest	180.6	167.4	348
British Columbia	39.2	147.8	187
Total	219.8	315.2	535

*Figures are in thousands of miles through 1994.
Source: Northwest Environment Watch
SEATTLE TIMES

ton, 95,000; Idaho, 69,000; western Montana, 29,000; northwestern California, 22,000; and southeastern Alaska, 5,000.

"Surprisingly, the Northwest's extensive network of highways ... has expanded relatively little since 1960," the report says.

"During this period, regional population nearly doubled and the number of cars tripled, yet recorded highway mileage increased only 25 percent."

That's partly because new housing developments do not add much mileage compared with old rural roads stretching across vast distances. Also, some new suburbs simply pave over existing roads, the report said.

National forests in the U.S. Northwest average 3.5 miles of road for each square mile of land, the report said, citing 1994 figures by the Forest Service.

Oregon's national-forest roads grew from about 20,000 miles in 1960 to 73,000 miles in 1994.

Washington's grew from about 9,000 miles to 22,000 miles, Idaho's from about 16,000 to about 33,000 and Alaska's from 251 to 3,600, the report said.

Logging roads on British Columbia's public lands now total about 150,000 miles.

Seattle Times
December 12, 1995

(2) Columbia River "Ecosystem management"

Feds prepare to tackle forest plan for East Side

By Jim Lynch

Staff Writer

After crafting a plan for harvesting Western woodlands, the Clinton administration is turning its spotlight onto the Inland Northwest forests.

The federal scrutiny arrives at the same time environmental attorneys are shuttling arms to the next old growth battlefield—the timberlands of eastern Washington and Oregon.

Clinton's top forester concedes the East Side was largely ignored in the recent White House forest plan, but said deciding how to best manage the pest-plagued forests is now the top priority.

"We're slowly marching our way eastward," said Assistant Agriculture Secretary Jim Lyons in an interview with The Spokesman-Review.

Lyons said the administration needs more scientific information about East Side forests before it decides how much timber can be logged each year without jeopardizing the forests' future.

It may take years before new management plans are fully enacted, but some key information surfaces later this month as reports on old growth and forest health are completed.

Meanwhile, the East Side timber sale program is in neutral with little more than salvage sales offered on most of the region's public forests.

After devising a strategy for the eastern Washington and Oregon forests, Lyons said the U.S. Forest Service will shift to north and central Idaho, the Inland Northwest's timber core.

The White House isn't waiting for a fractious Northwest congressional delegation to resolve the region's timber standoff that has pitted environmentalists against both the Forest Service and the timber barons.

"We don't need legislation to do what we want to do over there," Lyons said. He described the administration's goal as "attempting to protect forest health in a manner that ensures sustainable production of all resources, not just timber."

Lyons said West Side inventories revealed the Forest Service overestimated the amount of timber in its forests. He noted similar planning glitches may have occurred in East Side forests.

The Forest Service continues to manage its lands with plans devised in the late 1980s, but the timber sale levels have slumped far lower than the projected averages.

Most big sales have been delayed indefinitely in response to a threat by the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The San Francisco-based group filed a petition against the Forest Service in late March seeking to halt logging of old growth in East Side forests.

"The East Side of the Cascades faces an ecological crisis that rivals, if not exceeds the one threatening the northern spotted owl," wrote NRDC attorney Nathaniel Lawrence.

"Continued logging of the East Side's old growth will inevitably lead to an environmental and political train wreck."

The NRDC bills its petition as a way to protect the American marten, pileated woodpecker and northern goshawk, animals not on the endangered species list.

The threat of a lawsuit unnerves the agency's Region 6 headquarters in Portland, which spent the past few years in and out of court with environmentalists over its old growth sales plans in Western owl forests.

Tim Rogan, special assistant to Regional Forester John Lowe, said the petition was one of many signs the Forest Service needs to reevaluate its East Side sales program.

"All these things are adding up," Rogan said. "We decided we better put these sales that were scheduled to go out on hold."

Rogan said the agency is gathering information and doesn't know if future management strategies will allow the forests to return to the sale outputs deemed possible in the current plan.

"We have no idea what the (potential) timber output of the area is," he said.

Richard Everett, a scientist team leader for the Wenatchee Forestry Research Laboratory, is a lead architect of a new East Side management strategy.

Everett recently finished a five-volume report on East Side forests which evaluates the condition of timberlands and sets guidelines for ways to better manage them.

Lyons called Everett's study a good start. "It provides a generic blueprint," he said.

The study describes a management strategy that steps back and views logging and other forest activities from an ecosystem perspective.

With ecosystem management, foresters consider how logging and other activities affect a large region, such as an entire watershed.

It encourages managers to better mimic nature with prescribed burnings, tree thinning and other tactics.

Everett said it's far too early to predict how the new system would affect timber sales. But he said all sales will have to pass this test.

Continued on next page

Project significant undertaking for region

The Eastside Ecosystem Management Project is a huge undertaking.

It will help determine, among other things, how clean the region's water is, how much wood is available from its national forests, and how many different kinds of plants and animals survive into the 21st century.

What's the main goal of the project?

To write a document, called an environmental impact statement, that will guide management of 12 national forests and five Bureau of Land Management districts in Eastern Washington and eastern Oregon.

When will the environmental impact statement be completed?

A draft version, which will list alternative land management strategies, is due in February 1995. There will be a 90-day public comment period before it is finalized.

Who will choose the "winning" management strategy?

Two people: the Forest Service's regional forester in Portland, and the Bureau of Land Management's supervisor for Oregon and Washington.

What's the next step in the process?

This spring the public will be asked to help identify issues

that the environmental impact statement should encompass.

Will the document's writers take jobs and communities into consideration?

They stress that people are an important part of the ecosystem. They will consider economic and social values as well as ecological ones.

What's being done about federal lands in the Interior Columbia River Basin that are outside of eastern Oregon and Eastern Washington?

