



INLAND EMPIRE PUBLIC LANDS COUNCIL TRANSITIONS

Working for Sustainable Forests and Diversified Economies in America's Pacific Northwest

Volume 9, Number 6, November/December 1996

Toxic Floods: "A Conspiracy of Optimism" Coeur d'Alene National Forest Comes Tumbling Down

PEND OREILLE RIVER

Flood waters from Coeur d'Alene National Forest watersheds rush along the CdA North Fork, CdA and Prichard streams. These torrents merge with the CdA South Fork and its heavy metal laden flood plain, spreading a blanket of toxic contamination further down stream. The forest watershed condition is a significant flood factor.

FOREST WATERSHED CONDITIONS

- CONDITION RED**
Trashed watersheds
- CONDITION YELLOW**
Evidence of instability
- CONDITION GREEN**
Watershed with integrity
(roadless or lightly logged)

FLOOD ZONES

- Heavy Metal Contamination
- Forest Floods
- Toxic Floods

CLARK FORK RIVER

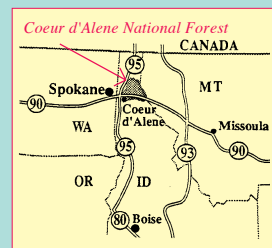
LAKE PEND OREILLE

SPOKANE RIVER

COEUR D'ALENE RIVER

COEUR D'ALENE LAKE

ST. JOE RIVER



CONTENTS

1. Toxic Floods p. 4
2. "A Conspiracy of Optimism" p. 10
3. The Conspiracy Clearcuts
Citizen Oversight p. 18
 - a) 1994 - Forest Service p. 21
 - b) 1995 - Congressp. 23
4. Resurrecting a River Ecosystem p. 30

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 exploitation to long term community and biological sustainability

Board of Directors

Matthew Andersen
Eugene Annis
Darryl Caldwell
Sue Coleman
Bart Haggin
Jeff Hedge, DO
John Osborn, MD
Paul Quinnett, PhD
Cynthia Reichelt
Dick Rivers, MD
Liz Sedler

Staff

Mark Solomon
Debbie Boswell
Samantha Mace
Barry Rosenberg
Sara Folger
Mike Petersen
Jeff Juel
Grace Millay Ott

Executive Director
Office Manager
Outreach Director
Forest Watch Director
Forest Watch Coordinator
F.W. Field Representative
F.W. Field Representative
Development

Transitions Team

Derrick Jensen
Amy Morrison
Easy

Associate Editor
Layout & Text Reproduction
Color & Photo placement



IEPLC, S. 517 Division, Spokane, WA 99202-1333 • Phone: 509.838.4912 • Fax: 509.838.5155
Email: IEPLC@IEPLC.desktop.org • Internet: www.ieplc.org

All contributions are tax deductible

 Printed on recycled paper

*Front cover adapted from 1992 USDA Forest Service map showing the state of watershed health in the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF). CREDITS: For material from **The Spokesman-Review**: Permission to reprint is granted in the interest of public debate and does not constitute endorsement of any opinions of the Public Lands Council or any other organization.*

TOXIC FLOODS: “A Conspiracy of Optimism”

By John Osborn, M.D.

In a single day of the 1996 flood, the raging Coeur d’Alene River carried *a million pounds of lead* into Lake Coeur d’Alene. The lead? Mining companies had dumped the lead and other toxic mine wastes into the Coeur d’Alene River’s South Fork. The North Fork is the main source of floods. Upstream of the old Catholic Mission at Cataldo these two rivers — North and South — come together. The co-mingling of waters is a metaphor for the coming together of two rich histories — logging and mining — that are the genesis of our toxic floods. The South Fork was destroyed by mining. The North Fork was destroyed by a “conspiracy of optimism”.

The North Fork died a death by a thousand cuts. Forest Service officials signed their names to decisions unleashing one destructive timber sale after another. Timber companies then slicked away the “green gold” of the Coeur d’Alenes.

People zipping along the Interstate or the river road that winds along the North Fork won’t see the clearcuts behind the deceptive “beauty strip.” This thin curtain of trees is not a substitute for an intact forest watershed: illusions don’t hold back floods. Much of the North Fork’s forest lies in “rain-on-snow” zones where warm winter rains can rapidly melt several feet of snow, causing floods. Bulldozing roads and clearcutting away the forest canopy worsens the floods. Similar to a thousand huge high-pressure hoses, floods rip out stream banks and bottoms. Rubble (called “bedload” sediment as opposed to “fine” sediment or mud) settles in slower water, fills up pools and destroys fish habitat. In this way the Coeur d’Alene’s trout fishery — one of most important in the Inland Pacific Northwest — was destroyed. Rubble also fills up the main river channel, making floods even worse.

One compelling part of the North Fork story is that the warnings against overcutting have gone unheeded for so long. The general relationship between overcutting and floods was well-understood in the last century — a main reason that the nation created the National Forests. The North Fork’s severe flood risk from logging in rain-on-snow zones was articulated by Panhandle hydrologists as early as the 1960s. Supervisory hydrologist Al Isaacson warnings can be found in a 1974 book *The River of Green and Gold* (Fred Rabe and David Flaherty). Warnings unheeded, overcutting continued.

A chilling part of the North Fork story is what happens when the “conspiracy of optimism” is challenged. When all else failed, the Forest Service decided to transfer those pesky watershed scientists out of the Panhandle. Isaacson quit instead. Warnings unheeded, overcutting continued.

In 1985 conservationists, prompted by scientists’ warnings, began taking concerns about the Panhandle watersheds to Congress. The logging continued. Conservationists spent years participating in the Congressionally-mandated Forest Planning process, eventually appealing the eight-pound Panhandle Plan in 1987, providing over 700 pages of supporting documents. Almost 8 years later, in 1995 (remember these are 10-year forest plans), the Chief’s office finally decided and rejected conservationists’ concerns entirely. Warnings unheeded, overcutting continued.

In 1990 the Council launched “Forest Watch” to scrutinize individual timber sale plans. Citizens stepped forward to stop injurious timber sales by using a citizens’ appeals process dating from 1906. The Forest Service was caught breaking the law and was forced to withdraw illegal and destructive timber sales. Timber offerings plummeted — not because of spotted owls but because at last local citizens had found a way to provide democratic oversight in the forests. The response? In 1994 the Forest Service crippled the appeals process. Not satisfied with that half-measure, in 1995 Congress suspended it — and environmental laws — with the so-called “salvage-rider”. Warnings unheeded, overcutting continued.

It is early December. Upstream the clearcuts are filling with snow. Downstream communities in Idaho and Washington await the next toxic flood. Earlier this year the Dept. of Justice sued mining corporations for damages estimated at up to \$1 billion for polluting the Coeur d’Alene River. Meanwhile another federal agency, the USDA Forest Service, continues to log the watershed above the mine waste and has no comprehensive plan to restore forest canopies, rip roads, and re-contour slopes. A “conspiracy of optimism” still controls these forests and the future of our downstream communities. And yes, overcutting continues.

“[There exists] a general cultural tendency to reject limitations on resource use and to assume the optimistic regarding our ability to control nature and resolve social problems with environmental engineering. This is the conspiracy of optimism.”

—Paul Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests since World War Two*. University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

1. Toxic Floods: Warnings Unheeded

1929

Forests and Rain

The Seattle Star sees some connection between forests and rainfall, “but it is the forests that result from the rain, not the rain from the forests.”

In the Pacific Northwest our rainbearing clouds are swept in from the Pacific. It is conceivable that if every stick of timber were cut in the state of Washington, as much rain would continue to fall as fell before. But - and here’s the rub - with the forests gone, the run-off would be speeded up. The streams would be swollen torrents one week and trickling rills the next. The waters would hasten to the sea

instead of lingering in their accustomed pleasant ways to convey benefits upon mankind. With that torrential run-off would come soil erosion and sand and gravel would be spread over areas now productive of grain, garden products and fruits.

That isn’t theory. It has been demonstrated in areas of ancient civilizations. The tragic lesson is written there upon irrevocably ruined landscapes.

