



INLAND EMPIRE PUBLIC LANDS COUNCIL **TRANSITIONS**

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

Volume 10 Number 3, July - September 1997

SAVING THE FORESTS

— Part 2 —

Ending Commercial Logging in Federal Forests

SAVING THE FORESTS

Part 1 Forest -Stealing

Part 2 Ending Commercial Logging

Clearcutting the Yaak, Kootenai National Forest in extreme northwestern Montana — Fourth of July Timber Sale

Jeff Juel

CONTENTS

Saving the Forests: Part 2

Ending Commercial Logging in Federal Forests

(1) Ending Commercial Logging	4
(2) Follow the Money	10
(3) Taxpayers Lose	12
(4) "Logging without Laws"	14
(5) The "Cut" drives Forest Planning	18
(6) Forest-Stealing	20
(7) Pacific Northwest in Transition	24
(8) "This land is your land"	28

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

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Corporate Corruption and the Federal Forests

By John Osborn, M.D.

The federal forests continue to fall. Sound science, fiscal conservatism, and a conservation land ethic are not felling the forests. Instead it is a corrupted political system in which timber corporations buy politicians who serve up federal timber.

In the Columbia River region, conservationists have relied on public processes to curb the worst abuses. After nearly 15 years of trying to make this work, and after a year of weighing the decision, the Council is calling for an end to commercial logging in federal forests.

In 1983 resident physicians formed the Spokane Resident Physicians Action League (later renamed the Inland Empire Public Lands Council, or "Council"). Then anglers, hunters, and other concerned citizens joined with the goal to protect fisheries and wildlife sanctuaries. In 1990 the Council launched a program to empower citizens to scrutinize federal timber sales: Forest Watch. Faced with citizen review and public exposure, the Forest Service withdrew many illegal timber sales. The cut plummeted, but not for long.

The Forest Service responded by writing slicker, appeal-proof timber sale documents. The Forest Service (and later, the Congress) also targeted the appeals process in order to cripple citizen oversight. A 1995 budget amendment called the "salvage rider" (or "logging without laws") eliminated the appeals process on many timber sales. Logging accelerated with citizen oversight impaired. A million acres of wilderness have been lost in Idaho alone during the last decade.

The 156 National Forests are criss-crossed with over 380,000 miles of roads. Upstream from Spokane is the nation's most heavily roaded federal forest: the Coeur d'Alene National Forest with over 8,000 miles of logging roads. Throughout the 1980s Sen. McClure (R-ID) triumphed in allocating hundreds of millions of tax dollars for logging roads. McClure enriched timber corporations, including Boise Cascade. McClure retired from "public" office becoming a director of Boise Cascade. Senators Larry Craig

and Slade Gorton stepped in to fill his shoes. Congress continues to pay timber companies to build logging roads.

When the federal courts ruled clearcutting to be illegal in National Forests, Congress reacted in 1976 by legalizing clearcuts and directing the Forest Service to write ten year plans for each National Forest. In the 1980s the forest plans became a battleground between the biological limits of forests and the top-down, political pressure to get out the cut. To force up the cuts McClure shut down forest planning in north Idaho in 1986. McClure demanded higher cuts — and got them.

We appealed the Panhandle Plan, among many others, in 1987. The Forest Service delayed the Panhandle appeal decision for eight years, logging and building roads all the while. In 1995 the timber lobby cheered

when the Forest Service denied our appeal — just months before floods from wrecked watersheds washed millions of pounds of lead into Lake Coeur d'Alene and the Spokane River.

In 1994 Clinton officials trumpeted a new, ambitious planning process for the Columbia River's federal forests and grasslands entitled the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Plan. The goal was to produce a body of science that would protect our federal forests. The science clearly pointed the way to that goal: stay way from the streams, don't cut old-growth forest, and protect the region's remaining roadless areas as reservoirs of ecosystem integrity. The Forest Service decision? Yes, it once again ignores the science and economics, instead calling for even more logging. The government's decision on the Columbia Basin plan is a repeat of the corrupted forest plans of the 1980s.

Our federal forests have become political spoils. The sad state of affairs in our federal forests is a reflection of our federal government: corporate corruption is rampant and it shows. Damage to our democracy and our federal forests is extensive, and only grows worse. The time has come to end commercial logging on our federal forests.

***Our children will not ask why
we supported an end to
commercial logging in
federal forests — they will
ask why we waited so long.***

— Sara Folger, Forest Watch

(1) Ending Commercial Logging

Activists calling for logging ban

Plea to end public-land harvests puts Lands Council out on limb

Ken Olsen/The Spokesman-Review

Claiming they have been forced to the wall by a corrupt political system and an unresponsive federal government, the Inland Empire Public Lands Council on Wednesday called for an end to commercial logging on national forests.

"There is no technology to replace the services our national forests provide — clean water, wild fish, fresh air, abundant wildlife and the relief people need from the hectic pace of their daily lives," said Sara Folger of the Lands Council. "Future generations will not ask us why we called for an end to commercial logging on our national forests, they will ask us why we waited so long."

Other environmental groups seem to be distancing themselves from the Lands Council announcement. "It's not something our organization is going to support at this point," said Larry McLaud of the Idaho Conservation League.

Industry sources, meanwhile, say the idea is flawed and foolish. Other people outside of the fray share that skeptical assessment.

But forest historian Paul Hirt says what was ridiculous just three years ago is a looming possibility. "Most of the good timber has been harvested, so there's little left to fight over," said the Washington State University professor.

"The national forest timber program is one-fifth of the size it was 10 years ago and there's no indication it's going back up to the levels of the 1970s or 1980s."

The bottom line is that the economic stakes are lower so the possibility is much greater, Hirt said.

Environmental groups have given up after five decades of trying to persuade the Forest Service to log more sensitively, he said. And, because 20 years of public opinion polls show that voters don't care if

But it also didn't significantly change the federal timber program, others note.

"It's not a well-thought-out strategy for how do you control something you think is not in the public interest," said Robert Wolf, a retired analyst for the Congressional Research Service. "To me it's more of a common-sense fiscal issue."

It doesn't seem to matter how much timber the Forest Service sells, they lose money on 90 percent of it," Wolf said. "The Forest Service hasn't figured out how to solve the problem of selling timber in a rational way."

Environmentalists are calling for an end to logging without acknowledging that it's declining anyway, he said. National forest logging dropped from 12 billion board feet a year in 1987 to 3.7 billion board feet a year in 1996, Wolf said.

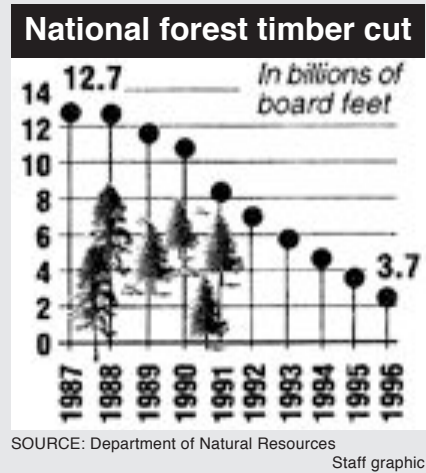
The Lands Council has a membership of about 1,000, primarily in Eastern Washington and North Idaho, and an annual budget of about \$400,000.

It made its announcement Wednesday near the gates of the lumber mill closed by Crown Pacific in 1994. Over the roar of passing automobiles, Lands Council staff said conversion of the site to an industrial park is proof the region can survive the shift to an economy without the timber industry.

Local mills rely on national forests for only 15 percent of their timber supply, and across the country the national forests supply only about 4 percent of the wood fiber appetite, said Mark Solomon,

Federal logging

The Inland Empire Public Lands Council on Wednesday called for a stop to all logging on federal lands. The following chart shows how the volume of timber harvested on federal lands has declined significantly over the last ten years.



national forest logging ends, the idea has some chance.