Federal officials plan to produce an environmental impact statement for Idaho. There's talk of writing one for Montana, too. Parts of Idaho and Montana are already included in the scientific assessment that's being done by the Eastside project.

Will the scientific team conduct research?

There is no time for that, although they may set priorities for future studies. They'll be making management recommendations based on existing information.

— Julie Titone

Spokesman Review

March 9, 1994

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"Does this activity improve the sustainability of the ecosystem, or doesn't it?" he said, noting sales must be redesigned if they don't pass.

"We anticipate that many sales will not pass this screening process," Everett said.

He also estimated it could take at least three years before ecosystem management will be fully implemented throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana.

Fred Stormer, deputy director of the Pacific Northwest Research Lab, said the new strategy changes the way the Forest Service looks at its land.

"We've been making product-based decisions rather than ecosystem based decisions," he said.

Andy Mason, assistant supervisor for the Colville National Forest, said managers of the northeastern Washington forest are not waiting for an official directive to change their management style.

"We're embarking on ecosystem management," Mason said.

He said some proposed timber sales are now going through the new "screen."

"Basically we're trying to figure out how we can do ecosystem management and what it will mean," Mason said.

Other East Side studies that could help script future timber plans include an old growth study by the East Side Forest Scientific Society Panel.

Panel Chairman Mark Henjum, a non-game biologist, said the project has been difficult because of conflicting information about old growth stands.

Henjum said in some cases Forest Service old growth maps were outdated and didn't reflect the fact that some reputed old stands had already been cut.

Lyons said the Clinton Administration focused almost solely on the West Side in its forest plan because it would have been too cumbersome to staff a team of scientists with expertise on both sides of the mountains.

"It doesn't mean we're not going to move aggressively to put together a strategy on the East Side," he said.

Lyons also said the decision to leave out the East Side had nothing to do with House Speaker Tom Foley. The speaker has expressed concerns that Clinton's proposed forestry plan may jeopardize too many timber jobs.

Lyons said after the administration gets a handle on East Side forests, Idaho's federal woodlands will receive similar scrutiny.

He said the management problems in Idaho are different and in some ways more difficult, complicated by the ongoing debates over roadless areas and salmon.

Spokesman Review

July 18, 1993

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(3) Congress censors science, guts public process

Panel axes three fish protection projects

By Roberta Ulrich
of The Oregonian staff

In a move environmentalists denounced as a "foolish idea," a House subcommittee this week ordered an end to three sweeping forest and fish protection projects east of the Cascades.

An industry spokesman said if the cutback survives the congressional process, it probably will be for the good.

But a spokesman for the National Marine Fisheries Service, which is charged with protecting endangered salmon, said the action "doesn't bode well for habitat protection."

The subcommittee's action is only the first step in the appropriations process. But it fits the environmental and fiscal agendas of many of the majority Republicans from the Northwest, giving it a good chance of being enacted.

The House Appropriations subcommittee on Interior Department agencies and the Forest Service terminated three key fish protection programs: Pacfish, Infish and the Interior Columbia River basin ecoregion assessment. The report is not yet public, but copies have been distributed to members of the full Appropriations Committee.

Pacfish is a set of regulations that the National Marine Fisheries Service developed for streamside protection until the basin project dealing with resident fish.

Much of the scientific study for the ecoregion assessment has been completed, and draft reports are planned for completion by Oct. 1, when the ban on further project work would take effect. A draft environmental assessment is not scheduled to be finished until mid-winter, said Tom Quigley, the science team leader for the multi-agency project.

The agencies, including the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, began the study in 1994 to adapt their forest plans to new demands, including protection for endangered species of salmon.

The subcommittee report notes that the ecoregion project has garnered important scientific information on forest health conditions.

However, the report added: "Despite this accomplishment, the project has grown too large and too costly to sustain in a time of fiscal constraints."

The only thing salvaged for funding is publication of the scientific information collected so far.

Bob Doppelt of Oregon Rivers, an environmental organization that has supported all three programs, said the subcommittee report seemed to eliminate analysis or alternative stream protection proposals.

The report also ordered the forest management agencies to amend their forest plans rather than use the guidelines developed under Pacfish and Infish.

Doppelt said the formal amendment process is so lengthy "there will be no protection for a long time, if ever" for salmon habitat in the eastside forests.

Brian Gorman, a National Marine Fisheries Service spokesman in Seattle, said removing the Pacfish rules would "have a major impact on habitat protection in the Northwest."

Jim Myron of Oregon Trout said sarcastically, "I guess there is no threatened fish species." Then he added, "It's like sticking your head in the sand."

Bruce Lovelin of the Columbia River Alliance, a coalition of industrial users of the Columbia and its tributaries, said the subcommittee action was "not too surprising." He said his group had not looked at Pacfish as helpful and would welcome changes in its rules for habitat protection.

Oregonian
June 22, 1995

Forest effort pawn in budget fight

By Eric Pryne

Seattle Times staff reporter

The budget war that now consumes Congress and President Clinton is as big as the national debt and Medicare.

It's also as small as an office on Poplar Street in Walla Walla.

Fifty scientists, planners and other federal officials who work there have spent the past two years assessing the present and plotting the future of all federal forests and rangelands between the Cascade crest and the Rockies.

Their charge: prepare a management plan for the dry side of the mountains that is as comprehensive—and perhaps as precedent-setting—as Clinton's controversial 19-month-old "Option 9" forest plan for the west side of the Cascades.

Now their work may be cut short. The Walla Walla project and the east-side forests have become pawns in the budget war.

They are hardly a major focus of the debate in Washington, D.C. But trees and salmon on 75 million acres of national-forest and Bureau of Land Management land—an area almost twice the size of Washington state—may hang in the balance.

Northwest lawmakers, backed by timber and agricultural interests, have inserted language in a spending bill that would both narrow the project's scope and bar the administration from imposing any sweeping changes based on its findings.