Spokesman-Review
December 7, 1929

1929

Valley of Desolation Tells Its Own Story Reminders of Former Prosperity Speak Of Prosperity, Of Decadence And Of Destruction

John Knox Coe, *Coeur d’Alene Press* (Coeur d’Alene, ID) Dec. 26, 1929

1983

Clear-cutting hurts streams

Jeff Sher, *Spokesman-Review* June 23, 1983

1985

Clearcutting is choking Cd’A River Fish habitat down in wake of logging

Jeff Sher, *Spokesman-Review*, July 28, 1985

1990

Panhandle floods leave residents stranded

David Bender, *Spokesman-Review* Nov. 26, 1990

1991

Sediment threatens Coeur d’Alene River

A-P, *Idaho Statesman* (Boise, ID) Aug. 9, 1991

1994

Water Crisis

Logging and road-building throughout the huge Panhandle National Forests have wreaked havoc on its watersheds, from destroying fish to causing floods

J. Todd Foster, *Spokesman-Review* Nov. 21, 1993

1996

Floods bring million pounds of lead to lake

More than eight times the amount that washed downstream in 1994

Susan Drumheller, *Spokesman-Review*, June 13, 1996

Don't drink the green water

Susan Drumheller, *Spokesman-Review*, April 12, 1996

Metal-laden silt causes concern

Mining wastes left behind by February floodwaters

Julie Titone, *Spokesman-Review*, March 10, 1996

River threatens Cataldo again

Julie Titone, *Spokesman-Review*, February 20, 1996

Less is more to CdA River flood victims

Stage was higher than '74 with half as much water

Julie Titone, *Spokesman-Review*, February 15, 1996

Areas left with mud, wreckage

Floods ease but cities face long, costly cleanup

Spokesman-Review, February 11, 1996

Idaho loses millions to raging flood

Mark Warbis A-P, *Missoulian* (Missoula, MT) Feb. 11, 1996

Rebuilding after N. Idaho floods put crimp in state budget

A-P, *Post Register* (Idaho Falls, ID) Feb. 21, 1996

Lawless Logging

A congressional rider has loosed chainsaws on our nation's forests in the phony name of 'forest health'

By Kathie Durbin

[excerpt from *Defenders*, Summer 1996]

As the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River flows south through northern Idaho, it drains mountains so scarred by logging, mining and roadbuilding that when heavy rains fall on a melting snowpack, the river scours out its own headwater streams and carries boulders, coarse gravel and riverbed cobbles downstream. Over several decades this sediment bedload has filled pools used by spawning salmon and raised the level of the river significantly. Severe flooding of the North Fork is now a regular occurrence.

As if the flooding weren't enough, the runoff from these mountains carries lead and other heavy metals, the toxic legacy of a century of hardrock mining in northern Idaho. In just one day last year, the North Fork carried 60 tons of lead into the mainstream Coeur d'Alene, where it was flushed into Lake Coeur d'Alene, a popular resort, and eventually downstream to the Spokane River.

No one is likely to hold up the North Fork watershed, part of the Idaho Panhandle National Forest, as a model of forest health. Hydrologists, state fisheries biologists and flyfishing groups have warned for years that continued logging in a watershed so unstable invites disaster, not only for the denuded mountainsides and downstream property owners but for the river's severely depleted population of native westslope cutthroat trout.

Twice in recent years environmentalists have successfully appealed timber sales in the heart of the North Fork. Yet now the Idaho Panhandle National Forest, under pressure to comply with the controversial salvage-logging rider enacted by Congress a year ago, has resurrected a twice-abandoned plan to resume logging in the North Fork. The Barney Rubble's Cabin timber sale would clearcut 216 more acres, further fragmenting a 17,000-acre resource area in which half the forest cover has been removed over the last 35 years. The U.S. Forest Service now contends that the logging is necessary to control root rot infesting Douglas fir and white fir stands - even though tree pathologists say the fungus poses no serious problem.

The idea that forest ecosystems as badly damaged as the North Fork Coeur d'Alene watershed can be logged back to health may defy logic. But Barney Rubble's Cabin is far from unique. Scores of environmentally harmful timber sales are being offered this year under the temporary salvage-logging rider attached to the Rescissions Act of 1995 - sales being justified by an alleged need to promote forest health when in reality they are standing the proper meaning of the term forest health on its head.

Congress passed and President Clinton signed the salvage rider in July, 1995, as part of an unrelated budget-cutting bill, hence the name "rider." Ostensibly to restore forest health, its

sweeping language mandates federal timber sales to salvage dead and dying trees, exempting the sales from appeals and from compliance with federal environmental laws. The mandate will be in effect until the end of this year. Because of the blanket suspension of normal legal constraints, environmentalist critics have labeled it "logging without laws."

The Clinton administration and the Forest Service have been willing partners in this rush to salvage. In October, 1994, after a summer in which wildfire swept across millions of acres in the West, Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas unveiled a plan to offer expedited timber salvage sales assertedly to reduce fire danger in stands of trees weakened by drought, insects or disease. "Innovative and extraordinary measures are needed to restore forest health in stressed forests," Thomas's Western Forest Health Initiative declared. The plan proposed 330 salvage projects in national forests across the nation, predicting that in two years the sales could produce 4.5 billion board feet of timber.

Since enactment of the "logging without laws" rider, Congress has held the administration to those targets, even demanding regular progress reports. The Clinton administration tried to reduce the damage by directing the Forest Service to make sure sales offered under the rider comply with the standards and guidelines in national forest plans. But citizens monitoring the rider's implementation say forest supervisors routinely have disregarded that directive because of congressional pressure to get out the cut. Across the nation, salvage sales are going forward in numerous roadless areas, sensitive watersheds and wildlife management areas that according to forest plans are supposed to be off limits to logging. "There's real confusion about who the Forest Service works for," declares Rick Brown, forest specialist in the Portland, Oregon, office of the National Wildlife Federation. "Are they a congressional agency or an executive agency?"

Senator Larry Craig (R-Idaho), one of the leading sponsors of the 1995 salvage rider, introduced legislation this year to make many features of the temporary law permanent. Under the Craig bill, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management could be petitioned to designate specific federal lands as "emergency" or "high risk" areas in need of "forest health" treatment. The agencies would then have to justify not logging those areas. Environmental reviews would be shortened and citizen appeals curtailed, and the bill makes no provision for the agency to change its mind once it has earmarked an area for "salvage." In the guise of protecting forest health, the Craig bill "allows for the creation of permanent extraction zones on any national forest or BLM lands not currently designated as wilderness or wilderness study areas," the Western Ancient Forest Campaign has pointed out.

Reprinted by permission from DEFENDERS magazine, Summer 1996

Copyright 1996 by Defenders of Wildlife.

Excerpted from *The New York Times*

KELLOGG, Idaho - A rust-colored river runs through the valley where Barbara Miller is trying to rear her four children, in a town of brittle-boned homes holding off age and gravity. Neighborly howdies blend with nervous talk about the poison that keeps showing up in the blood of the local children.

The Silver Valley, a basin in the Idaho mountains that once produced most of the nation's silver and much of its lead, has long been one of the most polluted places in the United States. Things are gradually getting better, Mrs. Miller, said, in part because the Clinton Administration has speeded the cleanup at Superfund toxic waste sites like the one in her neighborhood where mine refuse had smothered the land in toxic filth.

But Mrs. Miller and her neighbors are also struggling to live with another result of President Clinton's environ-

mental policy. Liberated from environmental restrictions thanks to a bill Mr. Clinton reluctantly signed last summer, loggers have been clearing the national forest just upstream. Early this year when the rains came, the naked hillsides could not restrain the runoff, sending a flood coursing through the valley and shifting more than one million pounds of lead downstream where the toxic sediment settled in people's yards.

"We've seen a lot of progress in this valley," said Mrs. Miller, whose yard was dug up to remove lead endangering her children. "But now, with this new logging, a lot of people are upset."

from "Battles on Conservation Are Reaping Dividends"

By John H. Cushman Jr. and Timothy Egan

July 31, 1996



Jeff Green for The New York Times

Policy at the River

Barbara Miller of Kellogg, Idaho, by the Coeur d'Alene River, which carries lead and other toxic pollutants from mine wastes into the yards of people living near it.

Toxic Floods of the Coeur d'Alene River



Reprinted from Fred Rabe and David Flaherty,
The River of Green and Gold, Idaho Research Foundation, 1974

Confluence of the North Fork and the South Fork

The Coeur d'Alene River's South Fork is the source of lead and other toxic mine wastes. The North Fork is the main source of floods.

Lead-poisoned swan carcass, killing fields

The river carries the lead downstream where it and other toxic mine wastes settle out in slower water, polluting thousands of acres of wetlands. Biologists call this vast polluted area the "killing fields".



IEPLC photo archives



**1974 flood,
Coeur d'Alene River**

Floodwaters sweeping across the “killing fields” resuspend toxic mine waste and carry it further downstream. Clearcuts and logging roads increase floods, and also fill-in the river channel with rubble. The shallower river can’t hold as much water. The 1996 flood was worse with only half the water of the 1974 flood.

*Reprinted from Fred Rabe and David Flaherty, **The River of Green and Gold**, Idaho Research Foundation, 1974*

Toxic swirl where the Coeur d'Alene River flows into Lake Coeur d'Alene, ca. early 1960s

The lake bottom is covered with an estimated 150 billion pounds of toxic sediments containing lead, cadmium, zinc, mercury, and arsenic.