The Sierra Club first issued the call for the end to national forest logging after a vote of its membership two years ago. Environmentalists and historians point out that the move didn't cause any serious backlash.



executive director of the Lands Council. So ending federal timber harvest won't be fatal to the industry.

Meanwhile, Solomon said, the Forest Service ignores public calls for more environmentally wise timber harvest and Congress weakens the laws that might ensure the job is done right. The problem is that the timber industry has a stranglehold on Congress, Solomon added.

"Judging by the amount currently invested in 'renting' Idaho Sen. Larry Craig by the Potlatch Corp., there is probably a seat being kept warm for him on their board when he leaves," he said.

Potlatch and Craig staffers laughed at the statement.

"It's ludicrous to think you can shape a candidate with campaign donations," said

Mike Frandsen, a Craig spokesman. "They have the cause and effect exactly backwards."

The problem is that the timber industry has a stranglehold on Congress.

– Mark Solomon

The timber industry donates money to Sen. Craig's campaigns, Frandsen said, because they like his longtime, "deeply held beliefs."

Potlatch Corp. spokesman Mike Sullivan also dismissed the notion. Members of the board are chosen for their business acumen, he emphasized.

Beyond the accusations, however, the industry finds several problems with

eliminating national forest harvest. Harvest is part of a "healthy, growing, productive forest," Sullivan said. "We'd argue in favor of management for those reasons."

But "we don't buy public timber any more because it's not available," Sullivan said. Instead, the company is almost totally self-sufficient.

Crown Pacific's Bob Hess says the Lands Council is underestimating the amount of timber federal lands supply to area mills. The Bonners Ferry mill, for example, has looked to national forests for as much as 30 percent of its trees, he said.

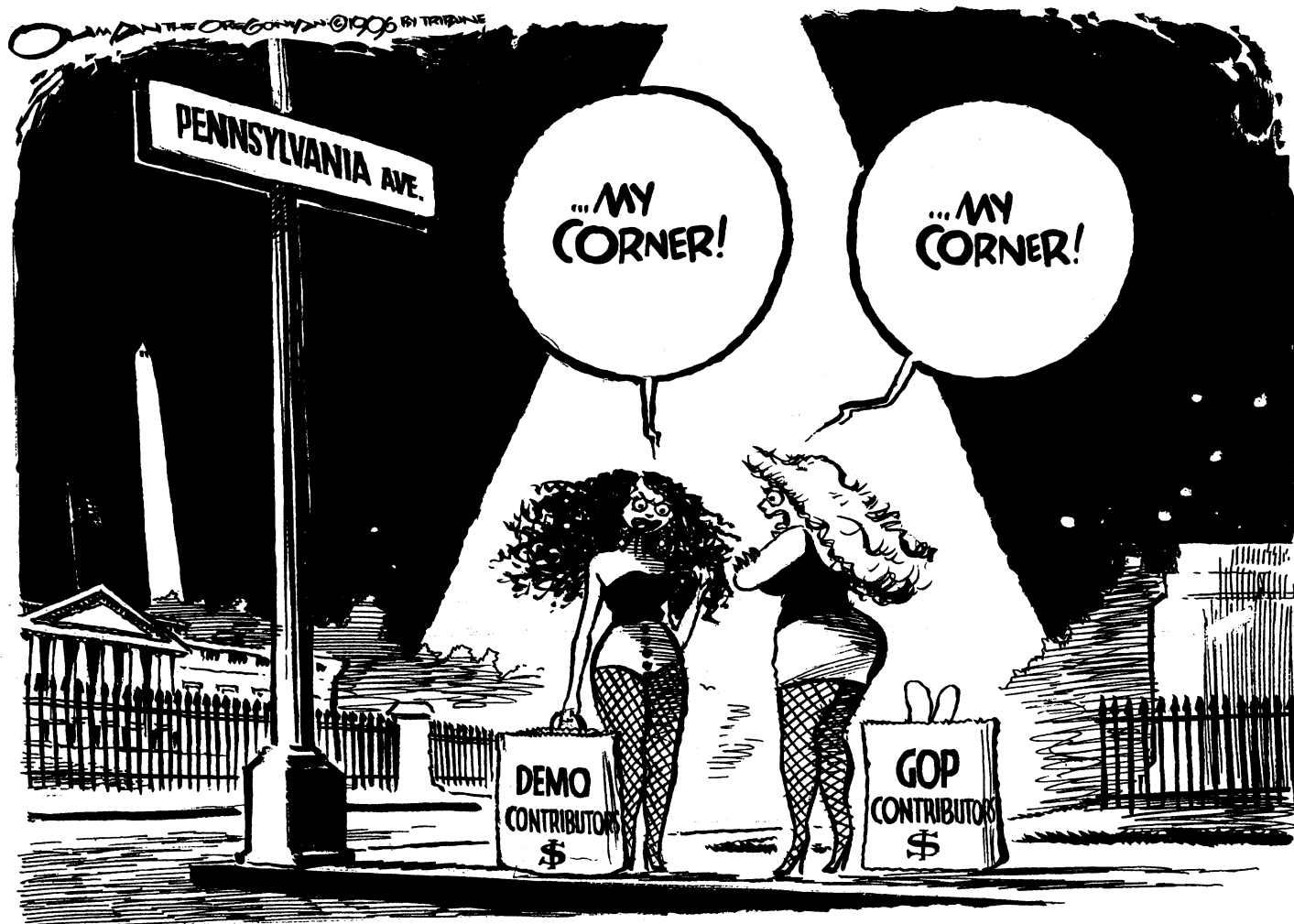
And if there's none available? "Nobody knows until you face those situations," he said.

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Ten Frequently Asked Questions On ENDING COMMERCIAL LOGGING ON FEDERAL FORESTS

- 1) *Is it realistic to expect to end commercial logging on federal forests?*
 - Yes. According to a recent survey done for the Forest Service, 58% of the American public stated that they do not want any commodity extraction on National Forest land.¹
 - 76% of the people surveyed in the Interior Columbia River Basin said that protection of watersheds, fish and wildlife habitat, recreational uses, wilderness, endangered species and ecosystems was the most important management strategy on public lands. Only 23% thought that our public lands should be managed primarily for logging, mining and grazing.²
- 2) *Won't fire risk increase if we stop logging federal forests?*
 - The Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project summary states, "More than any other human activity, logging has increased the risk and severity of fires by removing the cooling shade of trees and leaving flammable debris."³ Fire needs to be restored to this ecosystem in the form of controlled burns.
- 3) *What is going to happen to the counties and the schools when they lose the 25% share of logging revenues?*
 - As an example, in Idaho counties 70% of the shared timber receipts go to the road districts, not schools. Take the logging trucks off those roads and the cost of maintenance goes down. Increase the value of private woodlands by taking away taxpayer subsidized logging of the federal lands and the timber corporations with large holdings will finally be paying their fair share of the property taxes needed for the schools. PILT payments to counties will be unaffected.
- 4) *Does ending commercial logging mean that even damaged trees can't be salvaged?*
 - Trees — alive, damaged or dead — are all part of a forest providing nutrients to the soil, nesting perches for birds, shade for streams, and all the other miracles of a living forest. Salvage logging as we know it has been a thin excuse to strip the forest of these values in the name of corporate profits.
- 5) *Doesn't this validate what the industry has been saying all along, that your purpose was always to stop logging on National Forests?*
 - Since 1981, Council staff and volunteers have been advocates on behalf of the region's forests and communities threatened with continued domination by timber corporations. Forest Watch was founded on the belief that citizens working cooperatively with the Forest Service could bring about better land management on the National Forests. But the system is broken. As long as corporate-influenced politicians force Forest Service employees to rely on logging to keep their jobs, our forests will never be safe.
- 6) *How are we going to restore forest health?*
 - The genuine practice of forestry has many tools, including controlled fire and chainsaws. Ending commercial logging means that those tools could now be employed for the future of the forest, not for the corporate bottom line.
- 7) *Aren't a lot of timber workers and Forest Service employees going to lose their jobs?*
 - Our economic future lies in the well being of our national forests. This has already been demonstrated in Okanogan County, where 2,300 new non-timber jobs were created from 1990-94.⁴ Many businesses and workers and their families came to Okanogan County and remain there because of the landscape, scenery, and recreational opportunities on the Okanogan National Forest (OKNF).⁵ Over 40% of the OKNF is wilderness.
 - Timber jobs comprise less than 3% of the Columbia Basin's job base. We believe skills, retraining, and forest restoration work will provide better opportunities for economic stability than logging.