The provision is one of dozens of environmental "riders" that Congress has tacked onto the spending and deficit-reduction bills now at impasse: Most have more to do with policy than money.

That's hardly unprecedented. Budget bills must pass each year to keep the government running. So they become "Christmas trees," bills on which all sorts of marginally related ornaments are hung.

A rider to a 1987 deficit-reduction bill, for instance, took Hanford off the list of possible sites for the nation's first nuclear-waste dump.

What's different this year is that environmental riders have become a major sticking point between Clinton and Congress.

While the administration opposes the Walla Walla rider, environmentalists worry the president still could approve it if it's part of the right package.

The Walla Walla project lacks the high national profile of riders to change federal mining law or open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. While the Clinton administration opposes the Walla Walla rider, environmentalists worry the president still could approve it if it's part of the right package.

When Clinton announced the outline of his "Option 9" plan for west-side forests in 1993, he rejected environmentalists' entreaties to include forests in Eastern Washington and Eastern Oregon.

Instead, he announced that a parallel planning effort would be undertaken there. Officially it's known as the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project.

A scientific team, based in Walla Walla, is slated to complete an assessment of federal lands between the Cascades and Rockies early next year.

Other teams are piecing together management plans based on that assessment. Drafts are expected in February. One team, also in Walla Walla, is focusing on Eastern Washington and Eastern Oregon. The other, in Boise, is preparing a plan for Idaho and parts of Montana, Wyoming, Nevada and Utah.

The issues are different east of the Cascades. Fires are more frequent, for instance; scientists say they do more damage today because past logging and fire suppression have altered the landscape.

Debate rages over logging's role in restoring "forest health."

The east side also is home to the only Northwest salmon already protected by the Endangered Species Act. On federal lands, logging has been restricted along Snake River tributaries where the fish spawn.

Environmentalists have used lawsuits and the threat of lawsuits to block timber sales. In the 1980s the national forests of Eastern Washington and Eastern Oregon produced an average of 1 billion board feet of timber annually.



Last year, timber sales there totaled just 380 million board feet.

The Walla Walla project aims to provide land managers with a road map through all these disputes. But timber interests fear it could produce another Option 9.

That plan reduced logging in federal forests in Western Washington, Western Oregon and northwestern California to about one-fifth the level of the 1980s.

The Walla Walla project also is opposed by such groups as the Washington State Farm Bureau and Washington Cattlemen's Association, but for another reason: fear that it could affect private property.

Language inserted in the Interior appropriations bill by Rep. George Nethercutt, R-Spokane; Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., and others would:

- Limit the scientific team's report to "forest health" issues, excising information on the condition of fish and wildlife.

- Bar the administration from adopting a regionwide management plan, as it did in Option 9. Instead, each national-forest supervisor would decide what management changes are needed.

- Exempt timber sales from the Endangered Species Act.

- Eliminate after December 1996 interim policies that prohibit logging in relatively wide streamside buffers.

The idea, says Nethercutt, is to get away from "one

size-fits-all" regulation. "I think there's great benefit to decentralizing these decisions," he says.

Jim Geisinger, president of the Portland-based Northwest Forestry Association, agrees. "We aren't opposed to using new science and new concepts," he says. "There may be places where 300-foot (stream) buffers make sense. We just think there are other places where they don't."

But Mike Anderson, a senior policy analyst with the Wilderness Society, says the rider subverts science and muzzles scientists.

"It's not wise policy to have everyone making up their own mind in the Columbia Basin," he says, "because you have salmon and other species that are very wide-ranging."

Vice President Al Gore has labeled the Walla Walla rider "a shortsighted action (that) would ... guarantee more court battles and legal gridlock."

But Anderson and Geisinger agree its fate in the budget war probably hinges less on its merits than other features of whatever legislation it's ultimately packaged with.

"I don't think it's a make-or-break item, to be honest with you," says Geisinger.

Seattle Times
 November 23, 1995

Nethercutt confuses aquifer, ecosystem studies during WW visit

Summary: U.S. Rep. George Nethercutt criticized a federal ecosystem study during a visit to Walla Walla last week. However, some of his comments actually referred to a different federal study.

By Becky Kramer
Of the Union-Bulletin

U.S. Rep. George Nethercutt confused two federal studies during a visit Friday to Walla Walla.

Washington's GOP congressional delegation has been critical of a federal proposal to designate a large area of the Palouse region as a "sole-source aquifer"—creating new regulations for groundwater withdrawal.

Republican representatives sent a letter to President Clinton questioning the sole-source aquifer designation.

The letter did not address a study of Eastside forests and rangeland, as Nethercutt had indicated Friday.

Furthermore, a report sent to Nethercutt by the state Department of Ecology also addressed the sole-source aquifer designation. Contrary to Nethercutt's remarks, the Department of Ecology has not taken a stance on a study of Eastside forest and rangeland ecosystems.

Department officials are still reviewing the study, which is called the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, said ecology spokeswoman Mary Getchell.

Nethercutt criticized the ecosystem management project during several appearances Friday in Walla Walla. He characterized it as a "huge grab for federal control" that would lead to increased regulation on private lands. He also referred to the letter sent to Clinton and to the Department of Ecology report, indicating that they addressed the ecosystem management project.



George Nethercutt

"I don't know how the confusion occurred," said Nethercutt spokesman Ken Lisaius. Nethercutt was not available for comment Tuesday or this morning.

Project leaders have been working with Nethercutt's office to set a briefing with him on ecosystem management.

"Our goal is to help folks understand what's going on and set up good relations," said Patty Burel, spokeswoman for the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project.

The project—a joint Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management effort—is assessing the condition of range and forest lands in Eastern Oregon, Eastern Washington, Idaho and Western Montana. Project leaders say they need to know the overall condition of lands in that area to help them better manage federal lands.

However, new management strategies developed in the process will not extend onto private lands, Burel said.