Coeur d'Alene Tribe photo archive

2. "A Conspiracy of Optimism"

*"But rather than scale back development, denying forest users the full measure of their demands, agency leaders and politicians adopted a conspiracy of optimism, asserting that more infusions of technology, labor, and capital would keep artificially high levels of production sustainable and protect forest ecosystems. When technology failed, the merchants of optimism blamed it on flawed application that could be corrected with better training or more research. When the Administration or Congress failed to fully support intensive management in the budget process, politics could be blamed. When nature failed to respond as expected, no one was to blame. In all cases, advocates of intensive management found ways to dodge responsibility and maintain the overoptimistic assumptions essential to continuing the high-yield status quo. Now the proverbial chickens have come home to roost. As Patricia Limerick noted in her book, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 'postponements and evasions catch up with people.' This is, she added, a 'cruel but common lesson of western history.' "*

—Paul Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests since World War Two*, Univ. of Nebraska Press, pp. 293-4.

Scientist: Claim of overlogging led to firing 23-year career ended when he blew the whistle

By Scott Sonner

of the Associated Press

WASHINGTON _ A scientist who worked 23 years for the Forest Service said Wednesday he was forced out of his job in 1986 because he complained that excessive logging was damaging water quality in Idaho's Panhandle.

"Environmental laws were not taken seriously if they stood in the way of (logging) targets," said Al Isaacson, who now lives in Coeur d'Alene, and teaches hydrology at Spokane Community College in Washington state.

"The forest plans were viewed as unnecessary evils that restricted managing the forests and imposed unrealistic constraints," he said.

Largely as a result of the clearcut logging, he said, the region is suffering floods three to five times a year that are the magnitude of floods normally experienced once every 200 years.

Isaacson was the supervisory hydrologist for 16 years on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest until he was ordered transferred to Atlanta in June 1986, he said.

"I chose to quit. It was a tough decision because I had been with the Forest Service for 23 years and my father worked for the Forest Service," he said in an interview.

Isaacson said he was forced out because he argued against forest management proposals that he said would damage fragile rivers and streams.

Some forms of logging have been shown to accelerate erosion, which can fill streams with gravel and silt.

"I was given a statement that when the plan comes out we want you as far away as we can get you," he said.

Isaacson said former Forest Supervisor Bill Morden gave him the ultimatum.

Morden could not be reached for comment Wednesday night at his home in Coeur d'Alene.

Forest Service spokesman Jim Sanders in Washington D.C. said Wednesday night he knew nothing of Isaacson.

No one was available for comment Wednesday night at the regional Forest Service office in Missoula, Mont., said a man who answered the telephone.

Isaacson planned to testify today before the House Appropriations subcommittee on the interior, which sets the Forest Service's annual budget and establishes logging targets for national forests.

He met Wednesday with members of the House Civil Service subcommittee on civil service, which is investigating allegations from other past and present Forest Service workers that the agency violated environmental standards and retaliated against critics.

John Mumma, a biologist and former regional chief of the Forest Service in Montana, told Congress last fall he was ordered transferred from his job when he refused to cut trees in violation of environmental laws.

John McCormick, the former special agent in charge of Forest Service whistleblower complaints, told the civil service subcommittee last month of a "pattern of lawlessness" within the agency.

McCormick alleged deliberate attempts to circumvent the laws, improper political pressure to maximize logging and reprisals against those who stood up for their scientific ethics.

Isaacson said during the 1960s he became one of the first six hydrologists to be hired by the Forest Service and began researching watersheds on the Panhandle National Forest in 1967.

Continued on next page

Forest Service assumes Congress will increase Panhandle funding

1989 USDA FOREST SERVICE / John Osborn and Tom May

"[Conservationists] believe that the Forest Service should develop alternatives and select a preferred alternative that are based in budgetary reality. Indeed, the USFS recognized this also when in 1980 the Regional Forester approved the criteria for selecting a preferred alternative for the IPNF [Idaho Panhandle National Forests]: "The preferred alternative should be achievable within the 1981-2025 outlook for funding." [letter from Regional Forester Tom Coston to IPNF Supervisor, dated June 23, 1980. IPNF Planning Document 3203]

During the development of the Preferred Alternative USFS planners expressed concerns about the huge budgetary increases necessary to implement the Plan. [See for example IPNF Planning Document 1756 in which the planning team discusses the problems of a 36 percent increase in budget and a 146 percent increase in hard money dollars over the 1980 budget.] In 1983 IPNF Forest Supervisor wrote to the Regional Forester about the unrealistic budgetary assumptions of the preferred alternative, "It is apparent that there is a considerable funding gap between the Preferred Alternative in our proposed forest plan analysis and our probable program." [IPNF Planning Document 3151] During the review of the draft plan at the regional office in 1984, concerns were expressed that "[p]rojections for a budget increase for the preferred alternative seems to be wishful thinking these days." Ultimately, the regional forester did not communicate to IPNF planners any concern or provide any direction pertaining to developing alternatives based on a realistic budget. [IPNF Planning Document 2012]"

[excerpted from John Osborn and Tom May, "Reply to the Responsive Statement for the Idaho Conservation League et al Appeal (#2130) of the USFS Plan for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, Sept. 25, 1989. 197 pp.]

Continued from previous page

"About one-third of the area of the Panhandle (forest) was already in a degraded water state.

"We put 50 drainages in deferred status for 10 years - that means no entry, no roadbuilding, no harvests," he said.

But under the Forest Service's 10-year management plan adopted in 1986, two-thirds of those fragile drainages will be entered by 1996, he said.

"Forest-wide, our predictions of what would happen if you entered those areas have all come true," he said.

"The Coeur d'Alene River basin has fallen apart.

"We're getting 200-year floods three or four or five times a year that are directly proportional to clearcuts in the area," he said.

Lewiston Tribune
February 27, 1992



North Fork Coeur d'Alene Watershed

John Osborn

“And if you just jiggle a few numbers in [the Forest Service] computer you can come up with the higher harvest.”

Senator James McClure, 1988

1989 USDA FOREST SERVICE/ John Osborn and Tom May

The timber target established by RPA [Resource Planning Act] is the historic basis for the USFS's timber target that ultimately appears in the final [Panhandle] forest plan. In approving the USFS's criteria for selecting a preferred alternative, the Regional Forester wrote to the IPNF Forest Supervisor on June 23, 1980, and directed that “[t]he preferred alternative should meet or exceed RPA program objectives assigned to the Forest by the Regional Forester or contained in the Regional Plan.” [IPNF Planning document #3203]

During the period from 1979 to 1983, USFS officials began raising concerns that sufficient timber could not be found on the IPNF to meet the timber targets. “Ground-truthing” of timber volumes for the preferred alternative revealed less timber than anticipated. [See for example IPNF Planning Document 1762]

USFS personnel at the ranger districts continued to communicate their concerns to the supervisor's office about the timber targets. On the Wallace District, the Ranger wrote in Feb. 6,

1984, that “Ground-truthing” showed significant inaccuracies between FORPLAN and actual acres of mature and immature sawtimber. As the ranger noted, “Needless-to-say this drastically impacts the timber sell capability for the district.” [IPNF Planning Document 065]

When the USFS “ground-truthed” the ranger districts of the IPNF, the agency found that it would have to sacrifice more and more nontimber resources in order to maintain its overall timber target. ... The federal agency reassessed its earlier decisions about roading and logging activities in already heavily impacted watersheds (called “deferred drainages”) trying to find timber volumes. [For example, see letter from Mr. Chuck Prausa to the Planning team dated January 24, 1986]. The USFS was willing to sacrifice elk, fish, water quality, scenic beauty, and outdoor recreation in order to maintain a timber target at any cost.

[excerpted from John Osborn and Tom May, “Reply to the Responsive Statement for the Idaho Conservation League et al Appeal (#2130) of the USFS Plan for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, Sept. 25, 1989. 197 pp.]

On concerns of downstream communities in Washington State: Rep. Tom Foley

In addition, because of the extensive concern in the 5th District over the directions set forth in the draft Idaho forest plans, my office has met with the new Regional Forester for Region One, Jim Overbay, and the head of his planning team, Dale Bosworth, to review the concerns expressed to me by my constituents and to emphasize my interest in efforts by the Forest Service to be responsive to the public comments in the development of a balance final plan for these forests.

[Letter from Rep. Foley to John Osborn. Nov. 15, 1985]

Idaho forest plan unrealistic, flawed

The painful shriveling of Idaho's timber industry has made some Idahoans feel about as explosive as their tinder-dry forests when outdoors lovers question proposals to expand logging in the Gem State.

As a result, a fiery controversy has engulfed the U.S. Forest Service's proposed long-range management plan for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

Near the heart of the controversy is the natural tendency to look for villains in the logging industry's decline and, in particular, to vilify any groups that resist Forest Service proposals to log popular outdoor recreation areas, scenic spots and key wildlife habitats.

In actuality, however, conservationist inroads on forest management have little to do with the Northwest timber industry's decline.