Continued on next page



- Timber corporations take the most valuable trees out of the public's forests and then move on, leaving timber workers and communities with broken promises and broken economies.
- 8) *Won't the cost of wood-products sky-rocket without wood from the National Forests?*
 - According to Forest Service data, less than 4% of this country's annual consumption of wood and wood fiber (chips, pulp) come from the National Forests. Capping log exports, recycling, and material substitution can offset any decrease in wood fiber supply.
- 9) *Doesn't the law state that the federal forests should be managed for multiple use?*
 - Our forests are not "managed" - they are logged. Logging is a single use that destroys fisheries, soils, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunity, and the very trees themselves.
- 10) *What are you going to do now?*
 - Redouble our efforts to save our national treasures - the National Forests.

¹ Kaset International Surveys conducted for the U. S. Forest Service, April 1994.

² Rudzitiz, G.; Watrous, C.; Johansen, H.: Public Views on Public Lands, Univ. of Idaho, 11-95, pg. 1.

³ Status of the Sierra Nevada, Vol 1., Assessment of Summaries and Management Strategies, pg. 62. Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project; Final Report to Congress.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis.

⁵ Rudzitiz, G.; Watrous, C.; Johansen, H.: Public Views on Public Lands, Univ. of Idaho, 11-95, pg. 7.

Roads, logging help flush metals downstream

By Ken Olsen staff writer

Old mines, forest roads, logging and development will make downstream pollution worse for years to come.

Some residents also argue that current and future national forest timber sales — such as Barney Rubble's Cabin, Skookum Two, Yellow Dog Downey, and Big Short — will make matters worse because they mean more logging and logging roads in the headwaters where floods begin.

The U.S. Forest Service says flooding and the spread of lead contamination depend upon many factors. Even with a moratorium on logging and logging roads, people living downstream of the Silver Valley can expect to be exposed to the metals-laden sediment for decades to come.

This logging-induced flooding begins moving lead downstream near Cataldo.

"We have combined the worst toxic mine waste from the South Fork with the worst watershed damage in a national forest — the watershed of the North Fork — in creating a truly world-class problem," says John Osborn, a Spokane physician and a founder of the Inland Empire Public Lands Council.

Concern over heavy-metal pollution moving downstream is becoming a primary focus for the Lands Council, which first organized as a logging watchdog.

The Lands Council launched a "Get the Lead Out" campaign and began looking nationally for a director.

When it comes to flooding, activists and experts agree the most significant problems are the logging roads bulldozed into the North Fork country.

Roads rechannel rain and melting snow, magnifying erosion and starting mud slides, says Al Espinosa, who spent 20 years with the Forest Service as a fisheries biologist and now does natural resources consulting.

The mud and sediment eventually wash into the North Fork, filling that river and channels downstream, he says. As the river absorbs the sediment, the channel becomes more shallow and less able to handle flood waters.

The water has to go somewhere — often over the top of the river banks, Espinosa said. So the toxic metals are washed into front yards and onto beaches.

Ken Tilton, who lives in Cataldo, says his experiences are evidence that flood damage is getting worse, even with less precipitation. The 1974 flood pushed 14 inches of water into his house. The February 1996 flood, caused by half as much rain, sent 26 inches flowing into his living room.

Tilton worries that the Barney Rubble's Cabin salvage sale is a return to the old days of clearcutting and the result will be more flooding and more heavy metals in his front yard. "I try to get the clearcuts stopped," he says.

Logging and road building, especially practices from the old days, exacerbate flooding, says Rick Patten, chief hydrologist for the Idaho Panhandle National Forest. But there are many other causes.

Much of the problem dates back to turn-of-the-century mining along the North Fork as well as the South Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River, Patten says. Roads were built right up creek bottoms to get to mines and tailings were left in easily-eroding streamside piles.

As a result, "they grossly modified the stream channels," he says. Roads also were built to handle homesteaders and people who head to the woods for recreation.

Vegetation that once kept flood plain and terraces intact has been removed by homesteaders, both historic and modern Patten says. Stopping logging won't end the flooding and pollution problems.

"You could make all of the watershed wilderness and still see problems down in Cataldo for some time to come," Patten says. The solutions include reclaiming old mine sites and "restoring the vegetation so important to the stability of stream banks, flood

plains and adjacent terraces."

But it can be difficult to find money to pay for restoration. A 1994 Forest Service proposal to eliminate 300 miles of roads in the North Fork never went anywhere because Congress wouldn't pay for it.

With that attitude, says Espinosa, "the watersheds will get worse and the pollution levels will stay the same or get worse."

• Staff writer Susan Drumheller contributed to this report.

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We have combined the worst toxic mine waste from the South Fork with the worst watershed damage in a national forest — the watershed of the North Fork — in creating a truly world-class problem.

— John Osborn, Spokane physician and a founder of the Inland Empire Public Lands Council

Floods bring million pounds of lead to lake

More than eight times the amount that washed downstream in 1994

By Susan Drumheller, Staff writer

COEUR d'ALENE—More than a million pounds of lead washed down the Coeur d'Alene River into Lake Coeur d'Alene during the Feb. 10 flooding, according to the U.S. Geological Service.

That's more than eight times the amount of lead that washed downstream during the entire year of 1994 and double the amount in 1993.

The long-awaited data inspired environmentalists to call for action and mining representatives to downplay any alarm over the figures.

"This is not a human health concern," said Holly Houston executive director of the Mining Information Office. She emphasized that the percentage of metals in the total amount of sediment washed into the lake was minimal.

I don't think people should be concerned," said Matt Fein of Hecla Mining Co. "There's no evidence that this is a threat to human health or that this is a threat to fish."

But Bob Bostwick, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's press secretary said it is well-documented that the heavy metals do pose a health risk and are "wiping out waterfowl."

More of it's coming into the lake, and more of it's going down to Spokane," he said. "What the flood did was bring the danger a little more in our laps."

Scott Brown of the Idaho Conservation League was more strident, saying, "It's time to get serious about preventing flooding and cleaning up the mining pollution. That means forest restoration, not devastation, and money on the table for metals removal."

The USGS data collected during the less-than-ideal conditions of heavy flooding, was released Wednesday during a meeting of the Coeur d'Alene Basin Interagency Group, a group of scientists, mining representatives and others involved in cleaning up the polluted area outside the Silver Valley's Superfund site.

The flood earned North Idaho the designation as a disaster area and was the third largest flood on record for the area.

The debris going down the river made official sampling techniques too dangerous to attempt in some instances, said Mike Beckwith, a USGS scientist.

We sampled as we saw fit; a bucket off the bridge," Beckwith said. Even then, "we almost got drug off the bridge."

Beckwith was hesitant to draw any conclusions from his data accept to say that the flood could transport the same amount of material that normally would take years to wash downstream.

Most of the metals that were swept downstream from contaminated river banks and bottoms were carried by massive amounts of sediment.

More lead was found to be transported than zinc, probably because lead is more likely to attach to sediment, he said.