Walla Walla Union Bulletin
February 22, 1995

House approves plan that slashes funds for ecosystem study

Summary: A spending plan that cuts funding for completing a study of forest health issues east of the Cascade Mountains is headed for the U.S. Senate. The House of Representatives approved it Tuesday.

By Union-Bulletin and AP

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House of Representatives Tuesday approved a plan that guts funding for the Walla Walla-based Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Study.

Spending for the so-called “Eastside study” would be slashed to \$600,000 in the 1996 fiscal year, about a 90 percent cut from the \$6.7 million that had been requested.

The cuts were part of the overall Interior Appropriations Act, which was approved on a largely party-line vote of 244-181. One of the 14 Republicans who voted against the measure was Oregon’s 2nd District Rep. Wes Cooley, who represents Umatilla County.

The cutback was proposed by Washington’s 5th District Rep. George Nethercutt. The reduced funding, Nethercutt says, will allow project officials to publish results of their 18-month study and go home. The proposal does add \$3 million for watershed analysis.

Shutting down the process would affect two environmental impact statements—intended to amend dozens of federal forest plans and Bureau of Land Management planning documents in the interior Columbia Basin. The statements address issues that range beyond individual forest boundaries— such as salmon, forest health and rangeland conditions.

Nethercutt says he’s concerned about the cost of the project and its magnitude.

The measure also directs the Forest Service to remove existing guidelines for managing endan-



Nethercutt

gered salmon and trout stocks. Those strategies, known as PACFISH and INFISH, had established no-logging buffer zones—some as wide as a football field—around key rivers and streams.

Environmentalists said today that the cuts to the Interior Department and Forest Service would harm public forests and fisheries across the West.

“If the provisions of this bill are enacted, it will be written across the Western landscape in clear cuts, dead fish and red ink,” said Jay Lee of the Western Ancient Forest Campaign.

Nethercutt brushes aside the criticism: “I’m sure that those supporting full funding are trying to identify consequences,” he said. “I tried to be fair.”

The bill also would impose 40 percent cuts in the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, a signal of conservatives’ strength. It also would force reductions in the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the government’s effort to track endangered species.

But in a reversal, the House voted 271-153 to continue the moratorium on low-priced government sales of mining claims to federal land.

On a separate measure, the House Appropriations Committee approved a \$79 billion measure for veterans, housing and other programs. However, President Clinton said he would kill it unless it is changed before it reaches his desk. The bill would curtail efforts against air and water pollution, halve aid for the homeless and dismantle the president’s national service program.

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin
July 19, 1995

Lobbyists try to curry favor with freshmen

By Jim Drinkard

Associated Press

WASHINGTON—George Nethercutt, the Republican who knocked off House Speaker Tom Foley, mingled in the hallway of a Washington lobbying firm with about 40 lobbyists for mining, transportation, energy, agriculture and high-tech interests.

Over coffee, the lobbyists made introductions and small talk. Then they retired to the conference room at Preston Gates Ellis & Rouvelas Meeds, where partner Pamela Garvie introduced the incoming freshman lawmaker and he made brief remarks including one vital disclosure: his assignment to the House Appropriations Committee.

Wednesday's reception at offices a block from the White House was an example of how across the city, lobbyists are reaching out to get acquainted with new lawmakers, many of whom railed in their campaigns against the stranglehold of special interests.

Law firm partner Emanuel Rouvelas acknowledged that lobbyists rank low in the public eye these days. But the newcomers "tend to understand we are not corrupt black-bag folks, not back slappers or door openers. In effect, our job is to frame the issues and advocate the issues in the best way we can," he said.

A fairly common way to meet new lawmakers is over drinks and hors d'oeuvres at a reception to retire campaign debts. "There are fund-raising, debt-retirement opportunities galore," said one lobbyist who asked not to be quoted by name. "All of them come in with debts," and remember those who help them, he said.

"He is a very impressive guy," lobbyist Tim Peckinpaugh said of Nethercutt. "He is the kind of guy who is going to do well in this town."

Peckinpaugh, who arranged the session—a get-acquainted meeting, no fund raising involved—is one of several lobbyists at the firm with GOP credentials. He emphasized that most of the interests represented at the session are natural constituents of Nethercutt, with important operations in his district or in the Northwest. Among them, for example, was Carl Schwensen, chief lobbyist for the National Association of Wheat Growers, a major commodity in Nethercutt's eastern Washington district.

Preston Gates has planned nine such get-togethers—mostly for new lawmakers from Washington and Oregon, where its client base is concentrated. The list includes

Microsoft and a host of maritime, timber, mining and transportation interests.

"We are involved in a fairly substantial effort to get to know and work with the incoming members-elect," Peckinpaugh said. "This gives the new members an immediate sense of who they will be dealing with here in town, in terms of the key interest groups."

In addition to hearing the new lawmakers' views and priorities, it gives lobbyists—most of whom have worked on Capitol Hill—a chance to offer practical advice to the newcomers, he said.

"We think since we've been around a while and have seen it from the inside, we can offer some special insider tidbits on how you organize the office to fit your particular district, where to put district offices back home, that kind of thing," Peckinpaugh said.

"The best way lobbyist types get to know new members is through old members," said John Rafaelli, a partner in a major law and lobbying firm. "They introduce them to you, and you get to be buddies."

For corporate lobbyists such as Raymond Garcia, who represents defense and aerospace giant Rockwell International, the first step is to call on newly elected lawmakers whose districts include a Rockwell plant.

"Most companies are going to be planning these contacts, to just make people in Congress aware of their interests," Garcia said. "Most new members will be very interested in knowing who are the economic entities in their districts. They want to know as much as they can."

And it's terribly important, he added, to get to know those freshmen going on the committees that have power over each lobbyists' industry.

Lobbyist John Gordley, who represents soybean, sunflower and canola interests, is focused on next year's rewrite of the farm bill. If a new member from an agricultural state needs help getting on the Agriculture Committee, Gordley is well-positioned: He used to work for new Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole of Kansas, and is well acquainted with incoming House Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts, R-Kan.