Rather, the decline results primarily from high mortgage interest rates, which have made new homes unaffordable for many Americans, plus tough competition from timber producers in Canada and the southeastern United States.

Lack of demand for its wood - not lack of timber - is what is hurting the Northwest timber industry. Congress was told in June that logging firms have signed contracts to buy a staggering 1.2 billion board feet of Panhandle timber that market conditions prevent them from harvesting.

Meanwhile, the Forest Service's proposed management plan for the Panhandle's national forests calls for a dramatic increase in timber harvests.

Not only does the plan anticipate more logging, but it also assumes fantastic timber prices and exaggerates the value of some timber stands, with the result that it deems marginal forests to be profitable to harvest.

However, wishful thinking by federal bureaucrats cannot create demand for timber.

Although a revival of the logging industry would be highly desirable and it's fine to plan for one, nothing on the economic horizon indicates a veritable logging explosion of the magnitude the Forest Service envisions.

The Forest Service must be more realistic.

As written, the proposed plan would lead the Forest

Service to construct a vast network of roads that loggers may never need. The plan anticipates doubling the miles of roads in the Panhandle's national forests.

Outdoor groups complain that the plan rejects Idaho Fish and Game Department recommendations against roads and logging in 17 of 27 drainages vital to fish spawning and four of five drainages vital to elk herds.

Scenic values, as well as wildlife, deserve protection in this plan. But the plan's proposal for extensive logging near heavily visited Upper Priest Lake, for example, would ruin a popular jewel in Idaho's scenic crown.

These flaws in the plan add up to a disturbing pattern of forest management primarily for logging, and they raise questions whether Forest Service zeal for the timber industry has led the agency astray from the doctrine of multiple use - which ought to be the guiding light in Forest Service policy.

As lumbering declines, tourism - which, in Idaho, means outdoor recreation - is becoming more and more vital to the state's economy. The Forest Service ought to be looking out for that industry as well. Tourism's potential is great; elk hunting and outdoor guides and outfitters already bring \$61 million a year into the Idaho economy.

After the Sept. 1 deadline for public comment on the forest plan, it is to be hoped that the Forest Service will amend the plan with more realistic assessments of timber values, more modest road-building plans, greater heed to recommendations of the Idaho Fish and Game Department and others concerned with the state's priceless wildlife resources and, in general, more evidence that it still adheres to the doctrine of multiple use.

Logging is a legitimate, important use for national forests. However, it must not be allowed to trample the many other uses the Forest Service should be encouraging on the land the public has entrusted to its care.

Spokesman-Review

August 11, 1985

Copyright 1985, *The Spokesman Review*

Used with permission of *The Spokesman Review*

"The Forest Service admits it has already damaged about one-fifth of the major watersheds on the [Idaho Panhandle] Forest getting at the most easily reached timber. Already almost one-third of the Panhandle Forest produces sediment that detracts from fisheries and other watershed values. . . . The Forest Service acknowledges our fisheries are deteriorating — some of national significance. Yet demands for these fisheries and high quality recreation are high now and increasing."

[excerpt from testimony before Joint Hearings by the U.S. House Subcommittee on Public Lands and the Subcommittee on General Oversight, Northwest Power and Forest Management, June 13, 1985.]

Forest plans called 'devastating'

By Trudy Welsh

Press Staff Writer

The U.S. Forest Service refuses to tell the public about the financial burden on taxpayers and potential damage to fragile lands involved with its 50-year plan to build more logging roads in the Panhandle National Forests, claims several groups opposing the plan released this spring.

The 7,000 miles of roads would be built at a cost of about \$600 million, and would damage watersheds and prime environments for elk, mountain goats, cutthroat trout and kokanee salmon, said John Osborn, coordinator for Inland Empire Public Lands Council.

Jerry House, planning team leader for the Forest Service, said 2,330 miles of road will cost about \$128 million over the next decade - the most intensive road-building period.

About 1 billion board feet of Panhandle Forest timber has been purchased but never cut, because of predictions of continuing poor lumber markets, Osborn said.

That backlog would keep local mills operating for four years, and contradicts claims from North Idaho county commissioners that more logging roads need to be built in hard-to-reach areas in order to save jobs, he said during a press conference called today by various opposition groups from Idaho and Washington.

"The problem with the lumber industry is markets, not supply, yet the plan is geared to increasing supply," he said. "They expect the public to subsidize them hundreds of millions of dollars and at the same time destroy our wilderness heritage."

Rather than supplying solid scientific and economic information, he charged, the plan is a "political vision for the devastation of the Panhandle National Forest."

Osborn said sportsmen's groups have overwhelmingly opposed more roads in the Panhandle, which is already one of the most "heavily roaded" of our national forests.

The Forest Service justifies road-building by twisting computer data to create "make believe forests," containing high amounts of valuable wood species that are, in reality, less desirable lodgepole pine, Osborn charged.

David Williamson, spokesman for the Kootenai Environmental Alliance, said these figures are further bolstered by inflating timber values.

But House said the Forest Service is aware of the actual forest composition and present market value, and stressed that logging decisions must be made based on long-term predictions of lumber demand nationwide.

Less desirable species, he said, must be removed to allow the growth of more valuable species such as larch and fir.

At present, he contends, too much pressure is being put on lands used for timber harvesting, which could result in more problems for fish and wildlife.



David Williamson, left, Kootenai Environmental Alliance, and John Osborn, Inland Empire Public Lands Council, criticize the U.S. Forest Service's 50-year plan at a news conference this morning.

Williamson called on the Forest Service to analyze selective cutting as an alternative to the clearcut method, and establish stiff penalties for companies who carelessly or accidentally damage the forest beyond what is necessary for timber removal.

He also called for a revised plan with expanded wilderness designations for Long Canyon, Upper Priest Lake, and several areas around Lake Pend Oreille, Lake Coeur d'Alene and the St. Joe River.

Several North Idaho county commissioners have attacked the present plan as having too much wilderness and roadless areas.

But the local government officials are not taking into ac-

count recreation-related jobs that could be lost if the forests are further degraded, Osborn said.

Idaho's four large lakes - Coeur d'Alene, Pend Oreille, Hayden and Priest - would suffer heavy sedimentation problems if clearcutting is allowed on shoreline areas and adjacent watersheds, Osborn said.

No attempt was made to protect the domestic watersheds serving many municipalities in North Idaho, he further alleged.

The Forest Service is accepting public comment on the plan until Sept. 1, but no formal public hearings are scheduled, House said.

The Coeur d'Alene Press, August 8, 1985

The USDA Forest Service takes 8 years to reject conservationists' appeal of a 10-year forest plan

1987 **Coalition to challenge forest plans Habitat, hunting among concerns**

David Newman, *Spokesman-Review*, Oct. 22, 1987

1992 **Forest plan outdated, activists say Sediment in CdA River raises alarm**

Julie Titone, *Spokesman-Review*, February 21, 1992

"During peak runoff the water has no place to go except into river banks, road beds and even people's homes."

- Barry Rosenberg

Inland Empire Public Lands Council, Forest Watch

1993 **Logging's Legacy The Inland Northwest's ravaged forests reflect years of mismanagement by the very agency charged with their protection — the Forest Service**

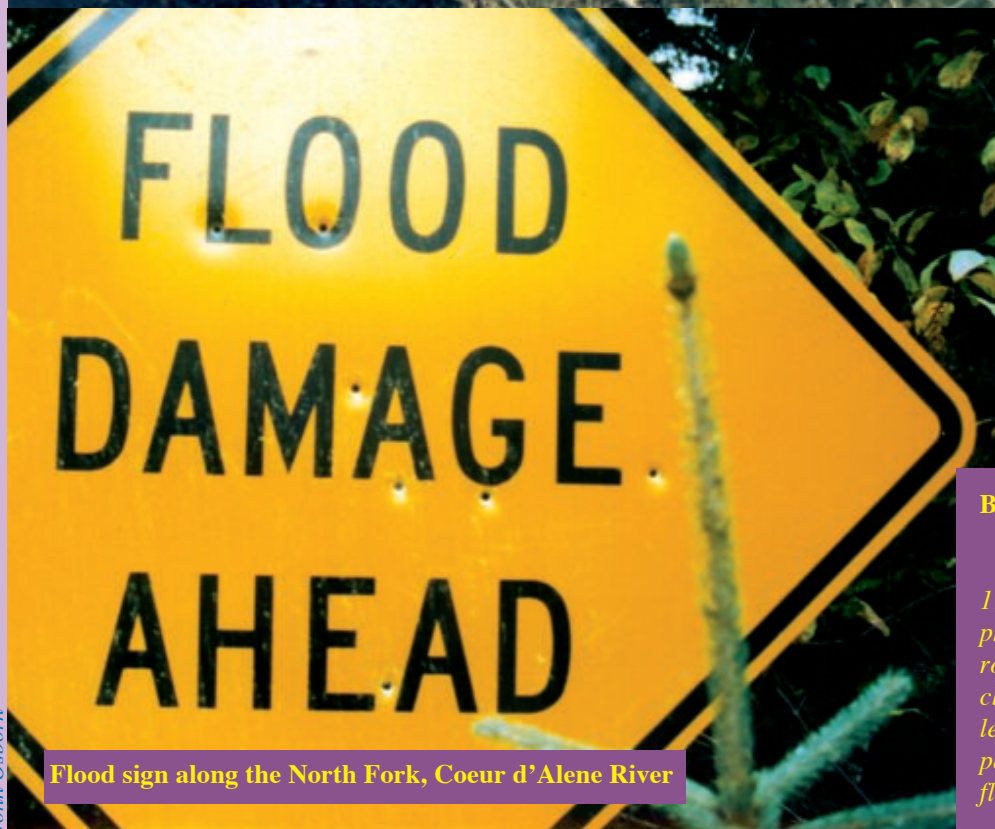
Jim Lynch and J. Todd Foster, *Spokesman-Review*, Nov. 21, 1993