Some scientists at the meeting suggested that most of the sediment deposited on the lake bottom within a mile of Harrison, where the Coeur d'Alene River enters the lake.

The river contributes about 40 percent of the lake's water, while the St. Joe River contributes about 60 percent.

But judging by the lake's discoloration for months after the flooding, and water quality tests by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, some of the sediment and metals were floating around the lake.

The DEQ issued a health warning this spring after lead levels exceeded federal drinking water

standards for the first time.

At one dunking water well site, lead levels still are elevated, but drinkable if the water is properly treated, said Geoff Harvey, a DEQ senior surface water analyst.

Some of the suspended metals probably washed down the Spokane River because Lake Coeur d'Alene has a relatively high turnover rate, Harvey said.

The metals shouldn't be a concern to people swimming in the lake, he said. A person would have to ingest a large amount of contaminated water to suffer the effects of lead poisoning.

The Chain Lakes area, however, continues to be highly contaminated.

The USGS found some of the highest amounts of metals between Rose Lake and Harrison.

Most of it washed past Bob and Marcella Hanson's home in the Chain Lakes area on Feb. 9. Some of it no doubt settled on their property when the flood waters receded.

The elderly couple said they weren't terribly surprised by the news. For us it's a matter of common sense, when people are out recreating on the lead plain, er, flood plain," Bob Hanson said.

Most camping and picnic areas and boat launches along the chain lakes have posted health warnings.

Marti Calabretta, the cleanup coordinator for the Silver Valley Natural Resource Trustees, called the USGS findings a "wake-up call" for continued cleanup up and down the Coeur d'Alene River system.

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More of it's coming into the lake, and more of it's going down to Spokane.

— Bob Bostwick, Coeur d'Alene Tribe

It's time to get serious about preventing flooding and cleaning up the mining pollution.

— Scott Brown, ICL

(2) Follow The Money

Timber industry shifts lobbying efforts into high gear

By Jim Lynch, Staff writer

The timber industry is buying \$1,000 plates of eggs Benedict and passing out John Denver concert tickets in its broad lobbying campaign to convince Congress to protect logging interests.

In a year when the stakes may have never been higher, timber lobbyists are harnessing all their tools of persuasion — from blunt campaign contributions to subtle gifts for congressional aides.

Congress recessed earlier this month, taking a reprieve from its debate on old trees, spotted owls, timber sale appeals and the Endangered Species Act. The timber industry is using the break to show its gratitude to its allies in Washington's delegation.

Last week, some timber company executives paid \$1,000 each to eat Eggs Benedict at the Houston Club and listen to U.S. Senate candidate Rod Chandler deliver a short speech in which he vowed to help save timber jobs.

For the breakfast chatter, the Bellevue congressman pocketed about \$20,000 from top officials at Georgia-Pacific, Champion and others in town for the Republican National Convention.

Later that evening, a flock of Chandler's aides enjoyed John Denver's outdoor concert in Maryland's Merriweather Post Pavillion — courtesy of Weyerhaeuser lobbyists.

The state's lumber giant had its own roped-off section on the concert lawn for its people and congressional staffers — with large turnouts from the offices of Chandler and Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash.

Gorton and Chandler are two of the most vocal timber industry advocates in Congress. Both agree with the industry that it's time to stimulate the industry by softening the Endangered Species Act and opening up more old growth forests to chainsaws.

Fred Benson, Weyerhaeuser vice president, called the concert perks "a low cost opportunity to say, 'Thank you. Thank you for the relationship. Thank you for returning our calls. Thank you for listening to us.'"

Benson said disbursing the \$15.50 concert tickets was not a common business practice. He noted Weyerhaeuser participated in the concert production, handing out coupons for free tree seedlings.

Benson called the event an "entertainment" expense built into the company's Washington D.C. operation. He refused to say how much Weyerhaeuser has spent this year entertaining Congress.

Congressional watchdog groups consider concert perks and other freebies as another facet of Washington D.C. lobbying they want eliminated.

"It's clearly one more way that industries use their money to gain access" to the powerful people in Congress, said Gene Karpinski, executive director of the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. "They probably didn't do it because they're big John Denver fans."

Gorton's spokeswoman Connie Correll said the senator's staff follows the Senate rules when it comes to lobbyists' treats.

A spokesman for the Senate Ethics Committee said staffers can accept gifts valued up to a total of \$250 without having to report the present, or request a waiver from the committee.

Correll said the concert events and other entertainment treats were "occasional occurrences, but I wouldn't say common."

Chandler spokesman Tony Williams said the office receives occasional perks from companies, such as tickets to the Baltimore Orioles when the Mariners are in town. "It's not a nightly thing," he

said. "It's an every now and then occurrence."

Congressional aides, who asked not to be identified, said lobbyists routinely flood the state's congressional offices with free tickets to music and sporting events.

"(Lobbyists) do it because they know they can get away with it," said one Senate staffer who termed the practice "disgusting."

When it comes to after-hours courting of the Washington delegation, two staffers said nobody does it better than Preston, Gates, Ellis, Rouvelas and Meeds, a Washington D.C. consulting firm with a client list thick with Washington firms and timber industry groups.

Among the perks the firm offers is free seats in its sky box at the Capital Centre where professional hockey, basketball, ice skating and other events are held.

"It's part of the business," explained Pamela Garvie, a managing partner with the firm. She called the after-hours entertainment of congressional staffers "a pleasant diversion."

The big diversion of the year for the Washington delegation is in the spring at the annual "Potlatch" when state business interests pass out free tickets to a deluxe seafood feast at a swank Washington D.C. hotel.

The entertainment is paid for by the timber industry and the other varied state business interests who hope to get favorable treatment from lawmakers in the Capitol.

Timber industry and other political action committees can contribute a total of \$10,000 to a candidate — \$5,000 for the primary election and the same for the general election. Each individual can contribute a total of \$2,000 over the same election cycle.

Spokesman-Review, August 27, 1992, Copyright 1992, *The Spokesman-Review*. Used with permission of *The Spokesman-Review*

Lobbyists are harnessing all their tools of persuasion — from blunt campaign contributions to subtle gifts for congressional aides.

Cozy industry relationship corrupts FS, report claims

By Scott Sonner, Associated Press

WASHINGTON—The Forest Service is a corrupt agency that mismanages national forests and “in general sleeps with” the timber industry, a liberal public interest group asserted today.

“For years the service has been one of the most mismanaged, poorly led, politically manipulated and corrupt agencies in the federal government,” said a report commissioned by the Center for Public Integrity.

The 81-page report criticized the Clinton administration for failing to effectively reform the Agriculture Department agency. And it contended that the congressional legislative agenda in regard to forests is “substantially set by timber industry interests.”

The report saved the strongest rebuke for the Forest Service itself, “an agency that is at war with itself and nature — one that mistreats and muzzles its own employees, routinely breaks the law, places its own budget over its mission to care for the land and in general sleeps with the industry.”

Most of the accusations have been leveled at congressional hearings and in news reports in recent years.

Administration officials disputed the report’s conclusions but said changes were already underway at the agency, where Forest Service biologist Jack Ward Thomas replaced Dale Robertson as chief earlier this year.

“The Forest Service doesn’t show favoritism to any organization or business. We treat everybody equally and fairly,” USDA spokesman Tom Amontree said.

Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy is “well aware of the problems and challenges facing the Forest Service and the need for new leadership. That is why we have a new chief,” Amontree added.

The center said that one of the few positive steps taken by the agency was to name Thomas chief.

The Washington-based group examines ethics-related issues in government from a liberal perspective. It is financed by foundations, corporations, labor unions and individuals.

The report, “Sleeping With the Industry: The U.S. Forest Service and Timber Interests,” was written by free-lance journalist Steven T. Taylor with help from a half-dozen center researchers.