The new lawmakers "like to have people come and meet them," said Gordley.

Missoulian

December 9, 1994

Oregonian
July 20, 1995

Nethercutt still in debt from '94 campaign

By David Royse

Correspondent

WASHINGTON — More than halfway through his first year in Congress, Rep. George Nethercutt still is raising money to retire debt racked up during his campaign last year when he unseated House Speaker Tom Foley.

Reports filed with the Federal Election Commission show most of the Spokane Republican's contributors were individuals, although the American Medical Association's political action committee led a modest list of corporate and trade association donors.

Nethercutt raised more than \$142,000 in the first half of this year, his FEC reports show. Almost 70 percent of it went to a committee dedicated to retiring the campaign debt, leaving Nethercutt only \$43,000 to spend on getting re-elected.

So far, no one has stepped forward to challenge the freshman congressman next year.

Nethercutt's 1994 campaign committee still owes \$34,700, including \$9,700 of a \$27,000 loan Nethercutt himself made to his campaign.

Campaign watchers say more candidates than usual ran up debts during last year's election races.

According to the citizens interest group Common Cause, freshman lawmakers of both parties have repaid more than \$1 million in personal loans to their campaigns. The largest debt among House newcomers belonged to Ohio Republican Frank Cremeans, whose 1994 campaign has repaid \$174,000 in personal loans.

Alex Benes, an official with another watchdog group, the Center for Public Integrity, said he is not surprised by Nethercutt's

debt except maybe that it is not larger.

"Given that he beat the speaker of the House, (Nethercutt's is) not a huge debt," said Benes.

This year's House freshman class raised \$133,186, on average, in the first part of this year, putting Nethercutt in the middle among his first-term colleagues in fund raising, according to Common Cause.

The top freshman fund-raiser collected more than three times what Nethercutt reported. Rep. John Ensign, a Nevada Republican who also is retiring a large debt from his 1994 race, had raised almost half a million dollars through June 30.

Most of Nethercutt's contributions this year—both for last year's and next year's races—have come from individuals in Washington state. Political action committees have given \$42,500 to the 1994 campaign, just less than half the total given to help retire the debt.

However, Nethercutt's committee for next year's race has received a far greater portion of its money from individuals. Less than a fifth of the re-election money has come from PACs.

The donations have come about equally from fund-raisers and through mailed solicitations, said Spokane attorney Lynn Watts, who has helped organize fund-raising events for Nethercutt and is a contributor herself.

Individuals who have given to Nethercutt range from small-time contributors, who say they just like his politics, to corporate executives, some of whom already have given the maximum \$2,000 each to the campaign.

Continued on next page

(4) Columbia River ecosystem: What future?

Committee sinks bid to put watersheds, fish in ecosystem project report

U.S. Senator Patty Murray, D-Wash., made a failed attempt Tuesday to include the study of fish populations and watersheds in the Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project.

A House-Senate conference committee rejected the amendment to the panel met for a second time to make changes to the 1996 Interior Department appropriations bill.

The committee made no changes to the project, which examines new strategies for managing federal lands east of the Cascade Mountains' crest. The fiscal 1996 budget is estimated at \$4 million, the amount included in the appropriations bill, which now is expected to go to the House and Senate later in the week for final action.

President Clinton already has said he may veto the Interior bill, listing omission of aquatics issues from the Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project as one of the problems.

Murray is frustrated that the committee didn't want to consider it, Murray's press secretary, Rex Carney, said today. U.S. Sen. Slade Gordon and Rep. George Nethercutt, both R-Wash, were among the conferees who voted against consideration of her amendment, Carney said.

"It is incredibly shortsighted of these members of Congress ... to ignore science."

**--Sen. Patty Murray
D-Washington**

"It is incredibly shortsighted of these members of Congress to put their heads in the sand and ignore science," Murray said in a press release. "My amendment would have allowed the agencies to approach their enormous task of resolving land management conflicts in the Columbia Basin."

The bill contains language restricting the project's scientific assessment to "landscape dynamics and forest and rangeland health conditions." Murray's amendment would have required a "thorough analysis of aquatic ecosystems, watersheds and fisheries populations."

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin
November 1, 1995

Continued from previous page

Spokane retiree Lola Jacobs is one of the smaller contributors. Her February contribution of \$25 brought to \$230 the amount she has contributed to Nethercutt's campaign.

"I think he's honest," Jacobs said of Nethercutt. "I knew his parents and they are very good people, and I really don't like Tom Foley at all."

Nearly half of the contributions to Nethercutt's two committees have come from donors giving less than \$200.

But Nethercutt is not without large donors. His biggest PAC contributor so far this year is the American Medical Association, which gave him \$5,000 to help pay off the 1994 debt.

By law, PACs can give no more than \$10,000 to each candidate—\$5,000 for the primary election and \$5,000 for the general election.

Jim Stacy, an AMA spokesman in Washington, D.C., said the organization does not publicly discuss its contributions.

Corporate donors also include those with interests in legislation considered by appropriations subcommittees Nethercutt

sits on, as well as companies with local ties, such as Boeing, which gave \$2,000 toward helping retire last year's debt.

Most major Spokane industries appear on Nethercutt's funding report. Reynolds Metals and Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corp. each donated, as did the Forest Industries PAC and Plum Creek Management, a large timber concern.

International Paper PAC helped Nethercutt retire his debt by \$500, while Weyerhaeuser's PAC gave the same amount toward the 1996 campaign.

Nethercutt's position on the appropriations national security subcommittee may be what garnered him contributions from some large defense contractors. Naval shipbuilder Tennaco's PAC gave him \$1,000, while defense contractors Textron and Allied Signal each weighed in with \$500. General Dynamics, another large defense company, gave Nethercutt \$500 toward next year's campaign.