1995 **FOREST SERVICE Rejects Conservationists' Appeal DECISION SUMMARY**

... [W]e affirm the Regional Forester's decision to approve the Forest Plan.
... Although we deny the relief requested, the appellant has the opportunity and is encouraged to participate in project-level decisionmaking [sic], monitoring, evaluation, possible amendments, and revision of the Forest Plan.

[USDA Forest Service, Decision for the Appeal #2130 - Idaho Conservation League of the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. June 8, 1995]

"A Conspiracy



Flood sign along the North Fork, Coeur d'Alene River

Beauty strips and the illusion of a forest

1984 USDA Forest Service aerial photograph of North Fork clearcuts and road networks. People don't see the clearcuts because of the Forest Service leaves "beauty strips." The watershed pathology reveals itself with raging floods.

of Optimism"

Snow falling on clearcut, North Fork

Much of the North Fork lies in "rain-on-snow" zones. Warm winter rains, "chinooks", can rapidly melt several feet of snow, causing floods. Roads and clearcutting worsen the floods. For decades the Idaho Panhandle was the "timber basket" for the entire region; the North Fork, the timber basket for the Panhandle.

North Fork in flood

Decades of warnings unheeded, Forest Service's clearcutting and road-building in the rain-on-snow zones have proved catastrophic. The Forest Service destroyed a popular sports fishery, destabilized an entire river watershed, and worsened toxic floods.

John Osborn

IEPLC photo archives

3. The Conspiracy clearcuts citizen oversight

Internal Memo -- USDA Forest Service, Panhandle

1. OUR PERSONAL WORK PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS ARE:

1. We will try to 'keep the train on the tracks' on the IPNF this year as we await the selection and arrival of our new supervisor. Emphasis will be on stability and continued implementation of the Forest Plan, including production of as much timber as we can in an environmentally sound fashion. . . .

3. THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES WE THINK WE OUGHT TO SEIZE IN THE REGION ARE:

1. Your arrival gives us the best opportunity we have had in years to re-establish good working relationships with the Congressional Delegations and the timber industry. As our programs continue to decline those relationships are more critical than ever. . . .

3. Watershed rehabilitation (including searching for opportunities to expand our capability to do watershed rehabilitation work as part of timber sales) needs the emphasis and attention of the [Regional Forester]. The condition of our watersheds is one of the biggest issues facing us the next few years.

[excerpts from U.S. Forest Service. Idaho Panhandle Briefing Paper — January 1992]

1990

Forest Service altered data to OK logging, environmentalists say

Julie Titone, *Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, WA) Sept. 26, 1990

Clearcutting protested

Bekka Rauve, *Daily Bee* (Sandpoint, ID) April 26, 1990

Fernan District halts Stronghog timber sale

Julie Titone, *Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, WA) Dec. 15, 1990

Planned timber sale called threat to trout

Julie Titone, *Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, WA) Nov. 12, 1990

1991

Idaho Timber Sale Appealed

Spokesman-Review (Spokane, WA) Oct. 24, 1991

Conservationists appeal Coeur d'Alene timber sales

A-P, *Lewiston Tribune* (Lewiston, ID) July 5, 1991

Owl did not halt local sale: FS decision tied to elk, trout, and erosion of soils

Marv Collison, *Coeur d'Alene Press* (Coeur d'Alene, ID) April 28, 1991

Official: Forests won't meet timber-cut goals

Julie Titone, *Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, WA) Sept. 7, 1991

1994 CONGRESS / Barry Rosenberg

The map on the table before you [see front cover of this *Transitions*] is a graphic and dramatic illustration of the result of the Forest Service's flawed and illegal policies. This map depicts the state of watershed health in the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF), and is part of an evaluation of watershed conditions across all of Region 1 [northern Idaho and Montana].

The red indicates watersheds that the Forest Service calls "management constrained." If you want to be more blunt and truthful, these watersheds are trashed. The yellow indicates drainages which preliminary indications suggest have some of the parameters of instability and these watersheds require further study. The green displays watersheds that still have integrity. Most of these watersheds are in roadless condition, and/or have been only lightly logged.

Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of watershed abuse in the entire National Forest System has taken place in the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River drainage, which encompasses the Fernan and Wallace Ranger Districts on the IPNF. Excessive road building has created areas that have road densities of up to 20 miles per square mile. Massive clearcut logging and mining have yielded stream instability and toxic heavy metal pollution. Floodwaters from the North Fork are disgorged onto a floodplain contaminated with heavy metals, pushing toxic metals and nutrients into Lake Coeur d'Alene. In spite of this, Forest Service officers continue to propose large timber sales. These sales call for the same clearcut-like logging that has destabilized the Coeur d'Alene watershed and caused the extirpation of the bull trout and the loss of viability of the native westslope cutthroat trout, Idaho's state fish.

Fortunately, these and many other proposed sales have been stopped by appeals through the efforts of local Forest Watch activists and the Council. Appeals filed by Forest Watch during the last four years have been responsible for a 75 percent overall reduction of timber sale offerings on the Colville, Okanogan, Clearwater, and Idaho Panhandle National Forests, as compared to the Forest Plan Allowable Sale Quantities for these forests.

I wish to add that there are no spotted owls on these forests. The reductions in timber sale offerings have resulted from intense scrutiny by local citizens intent on upholding the public's environmental laws protecting what remains of the biological integrity of our national forests.

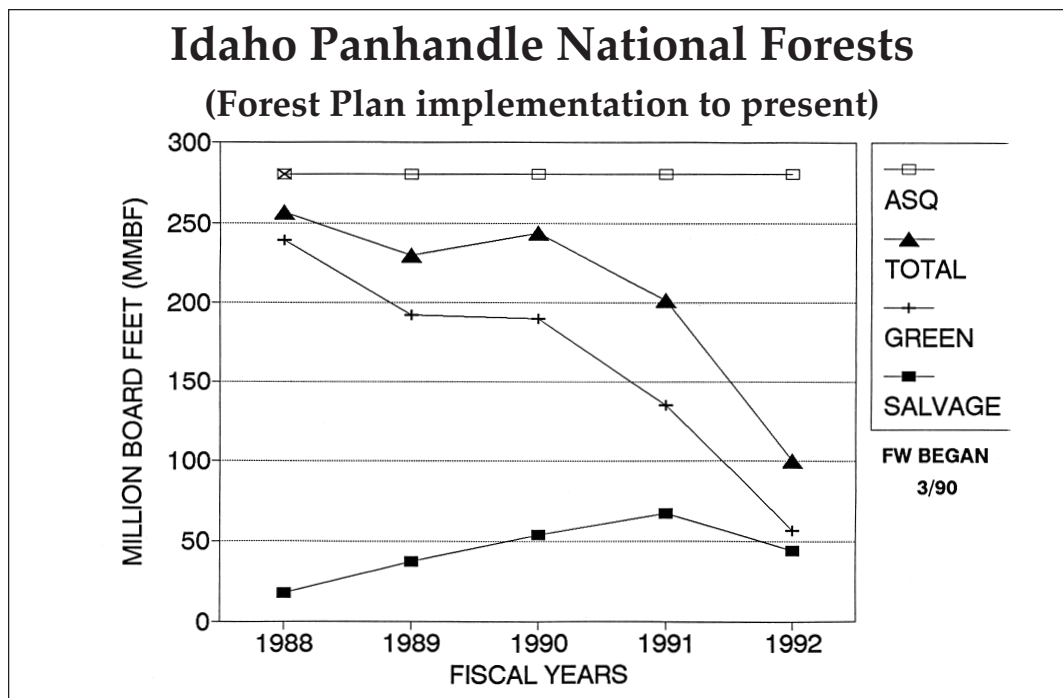
The success of these administrative appeals is tinged with irony. While the Forest Service has learned from citizen advocates, it has unfortunately learned the wrong lessons. Instead of improving its forest practices, the Forest Service has learned to write less transparent documents, some which cost up to half a million dollars each. The agency has begun improving its documentation while still proposing environmentally unsound timber sales.