The study cited the influence of millions of dollars of political contributions from the timber industry. But, it contended, even more important is the “cozy relationship” between timber industry officials and the Forest Service managers who oversee logging programs.

“In speaking with people, I was struck by the Forest Service’s lack of credibility,” said Taylor, an adjunct professor of journalism at American University and winner of the Washington Press Club Foundation Award.

“It was a little surprising to me to find so many Forest Service employees speak both on and off the record about how in many ways they’ve been intimidated and often times oppressed with their careers put on notice for raising issues that might threaten the timber industry,” he said in an interview.

Excessive logging of national forests, such as harvests that have threatened the northern spotted owl in the Pacific Northwest, is primarily the result of a budget process that rewards high harvest levels, the report said.

“It all boils down to timber targets — to getting out the cut,” the report

said.

Allegations of mismanagement by the Forest Service included:

- Abridging free speech of its employees and hitting them with career-ending reprisals for questioning timber policies.
- Allowing reforestation contractors to hire and mistreat illegal aliens.
- Allowing salvage logging, or “loophole logging,” that is not subject to normal environmental safeguards.
- Exaggerating potential timber regrowth to inflate logging levels allowed under laws requiring sustainable harvests.
- Continuing logging programs in national forests where the cost of logging exceeds the revenue returned to the federal government.

“The driving forces behind all of these conditions are the timber industry’s thirst for short-term profits and the inherent flaws in the Forest Service’s budget process,” the report said.

— *Missoulian* April 8, 1994

For years the service has been one of the most mismanaged, poorly led, politically manipulated and corrupt agencies in the federal government.

— Report by Center for Public Integrity

Timber dollars at work in Congress

WASHINGTON—Timber industry contributions to Montana lawmakers and other members of Congress may be perpetuating mismanagement and corruption at the U.S. Forest Service, according to one public interest group.

A report, released by the Center for Public Integrity Thursday, said the millions of dollars in contributions is fueling reluctance to reform the agency.

Sen. Max Baucus, a Democrat who serves on the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee ranked ninth in the report’s list of top Senate recipients of timber PAC money. He accepted \$42,757 in 1987-94. Republican Sen. Conrad Burns, who serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee, got \$30,100 in that time. Democrat Rep. Pat Williams, who serves on the House Agriculture and the Natural Resources committees took in \$22,500 in 1991-94.

— States News Service, *Missoulian* April 4, 1994

(3) Taxpayers Lose

\$1 Billion in the red

U.S. Forest Service posts huge loss, group reports

Scott Sonner, Associated Press

WASHINGTON—Conservationists said Wednesday the Forest Service cost federal taxpayers nearly \$1 billion last year, primarily in the form of government logging subsidies paid to timber companies, states and counties with national forests.

The agency lost \$614 million on its timber operations and \$474 million on its recreation programs for the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, 1993, the Wilderness Society said in its "Shareholder's Report on National Forests."

The group said its examination of Forest Service receipts and expenditures finds "a stubborn commitment to commodity production at the expense of forest stewardship."

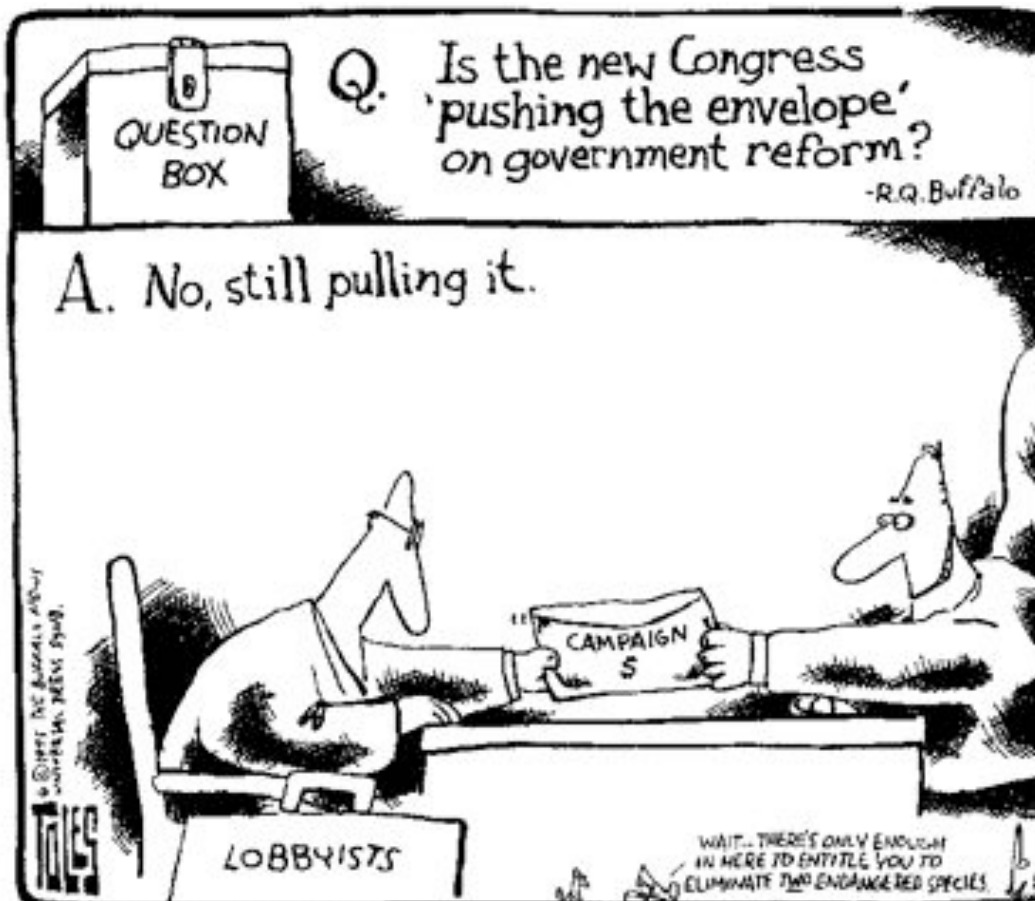
"They are going to put themselves out of business and squander our resources in the process," the society vice president, Mark Shaffer, said at a news conference Wednesday.

A Forest Service spokesman said the agency had not received a copy of the report and had no immediate comment.

The Wilderness Society said 12 percent, about \$305 million, of the agency's 1993 budget was spent on protecting natural resources, while 57 percent, more than \$1.4 billion, "was earmarked for resource extraction."

Since 1976, recreational use of national forests has increased 44 percent and winter sports use has increased 137 percent, the report said.

"Americans want healthy forests more than they want a short-term emphasis on cutting trees, feeding cattle and extracting minerals," said the society president, Jon Roush.



In addition to an overall loss of about \$957 million in fiscal 1993, the report said logging, mining and livestock grazing is causing irreversible damage to forest resources.

Since 1976, the year Congress passed the National Forest Management Act, the number of large trees on national forests has declined, watershed conditions have worsened and the number of threatened and endangered species has increased, said Jeff Olson, the group's chief economist.

"The Forest Service has failed to meet its basic charge — that of preserving natural capital," Olson said.

In other words, Shaffer said, "not only is there a negative cash flow, but an erosion of the capital — the ability to earn a profit in the future if you will."

— Post Register, October 13, 1994

Environmentalists say federal logging costs taxpayers nearly \$400 million

By Scott Sonner, Associated Press

WASHINGTON—Logging of national forests cost federal taxpayers \$398 million more than the timber sales returned to the U.S. Treasury in 1995, losses hidden by the government's accounting system, conservationists said Wednesday.

"While timber companies racked up record earnings in 1995, taxpayers had their pockets picked," said Carolyn Alkire, an economist with The Wilderness Society.

The Forest Service reported earlier that its commercial logging operations turned a \$59 million profit for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 1995.