Spokesman Review
August 22, 1995

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Scientists balk at restrictions on ecosystem data

SUMMARY: Scientists urge Clinton to veto Interior Department spending bill if restrictions on release of data in Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project aren't removed.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Forty-five scientists accused Congress today of trying to suppress research warning of significant damage to fisheries, forests and watersheds in the Columbia River basin.

The biologists, ecologists and other researchers said a Republican-backed proposal in an Interior Department spending bill would censor information on the declining condition of the basin in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana.

President Clinton earlier promised to veto the bill because of concerns about mining reforms. The bill failed on the House floor last week and has been returned to a House-Senate conference committee.

The scientists, in a letter to Clinton organized by the Pacific Rivers Council, said a section of the bill would restrict data in an upcoming report from the Scientific Integration Team as part of the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, located in Walla Walla. The team contains scientists from the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management.

The section dictates that the report “shall not contain any material other than” information on forest and rangeland health.

Congress called for the project two years ago and spent \$15 million on the research to determine the effects of logging, livestock grazing, water diversions and other activities on dwindling fish populations.

The scientists said the restricted report called for in the spending bill would be “a half-truth.”

The bill “deliberately attempts to suppress scientific information about public resources on public lands — important scientific information that was generated at public expense,” the scientists wrote in urging Clinton to veto it.

The research includes updated conditions of watersheds, trends of water resources and population status of threatened, endangered and sensitive species, including chinook salmon, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, grizzly bears, lynx and wolverines.

“The free flow of ideas and information is critical if scientific knowledge obtained at taxpayer expense is to contribute to sound decision making,” they said.

Walla Wall Union-Bulletin
October 3, 1995

President William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

October 13, 1995

Dear Mr. President:

Our organizations have joined together to urge you collectively to take a firm stand in negotiations with Congress on the FY 1996 Interior Appropriations Bill. We commend you on the strong stand you have taken by threatening to veto this bill in its current form, and we encourage you to stand firm on your position not to compromise the protection of America's natural resources. More broadly, we urge you to forestall the enactment of all riders that roll back environmental protection. We further urge you to make the removal of Section 314 of the Interior Appropriations Bill and removal of the language detrimental to the Tongass National Forest non-negotiable items in your discussions with Congress.

We represent a substantial part of the sportfishing industry and many of the more than 50 million Americans who fish. The sportfishing industry manufactures everything from rods and reels to boats and motors and in 1991 accounted for over 900,000 jobs and the production of goods and services for many of our nation's anglers. Those anglers in turn spent over \$24 billion for direct goods and services in that year.

Congress is currently finishing work on an Interior Appropriations bill that we believe will adversely affect sectors of the sportfishing industry. The bill is harmful to our public lands and could put jobs in jeopardy that would result in economic hardship to communities that rely on healthy sportfisheries. By reducing and eliminating federal protections of our nation's western and Alaskan fisheries this bill threatens resources that are the basis of sportfishing communities' livelihoods and of our sportfishing industry.

The Columbia River Basin's watersheds and fisheries in Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon are increasingly at risk as a result of relaxed federal regulations and policies which should be in place to protect them. Passage of this appropriations bill, particularly Section 314, coupled with the recent enactment of the rescission bill imperils public lands fishing by making these uses take a back seat to logging and grazing on public land. In addition we think it shortsighted to reject science-based ecosystem management and limits to public participation as well as to truncate long range planning as would occur under Section 314.

In Alaska the bill would impose a four-year old, discredited logging plan on the world class salmon watersheds of the Tongass National Forest. It would prevent citizen challenges of that logging, no matter how harmful it proved to be to fish and wildlife. By rejecting this provision you can avoid making the same mistakes in the Tongass that have been made in the Columbia River Basin. You can move proactively to protect the Tongass and avoid losing unique salmon stocks. The old logging plan mandated by this legislation would put the Tongass on a course parallel to that of the Columbia River Basin a decade ago and set it at the same risk.

As negotiations with Congress continue we urge you to insist that Section 314 is removed from the bill as well as the directive to manage the Tongass under the 1991 plan. Now is the time to stop Congress from including authorizing language on appropriations bills which repeals environmental protections and is potentially harmful to the industries, anglers and the communities that rely on our nation's fisheries.

Sincerely,

Steven N. Moyer
Director of Governmental Affairs
Trout Unlimited

Paul Brouha
Executive Director
American Fisheries Society

Liz Hamilton
Executive Director
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Institute

Norville Prosser
Vice President
Association Sportfishing Association

Paul W. Hansen
Executive Director
Izaak Walton League of America

Judy Guse-Noritake
National Policy Director
Pacific Rivers Council

Thomas J. Cassidy, Jr.
General Counsel
American Rivers



Flyfishing, St. Joe River in N. Idaho.

Don't kill lands analysis, both sides say

Environmentalists, timber officials tell Congress they need Columbia Basin study

By Jonathan Brinckman
The Idaho Statesman

Environmentalists and timber industry officials have joined forces against a proposal to halt an assessment of the health of forests and rangelands.

The unusual agreement between two sides in the heated war over Idaho's public lands stems from a House Interior Committee vote last week.

The panel wants to virtually eliminate funding for the final phase of the \$31.6 million Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project. The measure is to be considered by the full House next Tuesday.

The project, launched in 1994, was to be the foundation for logging, grazing and other management decisions on 75 million acres of U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management property in seven Northwest states. That federal land, in the eastern part of an enormous basin that drains into the Columbia River, includes 31.4 million acres in Idaho.

"They're taking the first effort to do large-scale ecosystem management and flushing it down the toilet," said Rick Johnson executive director of the Idaho Conservation League. Johnson said he believes science-based timber management would result in fewer clear-cuts.

Boise Cascade Corp. officials say a big-picture analysis of public lands would enable the Forest Service to free up timber sales now locked up by a hodgepodge of interim environmental rules.

"As Boise Cascade sees it, the interim plans have been very draconian. They've virtually shut down the forests," said Doug Bartels, a company spokesman. "We felt this would be the opportunity for scientists to put their heads together, look at the data and say, 'There, this is the right way to manage this land.'"