The Forest Service is comfortable in the belief that the appearance of procedural compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will likely result in a favorable ruling in the courts. As illustrated in this map, the perception presented in the NEPA documents does not reflect the reality in the forest.

[excerpt from testimony before U.S. House Natural Resource Subcommittees on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, and Oversight and Investigations. February 1, 1994.]

The well ran dry so suddenly and unexpectedly because the illusions promulgated by the conspiracy of optimism masked real conditions. Political and organizational pressures to maximize production led to fantastically optimistic technical assumptions and to a subsequent “overshoot” of capabilities. As Tim Foss, a timber sale planner for the Wenatchee National Forest in Washington and a reform advocate, bluntly stated in 1993: “Timber harvest levels nearly everywhere were based on overly optimistic FORPLAN models [forest planning computer models]. Field personnel knew all along they were ridiculous. And it’s finally catching up with the agency.”

—Paul Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests since World War Two*, Univ. of Nebraska Press, p. xliii.



1992

Plan to log in Wallace District sparks anger, appeals

Julie Titone, *Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, WA) March 2, 1992

Timber sale delayed in East Moon area

J. Todd Foster, *Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, WA) June 2, 1992

Illegal timber sales alleged: Conservationists say Forest Service made ‘secret sales’

Jim Lynch, *Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, WA) Sept. 5, 1992

Group challenges two sales; Forest Service admits error

Idaho Statesman (Boise, ID) Sept. 7, 1992

1993

Heavy harvest proposed for Savant Sage

Timber, environmental concerns balanced, Forest Service says

David Kilmer, *Coeur d’Alene Press* (Coeur d’Alene, ID) Oct. 11, 1993

Timber sale threatens hunting, fishing area

letter to editor: Jo Austin. *Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, WA) Feb. 1, 1993

3. Clearcutting Citizen Oversight

(a) 1994 - Forest Service

New FS chief says agency will obey law, tell the truth

AP, Coeur d'Alene Press, Oct. 9, 1994

Logging OK'd despite problems, appeal by group

Environmentalists say Forest Service blocks appeals

By Scott Sonner
Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The Inland Empire Public Lands Council has successfully blocked dozens of timber sales on national forests, halting Northwest logging with administrative appeals.

So it came as little surprise when the Forest Service recently notified the conservation group in Spokane, Wash., that it agreed there were some problems with the way a logging plan was prepared for the Prichard Creek site in the Idaho Panhandle.

The appeal reviewing officer acknowledged the agency failed to examine the impact on the water quality.

He also agreed the agency should have projected the impact future road building on neighboring private lands would have on the watershed.

And he questioned how the agency could have concluded sensitive fish species would not be harmed by the logging.

But then John Drake, the appeal reviewing officer, approved the logging anyway and denied their appeal.

Drake instructed the local Forest Service district ranger to further analyze the cumulative effects of the logging before allowing timber cutting to start.

Sounding an alarm

But his decision to move forward despite the deficiencies in the scientific documentation has sounded an alarm among environmental lawyers and activists.

"They are saying that they can break the law a little bit," said Barry Rosenberg, director of the Inland Empire Public Lands Council's Forest Watch program.

"We feel the analysis there is sufficient, but to better respond to concerns of the appellant, we are asking them to take an additional step with the evaluation of the watershed," said Steve Solem, coordinator of appeals and litigation for the Forest Service's regional office in Missoula, Mont.

The Forest Service believes it can "proceed with implementation of the sale without taking care of these points," he said.

"But we don't feel leaving these issues unresolved is in our best interest or in the best interest of the appellant.

"Rather than ignore their concerns and move on with the project, we want to provide a complete answer.

"We told the ranger he can't proceed until these things are done. The results will be shared with the appellants," Solem said. "Modification of the sale is fairly unlikely because we feel the analysis was sufficient."

The environmentalists said it won't do them any good to get a look at the results if they aren't granted another public comment period or chance to appeal the new findings.

"In essence, the agency is free to implement the decision immediately, even though the environmental analysis has not been completed," said Debbie Sivas, the council's attorney working with the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund in Seattle.

Violation of policy

Rosenberg said the National Environmental Policy Act requires environmental assessments or environmental impact statements be completed before commercial activity begins. The reviews must be subject to public comment.

"They are allowing themselves to violate NEPA," Rosenberg said.

Sivas said supplemental reviews often are ordered to be added to an environmental impact statement when new information is available.

In fact, Solem said new data on the population of the bull trout will be included in the additional look at the Prichard Creek sale.

But Sivas said supplemental reviews "cannot be used, as the Forest Service attempts here, to lessen the agency's initial burden of preparing an adequate environmental impact statement in the first instance before final agency action is taken."

The Idaho Statesman
October 23, 1994

Forest Service Gives Itself Permission to Violate Law

The Forest Service has secretly made changes in the way administrative appeals of its decisions are reviewed, and in so doing, has given itself permission to violate the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), says the Spokane-based Inland Empire Public Lands Council.

In a 9/14 news release, the group said it had obtained documents confirming the change in policy, including a letter from Chief Jack Ward Thomas and a leaked memo from Region 1 Forester David Jolly. The directives allow reviewing officers to affirm timber sale decisions even though environmental review for the project is acknowledged to be inadequate.

“In essence, the agency is free to implement the decision immediately, even though the environmental analysis has not been completed,” said Debbie Sivas, an attorney for the group. “This new approach ... reflects an obvious disdain for the public participation objectives of the law and is plainly illegal.”

The group says the new policy is inconsistent with Chief Thomas' message to his employees to “Obey the law, tell the truth.”

Frontline Fax Report
September 26, 1994

IEPLC Forest Watch Appeals Record - 1990 – 1994

Idaho Panhandle Only

1990 - 1992

16 appeals
11 sustained
5 denied

69% successful

1993

8 appeals
7 sustained
1 denied

88% successful

1994

3 appeals
3 denied

0% successful

3. Clearcutting Citizen Oversight (b) 1995 - Congress

Timber industry urges end to citizen appeals

Washington (AP) - Forest Service officials say their citizen appeals process is working well, but timber industry officials told Congress there should be more restrictions on administrative appeals of logging in national forests.

"We believe that the new process is working smoothly and with good results," Associate Chief Dave Unger told a Senate subcommittee on Wednesday.

The number of administrative appeals filed against proposed activity in national forests, primarily logging, fell from 2,600 in 1993 to 610 in 1994, Unger said.

Anne Heisenbittel of the American Forest & Paper Association acknowledged there had been improvements in the appeals process, but said the appeals that have continued often involve the largest amount of

timber.

She said the Forest Service should reconsider a proposal the agency made under the Bush administration in 1992 to eliminate all administrative appeals of individual timber sales.

"Appellants frequently appeal timber sales simply because they disagree with the idea of cutting trees," said Heisenbittel, the industry group's director of forest planning and policy.

Jim Rarick, president of the Black Hills Forest Resource Association in Spearfish, S.D., said the current system "limits the ability of the Forest Service to make and implement decisions in a timely fashion."

The Coeur d'Alene Press
March 10, 1995

Talk turns hot over timber sale

By Mike McLean
Staff writer

Coeur d'Alene — A rally in opposition to a proposed timber sale in the North Fork Coeur d'Alene River drainage drew spirited debate Thursday at the Fernan Ranger District Office.

About 45 protesters, chanting "Save the forests. Stop the floods," marched from the Fernan Lake Boat ramp to the district office at noon Thursday.

The sale involves timber harvest on 176 acres of a 216-acre parcel called Barney Rubble's Cabin.

Two previous proposals have been appealed by Environmentalists. Under the salvage logging act, the latest proposal bypasses the appeals process.

However, Forest Service officials say the proposal would meet or exceed environmental guidelines even if the salvage rider weren't in place.

Kootenai Environmental Alliance President Buell Hollister said logging in the North Fork drainage has and will contribute to flooding.

He blamed the timber industry and the Forest Service for

the floods in 1996.

While the volume of water wasn't as great as in previous great floods, damage was comparable because stream and river beds were loaded with sediment, he said.

Hal Rowe, of Native Forest Network, said the timber industry's definition of forest health is a fraud.

"All they want to do is get the cut out," Rowe said.

Susan Matthews, Fernan and Wallace district ranger, defended the sale. She said the proposal is expected to net taxpayers \$500,000 to be used for habitat restoration.

She said 1 percent to 2 percent of the stand will be harvested with "very low risk for increasing water yield."

Matthews said the sale aims to remove diseased stands in areas of five or fewer acres.

Kootenai Environmental Alliance President Buell Hollister said logging in the North Fork drainage has and will contribute to flooding.