But the society's annual audit of the U.S. timber program says the agency numbers are skewed because they ignore huge costs such as road construction and special payments to counties with national forests.

Ninety-five of the 109 national forests failed to return as much money as the logging cost, said the nonprofit environmental group.

The biggest losers were in the Pacific Northwest, where national forests in Oregon and Washington lost nearly \$177 million that year, the audit said.

Forest Service spokesman Alan Polk defended the agency's accounting system. He said it has been approved by Congress' General Accounting Office.

"We haven't figured the costs in the same way they figure them. It is two different accounting systems," Polk said Wednesday.

Forest Service officials intend to meet with leaders of the environmental group "to discuss and explain the processes we use for accounting," Polk said. "We want to make sure we have an open line of communication with them and all groups."

Doug Crandall, a professional forester and timber specialist for the industry's American Forest & Paper Association, said the Forest Service system is the only analysis of timber sales available using generally accepted accounting principles.

"When The Wilderness Society wants to be more credible and do a more traditional analysis, then their numbers will be valuable. Right now they are not," Crandall said Wednesday.

The Wilderness Society review said the Forest Service failed to account for \$200 million in road construction costs and \$257 million in payments to counties.

Federal law requires 25 percent of timber receipts be returned to the counties with the forests for use in financing schools and roads. The Forest Service does not consider that to be a cost of the logging operations, describing the transfer of money as "a redistribution of income that occurs outside the agency's normal financial activity."

The society said the service lowballs its road construction costs because it considers the road base to be a nondepreciable asset. All other road-related costs — surfaces, culverts and bridges — are depreciated over periods from 10 to 50 years and recorded as annual expenses.

The society estimated the unreported road costs based on a depreciation assuming the useful life of the road base to be 20 years.

Crandall said private land owners and most states use the same calculations as the Forest Service when amortizing road costs.

And the road base is considered an asset, he said.

"If you look at property values, it is absolutely unarguable that the property has more value with access than without it," Crandall said.

Payments to counties involve "a political decision to take money that was made from the timbersale program and redistribute it to the

counties," he said.

"That is a political decision after the fact, not a part of the sale program itself," Crandall said.

The Forest Service earlier reported logging under the agency's forest-stewardship program intended to improve forest health, such as thinning of dense stands, cost \$32 million more than returned.

Personal-use programs, for firewood collection and Christmas trees, cost \$35 million.

The Forest Service said its commodity sales program — large-scale commercial logging — posted a \$126 million profit on its own. That put the overall timber program \$59 million in the black once losses were accounted for, the agency said.

The Wilderness Society tally found that the commodity program lost \$195 million, with overall losses of \$398 million.

In addition to the Pacific Northwest, other big regional losers were the Pacific Southwest, with a loss of \$58 million, and Alaska, with losses of \$37 million, the group said.

The only national forest in the Northwest to show a profit based on the group's estimates was the Malheur in Oregon, with actual net revenue of \$15 million on 131 million board feet of timber logged — the biggest harvest in the region. The next-largest harvest in the Northwest region that year was on the Deschutes National Forest in Oregon, with a net loss of \$5.8 million on 129 million board feet of timber, the society said.

The group said the Northwest region sold 131 million board feet above cost and 745 million board feet below cost in fiscal 1995.

— Lewiston Tribune, February 6, 1997

Wilderness Society charges timber companies saw record profits while 'picking pockets'.

(4) "Logging without Laws"

President should veto 'logging without laws' bill

By John Osborn, Special to Roundtable

Congress spent the "First 100 Days" systematically gutting our environmental laws.

One outrageous example is what I call the "logging without laws" amendment both the House and Senate have passed in similar form. The amendment would suspend our environmental protection laws for public forests and require federal agencies to sell enormous numbers of trees.

If President Clinton signs this into law, tremendous harm will befall forests here in the Columbia River region.

Congress boldly cuts programs for children, the elderly and other vulnerable people in our communities. But cut corporate welfare on our public lands? Not when corporate lobbyists are writing our laws.

The amendment will cost taxpayers more than \$200 million, the Congressional Research Service estimates.

Boise Cascade, Plum Creek, Potlatch and other companies are funding an adroit propaganda campaign that is peddling a "forest health" emergency. Having overcut their industrial forests — leaving what Champion International's regional planning manager Jim Runyan called a "hellacious hole or gap" — companies are reaching for our national forests. Companies advertise they are "striving to protect the environment"; meanwhile, they are scheming to cut down our national forests.

The companies are trying to manipulate naturally occurring forest events into a "national emergency" to justify massive logging programs — and this isn't the first time. Paul Hirt, a Washington State University history professor, describes in "A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests since World War II" how the U.S. Forest Service vigorously attacked perceived threats to "timber abundance" during the early 1950s.

Responding to a naturally occurring spruce bark beetle outbreak in the West, the Forest Service secured from Congress millions in road-building money, launched massive salvage logging operations and undertook a large-scale pesticide spraying program that included DDT mixed with fuel oil. Forest Service researchers would later discredit logging for controlling spruce bark beetle as "both ineffective and destructive."

Yes, specific areas of our forests have fire, insect and disease outbreaks that are integral to functioning forest ecosystems. But according to the Forest Service's own figures, annual tree mortality amounts to less than 1 percent of total stock. The data do not support the radical treatments now being steamrolled by corporations and Congress.

Salvage logging — an option that may be appropriate if done with care — would be used aggressively across landscapes. As with burned patients, burned forests require a higher level of care, not less. Salvage logging has as its goal cutting trees for someone's financial gain, not the ecological recovery of forests.

Careful use of the saw and prescribed fire are options for managing forests. But the logging without laws amendment does not promote forest health, it accelerates forest death. This amendment directs the federal government — in addition to the existing timber program — to "salvage log" the maximum amount (in the Senate version) or 6.2 billion board feet (in the House version) on our public forests over the next 18 months.

To put this in perspective, 6.2 billion board feet is enough trees to fill 1.2 million logging trucks. Much of the massive cutting would occur

in already-damaged forests of Eastern Washington, Idaho, and Western Montana.

No, this is not a thoughtful, scientific approach to restoring forests. This is corporate plunder and meat-axe forestry at work inside Congress.

Just look at how Congress defines "salvage." Congress includes any trees "susceptible to fire or insect attack" and all "associated trees." If this becomes law, we can expect the Forest Service to label all related future sales "salvage." In 1992, when the Forest Service exempted salvage timber sales from the citizen appeals process, virtually every sale offered was a "salvage" timber sale. Surprise. Virtually every tree in our national forests, unless protected in a wilderness area, would be vulnerable if the logging without laws amendment is enacted.

To open the national forests to the corporations, both House and Senate versions of the legislation suspend such laws as the National Forest Management Act, the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act — the only real impediments to unfettered corporate cutting in our nation forests. These laws allow citizen participation and environmental protection.

Congress took the reckless and irresponsible step of endorsing lawlessness in the forests. Now the real emergency in our forests is logging without laws and stripping the power that makes real public participation in public land decisions possible.

This is not the first time a president has faced ill-conceived attacks on the national forests: President Grover Cleveland vetoed Congress's Sundry Civil Appropriations bill in 1897 to save national forests.

When President Clinton convened the 1993 forest summit in the Pacific Northwest, he said his administration would obey the

Congress boldly cuts programs for children, the elderly and other vulnerable people in our communities. But cut corporate welfare on public lands? Not when corporate lobbyists are writing our laws.

Gore calls salvage logging 'biggest mistake'

By Scott Sonner, Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Clinton's signing of a controversial salvage logging law that waived protections for fish and wildlife was the "biggest mistake" of the administration's four years, Vice President Al Gore said.

Gore singled out the miscue involving logging on national forests in an interview with David Frost scheduled to air tonight on the Public Broadcasting Service.