The proposal to end the project would cut 1996 funding from \$6.67 million to \$600,000. It was

spearheaded by U.S. Rep. George Nethercutt, R-Wash., a member of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee. The subcommittee called the project "too large and too costly to sustain in a time of fiscal constraints."

The committee recommendation was lauded by U.S. Rep. Helen Chenoweth, R-Idaho: "Eliminating this project has been one of my top priorities since coming to Congress. The federal government spent millions of dollars and created no tangible product and no jobs. All it attempted to create were more regulations."

The House committee calls for all the data collected during the past two years of study to be assembled, peer-reviewed and made available to the public.

A proposed last phase of the project, the creation of an environmental impact statement that would develop and assess alternatives for public land management, would be scrapped.

The idea sounds fine to Brad Little, an Emmett sheep rancher who chairs the public lands committee of American Sheep Industry, a trade group. He called the science valuable but disputed the need for an environmental impact statement.

"The bottom line is, we don't need another decisions document to complicate the life of guys who are trying to administer the forestlands," Little said.

Mike Sullivan, a spokesman for Potlatch Corp., said that while he supports the study, he doesn't worry that a final evaluation may not be done.

"We agree it makes sense to look at whole landscapes when developing management plans," he said. "That science will not be lost."

Steve Mealey, formerly supervisor of the Boise National Forest and now manager of the eastern part of the study, said ending the study - breaking leases,

Continued on next page

Editorial

Land study deserves rescue

The U.S. House has foolishly proposed stopping a study of forests and rangelands in the Northwest.

Idaho's two senators need to team up with other Northwest representatives to rescue this important project from the slash pile.

The study will, for the first time, provide agencies and the public a much-needed big-picture look at how federal lands can best be managed. When complete, the study will finally allow lands to be managed as they should—as complex ecosystems, not as dozens of individual and unrelated parcels.

But, at the behest of Rep. George Nethercutt, a freshman GOP congressman from Washington, the House Interior Committee eliminated funding for the final phase of the \$31.6 million Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project. The House panel cut 1996 funding from \$6.67 million to \$600,000, leaving enough to complete the scientific portion of the study, but not the second half, the environmental impact statement.

Killing the study now would be a mistake. The scientific data needs to be turned into usable, on-the-ground policy.

The alternative is depressing and wasteful. With-

out new guiding principles, gridlock will continue to reign as competing interest groups lock horns, leaving the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management immobilized in the middle.

Gridlock serves no one—not the loggers and ranchers who make a living off public lands nor the campers and hunters who recreate there. Yet gridlock is virtually guaranteed unless the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project is allowed to find solutions that avert lawsuits and endless squabbles.

The project is designed to stop environmental train wrecks before they occur. With proper land management, groups wielding the Endangered Species Act, for example, can be disarmed.

The project also can provide people who depend on federal land for their livelihoods the certainty they crave. When complete, the study can be a useful guide for determining how timber and grazing land can best be managed to sustain small resource-based communities.

The study is a needed exercise that can lead to more efficient use of public lands. It deserves Congress' support.

Idaho Statesman
July 13, 1995

Continued from previous page

transferring personnel, completing salary obligations — would consume virtually all of the Forest Service's share of the proposed \$600,000 allocation.

Little money would be left for publishing the data, and project managers would be unable to make management recommendations, he said.

“The science is documenting that we've got seri-

ous ecosystem problems, and the public is highly divided about what to do about it,” Mealey said.

“The thing we could lose is the opportunity to develop alternative ways to solve those problems.”

Idaho Statesman
July 4, 1995

Editorial

Ecosystem vote is shortsighted

It's not often that the timber industry and environmentalists join forces to fight legislation.

But both groups are opposed to a House Interior Committee recommendation to eliminate funding for the final phase of the Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project.

The project, launched last year, was to be the foundation for logging, grazing and other resource decisions on 75 million acres of federal property in the eastern part of the basin, which includes all federal land in Idaho.

Taxpayers have already funded a major portion of the study, but some House Republicans want to kill it with barely enough money left to publish the results and make final recommendations, according to Steve Mealey, former supervisor of the Boise National Forest and a manager for the study. That doesn't sound like wise use of tax dollars to us.

Timber industry officials in Idaho support the study because its recommendations could allow the Forest Service to proceed with timber sales now delayed because of temporary environmental regulations put in place until an overall management plan is completed. That's what this study was supposed to do: make recommendations for comprehensive plans that address management on an ecosystem basis, rather than state by state. Forests, watersheds, and plant and animal species don't recognize state boundaries and often management plans for adjoining states conflict.

Ironically, the committee vote to kill the program came at the same time a report prepared for the

Department of Interior revealed the nation's natural resources are disappearing. Consider these numbers:

- Ninety percent of the nation's old-growth forests are lost.

- Ninety-five to 98 percent of virgin forests in the lower 48 states had been destroyed by 1990 while 99 percent of virgin deciduous forests have been cut.

- Eighty-one percent of the nation's fish communities have been harmed by human actions while 98 percent of the streams in the lower 48 states are degraded to the point they can't qualify as scenic or wild rivers.

- In the West, 99 percent of California's native grassland is gone as are up to 90 percent of western Montana's old-growth forests and low-elevation grassland and half of Colorado's wetlands.

- Numbers from other regions are just as discouraging. In the Northeast, for instance, 97 percent of Connecticut's coastline is developed and 95 percent of Maryland's natural barrier island beaches are gone. Almost all of Ohio's bottomland hardwood forests are gone.

While some may disagree with the severity of the damage, there is little debate that, gradually, we are destroying the health of the land.

The House committee's vote may save money in the short run, but is costly to taxpayers and natural resources in the long run. Hopefully, the Senate or the administration will overrule the House committee's shortsighted vote.