Continued on page 26

Crippling Citizen Oversight

June 3, 1994, Assistant Agriculture Secretary Jim Lyons (center) inspects damaged watersheds of the Panhandle, where he had worked in 1976 marking trees for timber sales. Al Isaacson (right), the Panhandle's former Supervisory Hydrologist, showed rubble-filled streams caused by clearcuts and roads. Dr. Arthur Partridge (left), a renowned forest pathologist who studied root diseases here for decades, cautioned against logging under the guise of "Forest Health".

One year later, on June 8, 1995, the Chief's Office would reject entirely conservationists appeal of the Panhandle Forest Plan.

Place T66P24a here so the 3 big guys on the right show and so the lower picture overlaps just a bit

Logging protesters demonstrate outside the Fernan Forest Service office over an upcoming sale.

[From "A flood of protest on logging" The Spokesman-Review, May 17, 1996. Copyright 1996, The Spokesman-Review. Used with permission of The Spokesman-Review.]



Cathy Bertagnolli

Craig Buck/The Spokesman-Review



Matt Helm / Coeur d'Alene Press

*Barry Rosenberg of the Inland Empire Public Lands Council expresses his opposition to proposed salvage logging during a protest at the Fernan Ranger station.
[From "Talk turns hot over timber sale" Coeur d'Alene Press, May 17, 1996]*

1995 CONGRESS / Barry Rosenberg

For the last 25 years, since the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) became law, the Forest Service has been issuing Findings of No Significant Impact [pronounced “FONSI’s”] on timber sales — and for 25 years these findings have been **wrong**. As a result our forested ecosystems have been significantly damaged. Gone or greatly imperiled are many of the native fish and wildlife populations. The fabric of our forest’s biological diversity and ecological integrity is tattered. ...

It was not until the Forest Watch Program started in 1990 that local citizens began to scrutinize, in an organized fashion, the illegal and destructive activities of the Forest Service in the Inland Northwest. I would like to share with you some examples of people who since 1990 have been bringing democracy to the forest.

These are people like Jo Austin, a long term resident of the Silver Valley and schoolteacher in Kellogg, Idaho. Mrs. Austin became fed up at the increasing numbers of clearcuts littering the hills in the Coeur d’Alene River drainage. This woman has volunteered endless hours walking in the forest, meeting with Forest Service officials, and analyzing and commenting on thousand-page documents for proposed timber sales. For the most part her comments were ignored and she then, with the help of Forest Watch, worked on and authored many successful timber sale appeals in the Coeur d’Alene basin.

Those working on appeals are people like Allen Isaacson, former Supervisory Hydrologist of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, who has worked in and fished the streams of the Idaho Panhandle for over 20 years.

Continued on next page

Talk turns hot

Continued from page 23

She said 10 percent of trees on every acre logged will be left standing as shelter wood.

While opponents contend “shelter wood cutting” is another name for “clearcutting,” Matthews said shelter wood maintains a canopy over the site and helps protect against rain-on-snow events that contribute to flooding.

She said root-diseased trees will be replaced with disease-resistant white pine.

Verbal sparring began when timber industry representatives tried to counter the protesters.

Stan Smith of the Small Loggers Council said the proposed sale was worked out within the guidelines of a joint policy statement signed between the Small Logger’s Council and the Selkirk-Priest Basin Association.

The SPBA is closely linked to the Inland Empire Public Lands Council, which organized the rally.

“The (rally) is the farce,” he said. “There is no lawless logging. We’re the most regulated industry in the state.”

Smith said the trees won’t improve habitat if they are left to rot and eventually burn in a forest fire.

“Where are the fish?” shot back Barry Rosenberg, direc-

tor of the IEPLC Forest Watch Program. “They are not here with logging. But they are here after a fire.”

Rosenberg said the North Fork should be restored without logging.

Environmental attorney Chuck Sheroke said North Idaho has become a third-world country exploited by resource-dependent industries. “They’ve taken the people out of the process. That’s what’s wrong.”

Ken Kohli, president of the Intermountain Forest Industry Association, said he’s frustrated that rally organizers portrayed the sale as the same proposal that was appealed.

He said the revised sale calls for half to a third of the harvest of the original proposal.

“The Forest Service has reduce the proposed harvest to 3 million board feet compared with 8 mmbf in the original proposal,” he said.

No new roads will be built, but 25 miles of existing road will be eliminated, he said. Logging roads are considered the largest contributor to stream sedimentation.

Coeur d’Alene Press
May 17, 1996

Isaacson, while developing watershed guidelines for the IPNF Forest Plan, told his superiors of the watershed damage that was occurring due to the excessive clearcuts and road building, and warned that even greater flooding and loss of fish habitat was going to occur unless the logging and roading was brought under control. He spent years working on the Forest Plan. Since his recommendations did not mesh with the Forest Service's agenda of getting out the cut they were ignored and he was offered a directed transfer to Atlanta, Georgia. He refused and lost his job. The flooding and loss of native fish populations that he predicted did occur and are continuing to occur in the Coeur d'Alene drainage.

Those appealing timber sales are the owners of the Orient Water Company of Orient, Washington which provides the water for the town of Orient. They have had to use a back hoe to dig sediment out of their water system since the water system was damaged by an illegal Forest Service timber sale in the Deer Creek watershed. Since then, the Forest Service planned yet another logging and road building project in the Deer Creek watershed. The Orient Water Company complained, was ignored, and then turned to local Forest Watch activists for help. An appeal was filed, upheld, and the Forest Service has withdrawn the sale.

Those appealing timber sales are the members of the North Idaho Flycasters, a group that has spent extensive time and money working with the Forest Service on stream restoration projects in the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River. The Flycasters saw that the stream structures they emplaced were being blown out by excessive water runoff from ongoing Forest Service clearcutting. The Flycasters tried to work cooperatively with the Forest Service, felt they were being duped, became fed up and appealed two timber sales. Their appeals were upheld.

Also appealing timber sales is the Idaho Department of Fish and game, which was forced to appeal two timber sales on the Fernan District in northern Idaho (appeal available upon request).

Those appealing timber sales are people like John and Carol Stuart, 20-year residents of a homestead outside Newport, Washington. John and Carol depend on the forest for their livelihood. They are people like Ken Tilton, a recently retired telephone lineman of Cataldo, Idaho, a town which suffers frequent floods as a result of the heavily clearcut and roaded Coeur d'Alene River drainage; Bill Egolf, a carpenter, cattle ranchers, and 20 year resident of Priest River, Idaho; and Al Espinosa, a fisheries biologist who worked for the Forest Service for almost 20 years before retiring in disgust at proliferation of illegal and destructive Forest Service timber sales.

The list goes on, and I hope puts to rest the myth that appeals are frivolous and are filed by those that do not have a stake in their communities. With the exception of the Idaho Fish and Game, these people volunteer an incredible amount of timber going out on the ground, and analyzing thick and complicated timber sale documents. Even Ed Schultz, the Supervisor of the Colville National Forest, who has been oft-criticized by environmentalists for his lack of sensitivity about environmental concerns, has gone out of his way to correct misinformation about appeals filed on the Colville.

Forest Watch activists are responsible, concerned citizens. Most are rural based, with strong ties to the land and their communities. In fact, much stronger ties to the communities than the Forest Service employees who are victims of frequent transfers, and the timber corporations whose headquarters are based in large cities away from the forests they log, and whose loyalties lie with their shareholders and profits, not the communities.

[excerpt from testimony, U.S. Senate Forest and Public Lands Management Subcommittee, March 8, 1995]

Riverside residents fear logging

Will more watershed timber sales increase flooding?

Julie Titone, Spokesman-Review, Jan. 25, 1993

North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Drainage Completed Logging and Road Construction — 1/86 to 7/96*

(Source: USDA Forest Service (6/27/96); Wallace and Fernan Ranger Districts)

WALLACE RANGER DISTRICT (310,426 acres)

Regeneration (clearcut type) Logging	14,887 acres (23.25 square miles)
Intermediate Logging	6,562 acres
<hr/>	
Total Acres Logged	21,449 acres
Total Board Feet (Thousand — MBF)	444,329 MBF
Road Construction	181 miles
Road Reconstruction	192 miles

FERNAN RANGER DISTRICT (235,853 acres)

Regeneration Logging	6,716 acres (10.50 square miles)
Intermediate Logging	3,475 acres
<hr/>	
Total Acres Logged	10,191 acres
Total Board Feet (Thousand — MBF)	188,118 MBF
Road Construction	72 miles
Road Reconstruction	153 miles
<hr/>	
Total 33.75 square miles cc; 4.7 square miles of road con/recon	

**Does not include volume figures for sales being proposed or currently under sale administration.*

Timber plan unleashes flood worry

Forest Service counters that project will leave fewer roads, stream crossings

By Ken Olsen

Staff writer

COEUR d'ALENE - A proposed timber sale on the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River will lead to more of the flooding that pummeled North Idaho this winter, local environmental groups say.