"I think the biggest mistake that we have made involved an issue known in the United States as the 'salvage rider,'" Gore said.

"It's an issue related to timber and it was a mistake that we thought was a very small mistake at the time, but a court decision made it much more significant," he said.

Gore, who wrote a book on the global environment, said the achievements of which he is most proud over the last years "include turning around America's environmental policy by giving advice to President Clinton and helping him with a new policy direction which I think is much more in our interest."

But he acknowledged the logging provision backed by members of Congress who want to speed harvests in national forests was damaging forest ecosystems.

"Luckily, that law will run out on December 31st of this year and we have a better chance containing the damage and undoing

the worst of it," Gore said in the interview taped on Monday for "... talking with David Frost."

The so-called "salvage rider" waived the normal environmental protections, including the Endangered Species Act, in order to expedite logging of dead and dying trees in forests where increased fuel loads posed fire threats.

It also ordered the Forest Service to allow logging of thousands of acres of old-growth forests in Oregon and Washington that had been sold to private bidders in 1989 and 1990, but never formally released for cutting due to emerging concerns about threatened birds.

Clinton vetoed the proposal the first time it made it to his desk, but signed it in July 1995 when it was tied to a comprehensive spending bill that included emergency relief for victims of the Oklahoma City bombing and California earthquakes.

Environmentalists warned that the language in the rider created a loophole that ordered the logging of healthy, green stands of trees in addition to the dead and dying ones.

Clinton administration officials maintained initially that the environmental waivers were optional and that the government could not be forced to release the old-growth for logging. However, federal judges later ruled the logging was required under the bill.

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Order didn't end salvage logging, critics say

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Contrary to public perception, the Clinton administration continues to award new logging contracts in Northwest forests with centuries-old trees, exempt from environmental laws and insulated from citizen appeals, environmentalists said yesterday.

The old-growth logging continues despite the administration's announcement last week that it was prematurely ending advertisements for bids for salvage logging under a controversial salvage-timber rider, the critics said.

"The directive is a cynical ploy to fool the public into thinking the problem of the rider is solved while allowing the clear-cutting of thousands of acres of old trees," said Brian Vincent, conservation director for the Northwest Ecosystem Alliance in Bellingham.

The directive issued Friday by Agriculture Undersecretary James Lyons applied only to the logging of dead and dying timber that was scheduled to continue under salvage operations through the end of the year under the rider.

Untouched by the new order are hundreds of millions of board feet still intended to be offered for sale in the remaining two weeks of the year in national forests covered by President Clinton's Northwest forest plan, the environmentalists said.

Logging also was continuing in other places nationally where the salvage timber already had been advertised but not yet sold. Lyons has said he didn't want to give the impression there was a rush to beat the Dec. 31 deadline. Effective Jan. 1, logging operations are subject to the normal administrative appeals and environmental safeguards.

The Forest Service this week intends to auction 28 million board feet in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in southwestern Washington and, in Oregon, 51 million board feet in the Mount Hood National Forest, 20 million board feet in the Siskiyou National Forest and 15 million board feet in the Umpqua National Forest, the environmentalists said.

— *Seattle Times*, December 18, 1996

Continued from page 14

law when it comes to our national forests. He also committed himself to help us find a way to protect and restore our forests and help our communities through this difficult and historic transition. And in a recent Earth Day address, he vowed to veto laws that would unravel the last 25 years of environmental legislation.

It is time for Clinton honor these pledges. Clinton should take the reasonable and prudent course: veto "logging without laws."

— John Osborn, a Spokane physician, is coordinator of the Inland Empire Public Lands Council.

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Timber salvage law called corporate giveaway

Forest Service broadly interprets a provision shielded from challenges

By Scott Sonner, Associated Press

WASHINGTON—The idea was to cull national forests of dead trees and fire-prone underbrush, but thousands of prized healthy timbers also are being targeted for commercial cutting under a controversial logging law suspending most environmental safeguards.

The so-called salvage logging provision, enacted last year, is a financial bonanza for the timber industry and is causing severe ecological damage to public forests from coast to coast, critics say.

The law opens thousands of acres of federally owned forests that otherwise would have been off limits to chain saws.

Backers say the law will ease fire threats across hundreds of thousands of acres, produce thousands of jobs for loggers and mill workers and bring tens of millions of dollars to the U.S. Treasury.

But the cost of the new law will exceed revenue from timber sales, assert opponents trying to get Congress to repeal the law.

"The tab could run to \$430 million in corporate giveaways for timber companies," according a recent report of the Wilderness Society.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated last year timber sales would generate \$84 million to the federal treasury. But the Congressional Research Service, an arm of the Library of Congress, said last week the ultimate impact would be a loss of more than \$50 million.

In several places, conservationists say, the logging poses serious threats to wildlife, including threatened fish in Oregon, grizzly bears in Alaska, goshawks in Colorado and the endangered Indiana bat in Kentucky.

"It's logging without laws," says Carl Ross, co-director of Save America's Forests, a coalition of grass-roots conservation groups. One logging site the Forest Service is pursuing in Idaho was opposed by three different federal agencies — the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

NMFS biologists warned in September that the "Thunderbolt" salvage sale planned for 3,300 acres near the Salmon River in Idaho would jeopardize survival of Snake River chinook salmon.

"It's what we call chain-saw justice," said Ron Mitchell of the Idaho Sporting Congress in Boise.

The logging provision was in a larger budget bill that President Clinton reluctantly signed last summer. The measure, about which the administration now acknowledges concern, suspends the Endangered Species Act and all other environmental laws that normally apply to logging on national forests.

The new law also more broadly defines the kinds of trees that qualify as salvage and insulates the cutting from legal challenges. Senior administration officials now say they didn't anticipate the broad sweep of the exemptions.

Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas insists the agency is operating within the confines of the environmental requirements in place before Clinton signed the salvage exemption last summer.

Nevertheless, the U.S. Forest Service is interpreting the law broadly.

In a growing number of cases, "salvage" timber sales include thousands of healthy trees whose harvesting previously had been blocked by citizen appeals or held up because of concerns within the Forest Service that fish, wildlife and nearby streams would be adversely affected.

Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., who helped write the law, said he has no problem with the Forest Service offering live trees for sale as part of the salvage packages. He said he's confident the agency won't cause any serious environmental damage.

The agency had planned to sell about 3.7 billion board feet of timber on national forests this year, including 1.4 billion board feet of so-called salvage. But under the new law it now intends to increase the total about 20 percent — to 4.5 billion including 2.1 billion board feet salvage.

Grass-roots groups, along with The Wilderness Society and the Western Ancient Forest Campaign, began last fall documenting dozens of sales across thousands of acres they said would be found illegal if not for the salvage law's suspension of existing regulations.

Clinton said he wants to change the law but his administration has been reluctant to back a full repeal, in part because of pressure from Republicans and some Democrats in the West to bolster overall harvests on national forests to keep wood flowing to local saw mills.

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Marked for death

Trees logged in salvage sale may not have been dying after all

By Scott Sonner of The Associated Press

WASHINGTON—As controversy raged last fall over the salvage logging of dead and dying trees in national forests, a bug expert in Idaho warned her bosses at the Forest Service about an emerging problem:

The trees aren't dying as fast as they should.

Contrary to earlier assessments of damage from fire and bark beetle attacks, test plots of a few hundred trees — left behind during a salvage operation on the Payette National Forest — were still alive two years after the fire and more than a year after 10,000 acres of neighboring stands had been logged.

"Currently, our biggest errors are associated with trees living which have been expected to die from our selection guidelines," Forest Service entomologist Julie Weatherby wrote to her supervisor.

"Hopefully some of these green grand firs and Douglas firs ... will die over time," she wrote in the Sept. 15 memo obtained by The Associated Press.

Usually it's trees that ARE dying that cause concern.