—Gene Fadness

Post Register
July 18, 1995

Editorial

Restrictions on ecosystem project undermine study

The House-Senate compromise over future funding of the Walla Walla-based ecosystem study is a clear victory for Rep. George Nethercutt and, unfortunately, appears to be a loss for taxpayers.

Nethercutt, a vocal critic of the project, was successful in putting restrictions on the project. Research related to fish and aquatics will not be included in assessments of forests and rangelands in the Columbia Basin.

"The money is really the only thing we've given into," Nethercutt said after the compromise was crafted.

The end result is that even though the compromise brokered by Nethercutt and Oregon Sen. Mark Hatfield authorizes \$4 million to finish the project, the study will be incomplete and ripe for legal challenges.

The public, it seems, won't be getting its \$4 million worth. Nor will the public fully benefit from the nearly \$25 million spent over the past two years on the ecosystem management study.

A complete study of the ecosystem can't be done without including all components. Fish and aquatics have an impact on forests and rangelands. Streams and rivers flow through forests and rangelands.

The compromise prohibits project leaders from choosing a preferred management alternative from the suggested options. Nethercutt said that each forest and Bureau of Land Management district will

be able to adapt the information for its use. Congress, however, will likely have more to say on how the study is used.

That aspect isn't particularly surprising or troubling. This is, after all, a political process, and it would be naive to assume that Congress would abdicate power in this matter.

The original goal of the study was not, as Nethercutt has contended, a "huge grab for federal control." The intent was to study the ecosystem in portions of six states, including Washington and Oregon.

Ultimately, the study was supposed to bring predictability to managing federal lands by helping select logging and grazing levels that are compatible to fish and wildlife and that can be sustained. One goal of the study was to diminish the number of species listed as endangered in the future.

These goals were sound. The current practice of making ecosystem management decisions on a piecemeal basis is ridiculous. It invites court challenges.

The best way to manage the forests, the rangelands and all natural resources is by having accurate scientific data on which to base decisions.

Nethercutt's unfounded fears about the nefarious goals of the ecosystem project have resulted in a congressional compromise that threatens to undermine the work that has been completed to this point. The public has paid the bill but won't get the product that was ordered.

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin
October 1, 1995

Letter

Lands going to pay political debts

Americans should wake up to the fact that the Republican congressional delegation is stealing local people's power to control the management of public lands.

The politicians are using rider amendments on appropriation bills to circumvent the democratic process. Politicians are going to control public lands from Washington, D.C., and allow the lands to be exploited by the special interest groups that contributed to their election campaigns.

The Republican politicians are against scientific and ecosystem management. Some Republicans have advocated a resumption of clearcutting.

To achieve these ends the politicians shamelessly manipulated the public with the "war on the West" theme and "get government off the people's back."

U.S. Rep. Helen Chenoweth has talked of waging

spiritual war against environmentalists, even though polls show 70 percent of the people favor environmental laws. Republican politicians have not passed any constructive environmental reform legislation despite having control of both houses of Congress. Public lands belong to the people, and the people need to stand up for their property rights against the Republican politicians.

The people should demand professional, science-based ecosystem management of the public lands with timber production a secondary priority.

—*John Muir*
Sagle, Idaho

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Editorial

Inland forests demand a different approach

While the fight for the West Coast's spotted owls and ancient forests captured the nation's attention, on the other side of the Cascade Mountains the chain saw reigned.

A special section in this morning's Spokesman-Review describes the results.

Some of us, here in the Inland Northwest, did not fully grasp the significance of a central point: East of the Cascades forests are slower growing, their ecosystems more fragile. Yet clearcuts here were carried out much as they were in the more resilient coastal timberlands.

Annual rainfall here is less than a third of the deluge which makes western forests so lush. When loggers shave a watershed here the thinner soil quickly erodes in spring's runoff. Replanted trees here can take twice as long, even four times as long, to grow back. If they grow back at all. With less protective vegetation on the hillsides, streams—a barometer for ecosystem health—fill with silt and fish runs die.

That's what happened here for decades, and it accelerated in the 1980s as the Reagan administration's stewards tilted national forest management way too far toward logging.

Multiple-use management, in theory the taproot of U.S. Forest Service policy, is supposed to embrace more than logging. Hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, wildlife protection, berry picking, grazing and longterm survival of the ecosystem all are supposed to be well served by Forest Service policies.

Gifford Pinchot, patron saint of the Forest Service and its first chief, argued the cause of conservation. Forests, he believed, were a trust to be passed from one generation to another in perpetuity. Not unchanged or untapped, for nature changes and in good hands renews itself. But not abused, either.

Some of the Inland Northwest's forests have been abused.

Within the Forest Service, scientists responsible for ecological protection sounded alarms as logging trampled streams and scalped steep slopes which should have been left alone. The scientists were too few in number, and they were overruled by the agency's emphasis on logging.

Meanwhile, public attention focused on the West Coast forest controversy, where polarization inhibited understanding. On one side was the logging industry. On the other side was the environmental movement, which in fact is diverse but in political effect was engaged in a crusade to stop logging in its tracks.

Neither extreme serves the interests of society, which does need a steady supply of forest products but also wants its forests managed for the long haul.

The fate of coastal forests remains lost in fog and political paralysis.

Let us hope fate, politics and the Forest Service will treat inland forests more kindly.

A cessation of logging would go too far. National forests should not be museums; for that role, we have National Parks and wilderness areas. But national forests ought to be managed differently in the future than they have been managed in the past.

Logging ought to continue. It will have to continue at a slower pace. The scientists who understand how to protect fisheries, for example, ought to become more numerous and their advice ought to carry weight in the planning of timber sales.

In the dry inland forests, old-style clearcuts ought to become a thing of the past. So should logging near stream sides. Restoration of old scars ought to become a priority.

If the environment begins to receive the respect it deserves, litigation challenging timber sales ought to subside—or at least, should enjoy a lower rate of success.

Logging doesn't have to leave ruin in its wake. With better forest management policies, it won't.

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