And while federal law no longer allows them to appeal the sale, the Kootenai Environmental Alliance hopes public outrage will stop the Barney Rubble's Cabin salvage sale, 15 miles northeast of Coeur d'Alene.

But by the time the project is over, there will be fewer roads, fewer culverts and a healthier watershed, the Forest Service counters. And it will bring the taxpayers more than \$400,000.

That's little comfort to opponents. "I'm convinced, along with quite a few other people, that a large part of the flooding was exacerbated by road building and clearcutting in the upper reaches of the North Fork," said George Brabb, of the Kootenai Environmental Alliance. "We're very much concerned" about Barney Rubble's Cabin.

The Environmental Alliance mulled over several concerns during its meeting Thursday. Those include the effect of the 3.4 million board feet of logging on fish habitat, water quality, and whether more flooding would push more of the toxic metals from mining downstream toward Coeur d'Alene.

The Forest Service has logged the North Fork area many times during the last three and a half decades. So additional logging gives pause to fishing groups that have done watershed restoration work in the North Fork drainage.

"Are we putting Band-Aids on bleeding arteries?" asked Doug Fagerness of the North Idaho Flycasters, gesturing at an aerial photo of vast clearcuts on the North Fork. "If we were at war and the enemy did that to us, we'd be outraged."

Barney Rubble's Cabin has twice been attempted as a regular timber sale and was defeated by appeals. It is back, this time under the salvage law passed last summer by Congress.

Environmental groups question how a formerly green timber sale - which they successfully appealed - could be offered as a salvage sale.

"The sale we are offering is different from the original two proposals," said Susan Matthews, Fernan District Ranger.

The original sales covered between 6 million and 8 million board feet of timber and the new version only includes the dead and dying grand fir, Douglas fir, hemlock and a little white pine.

The sale only affects 1 percent of the watershed and "our hydrologists feel that is a very conservative part of the watershed," Matthews said.

The area should be in better shape and less vulnerable to flood damage after the logging, because the project includes removal of 26 miles of road and 51 stream crossings, she said.

The Idaho Fish and Game and others would prefer the Forest Service take out the roads and restore the watershed without the logging, Matthews acknowledged. But there isn't money available to do it that way.

Idaho Spokesman-Review

April 19, 1996

Copyright 1996, *The Spokesman Review*

Used with permission of *The Spokesman Review*

Internal Memo: USDA Forest Service, Panhandle [excerpt]

National Resources Damage Assessment Requirements of CERCLA (PUTNAM):

Bill Putnam, Watershed Program (RO), briefed the team concerning the following:

- > national resource damage
 - > restoration of the Coeur d'Alene Basin
 - > regulations process has to be broken in three phases
 - > Coeur d'Alene base and restoration project
 - > reviewed regulations
 - > Four trustees are:
 - 1) Forest Service
 - 2) Coeur d'Alene Tribe
 - 3) Bureau of Land Management
 - 4) Idaho State Department of Lands
 - > reviewed steps required
 - > Coeur d'Alene Basin restoration project
 - > take a look at injuries done to the Coeur d'Alene River and what the Forest Service can do to repair damages
- [IPNF Leadership Team Meeting Minutes, John Criswell, Facilitator, July 10, 1992]

4. Resurrecting a River Ecosystem: You Can't Log Your Way to Watershed Health -- Forests, Fish, and Floods

"I don't know how you can mitigate for an increase in water yield, other than allowing the trees to grow back so that the watershed behaves naturally." (Ned Horner, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) Regional Fishery Manager, referring to the fishery condition in the Coeur d'Alene River drainage, reference Nov.5, 1990 letter re: Freezeout and Short Riley DN)

"By removing more timber and increasing the risk for damage, they [Forest Service] are also risking the rehabilitation efforts and risking the taxpayers' funds. I recommend that the N.F. Coeur d'Alene River be placed under a moratorium from timber harvest, and that rehabilitation be completed along with at least 10 if not 20 years' regrowth on the vegetation before any timber removal." (J. Allen Isaacson, former Supervisory Hydrologist for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, referring to the Barney Rubble's Cabin and Skookum timber sales, letter to IEPLC Forest Watch, September, 1993, attachment C, appeal of Supplemental EA's for both sales.)

In June 1993 Pete Bengeyfield, Forest Hydrologist for the Beaverhead National Forest, peer reviewed a portion of a watershed restoration project on the Wallace Ranger District. He made these comments in his June 11, 1993 follow-up letter to then-District Ranger Steve Williams:

"The drainages within the Coeur d'Alene Basin will recover only when the vegetation lost through timber harvest is replaced by new stands of timber that approximate the density and height of the original stands."

"...it is inappropriate to schedule harvest as a means to fund restoration work."

"Once the vegetation is removed, the only control over the amount of energy increase is the size of the climatic event that produces the runoff."

"...Further canopy removal exacerbates the portion of the scenario that leads to the greatest instability in the streams."

"...The standing dead trees left by root rot will not have near the effect on water yield as a clearcut or seed-tree harvest."

"...Creating additional clearcuts or seed tree units will only maximize water yield increase on those acres harvested, while setting them further away from eventual recovery."

Quotes from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game regarding the Barney Rubble's Cabin and Skookum timber sales in the Little North Fork and North Fork Coeur d'Alene River drainage, Idaho Panhandle National Forests:

January 13, 1993 letter to Don Bright, Fernan District Ranger: "...we have observed habitat conditions in the Little North Fork continually worsen in response to timber harvest and related activities."

"Poor road maintenance, placement of roads, and previous disturbances to stream channels and riparian zones have all contributed to the destabilization of the watershed."

"We are apprehensive about the prospect of existing and proposed timber sales in sub-drainages of the Little North Fork all contributing to further loss of habitat or setting back the recovery process..."

“Cutthroat trout populations in the Little North Fork of the Coeur d’Alene River are reaching levels where continued viability of the species is of serious concern.”

January 14, 1993 letter to Dave Wright, IPNF Supervisor: “By the Forest Service’s own standards, bedload in the Little North Fork channel is essentially completely destabilized.”

“We believe the long term viability of westslope cutthroat trout is questionable in the Little North Fork.”

“The only sure way to recover watersheds at this stage is to allow continued canopy recovery to intercept precipitation.”

“...we do not believe the proposed activities will show any significant improvement in watershed condition, and in fact run a very high risk of further destabilizing the system and virtually eliminating the cutthroat trout fishery.”

Idaho Fish and Game filed administrative appeals against the Barney Rubble’s Cabin and Skookum timber sales in February, 1993.

FOREST HEALTH?

Having twice released the Barney Rubble’s Cabin and Skookum timber sales and having them stopped by IDFG and citizen appeals, the Fernan Ranger District proposed “restoration only” activities in the North Fork. While IDFG supported the restoration proposal, it objected to the Fernan District’s attempt to justify logging by claiming diseased trees increase runoff and peak flows.

June 27, 1994 letter to Don Bright, Fernan District Ranger: “The statement that root disease reduces canopy closure, resulting in increased peak flows, should be backed up with data or literature citations which support it, or it should be removed. ...root rot infested stands likely behave very differently than large clearcuts with respect to water yields. To lead off a discussion on natural and management caused impacts on water yield with a statement about impacts to water yield from root rot implies that root rot is a prime culprit in causing de-stabilized channels. To date we are unaware of any evidence to support this argument.”

The Fernan’s restoration project was not funded by Congress or the Forest Service, and so did not go forward.

After passage of the “logging without laws” timber salvage rider in July 1995, the Fernan District again released logging proposals in the North Fork under the guise of “salvage.” IDFG stated its concerns about fish and wildlife habitat, and the high road densities in the drainage which would not be maintained, obliterated, or otherwise dealt with in a salvage rider logging operation.

February 16, 1996 “Watershed condition and fish habitat remain our biggest concerns with the new proposal, but potential impacts to elk and non-game species are also of concern.”

“only about 15% to 30% of the problem road crossings will be treated.”

“...the District is unable to bring identified problem roads and stream crossings into compliance with state and federal regulations for protecting water quality.”

April 23, 1996 letter to Susan Jeheber-Matthews, Wallace-Fernan District Ranger on Barney Rubble’s Cabin Salvage: [IDFG is concerned about] “...the amount of ‘time bombs’ which will still be in the watershed in the form of unmaintained roads and culverts not treated by this proposal.” “...there are currently over 300 miles of roads (105 miles of which are considered driveable) within the analysis area, and an estimated 500+ culverts, of which about 60% are classified as non-system, or not scheduled for regular maintenance.”



INLAND EMPIRE PUBLIC LANDS COUNCIL
P.O. Box 2174
Spokane, WA 99210-2174

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SPOKANE, WA
PERMIT NO. 257

USFS photo

Decades of warnings unheeded:

Clearcutting streams, North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River, 1980s.