But in this case, a politically charged fight over the logging of the diseased and bug-infested trees had changed the rules of the game.

Congress spent more than a year gathering testimony from scientists, environmentalists and timber-industry experts about the wisdom and necessity of salvage logging.

Backers said it was necessary to ease fire risks and recover dying timber before it lost its market value. Critics said it was a scam

Continued on next page



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Continued from page 16

intended to harvest healthy, green trees under the guise of salvage operations free from the usual environmental restraints.

In what Vice President Al Gore later called the biggest mistake of the Clinton administration's first term, President Clinton signed the so-called "salvage timber rider" into law in 1995. The measure waived the usual fish and wildlife protections to expedite harvests through the end of 1996 in an effort to clear out fuel loads that contribute to catastrophic fires.

Environmentalists dubbed it "logging without out laws" and accused the Forest Service of cutting tens of thousands of acres of healthy trees. Clinton later said he'd been tricked and didn't really support the program.

Environmentalists across the country went to court last year to try to block the salvage timber sales, but had little success due to the broad definition of what constitutes dead or dying trees.

At the Payette National Forest last July, two lawyers for the activist group Idaho Sporting Congress were arrested and their film temporarily confiscated when they took pictures to support claims they made in a lawsuit that sought to halt salvage timber sales near the Salmon River.

Meanwhile, University of Idaho professor Arthur Partridge was testifying on Capitol Hill that the overall forest health crisis was a hoax.

There has been virtually no change in tree mortality nationwide over the past 30 years, said Partridge, a professor of forest disease and insect problems.

He said he had examined trees marked for salvage sales in the French Creek area of the Payette National Forest and found them to be green and healthy.

Insects are constantly attacking trees, but that only causes death under certain conditions, Partridge said.

"Insects and disease are all parts of a functional ecosystem, just as they are in the human population," he wrote in an op-ed piece published by the Idaho Statesman on Aug. 12, 1996.

"Using the presence of these phenomena as an excuse to log is akin to using the presence of athlete's foot as an excuse to execute the athlete."

The Forest Service insisted the Payette trees at issue were dead.

In a July 23, 1996, news release, the agency said that "people may see what appears to be green, healthy trees removed from the forest.

"These trees are actually dead, the result of bark beetle attacks," the agency said.

Ron Hamilton, resource and ecology branch chief for the Payette, said 1994 wild fires had damaged the tree roots, "leaving them stressed and highly vulnerable to beetle attacks."

Weatherby was quoted in the news release saying that the green foliage hadn't faded yet because the bug attacks were too recent.

"The chlorophyll needs time to leave the needles so the green color won't fade until late this summer or early next summer," she said.

Now agency officials concede the environmentalists may have had a point. The trees seem to be doing better than the Forest Service thought they would.

Forest Service officials headed back into the woods the week of Aug. 18 to begin this year's assessment of the test plots, part of a five-year study.

– *Lewiston Tribune*, August 30, 1997

(5) The "Cut" Drives Forest Planning

'Phantom forests'

Forest Service admits errors on Kootenai; chief orders change

By Sherry Devlin of the Missoulian

After an eight-year delay, the U.S. Forest Service has concurred with an environmental appeal and agreed that the Kootenai National Forest used "phantom trees" to justify timber-cutting targets in its forest management plan.

The Cabinet Resource Group and Montana Wilderness Association appealed the Kootenai forest plan in 1987, then filed a lawsuit this September objecting to the eight-year wait.

The decision, just signed by Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas, concurs with the environmentalists' claim that the forest overestimated sawtimber volumes by counting "phantom forests" that existed on paper but not on the ground.

Thomas ordered the Kootenai to set its yearly timber sale program level at 150 million board feet and to amend the allowable sale quantity (called the ASQ) listed in the forest management plan.

Determine the amount of the overestimation, the chief said, then revise the ASQ.

The environmentalists claimed victory Thursday.

"The Forest Service has finally accepted what we've been saying for years," said Mike Grayson of the Wilderness Association. "The Kootenai inflated its timber promises and its budget by claiming it has more big trees than are really there."

"By slashing the maximum timber cut, the Washington office sent a clear message that this type of creative accounting will not be tolerated," he said.

While conceding that the forest is on orders to amend its management plan, Kootenai planner Joan Dickerson said there is no

"phantom tree" issue. "We overestimated some sawtimber acres," she said, "but not necessarily the inventory."

She said the Kootenai has a year to either make the needed amendments to the ASQ or to issue a notice of intent to review the entire plan.

The forest plan set a ceiling of 227 million board feet for yearly timber cutting. But internal agency memorandums since have shown that the forest can actually produce no more than 130 million to 150 million board feet a year.

Thomas's decision on the appeal also rapped the Kootenai for including an "escape clause" in the forest plan that allows it to exempt timber sales from environmental standards.

The exemptions must instead be treated as site-specific forest plan amendments, the chief said.

In addition, the forest was ordered to amend or revise the plan to incorporate a recent grizzly bear habitat-protection agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and all guidelines of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee.

"Hopefully, this decision signals the end of an era of abuse on the Kootenai National Forest," said Bill Martin of the Cabinet Resource Group. "We will continue our efforts to cooperate with the forest and other members of this community to improve forest management."

"We prefer cooperative rather than confrontational solutions to these issues," he said.

Dickerson said she, too, "wants to work with these groups in going forward with revision of our forest plan."

But she said the decision will not affect day-to-day management of the forest. The grizzly bear provisos already are in effect. And the "escape clause" is rarely used, she said.

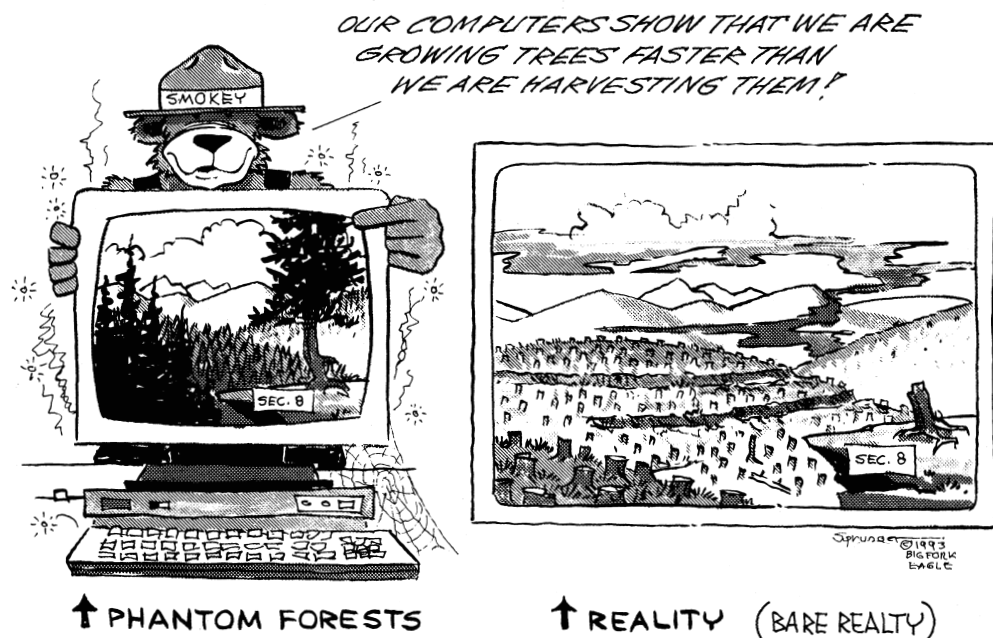
"We don't make exceptions on a whim," Dickerson said.

"We have recognized that there were things in the plan that needed to be clarified," she said. "Management considerations have changed since the plan was done."

The chief did dismiss some of the environmentalists contentions, most notably a claim that the plan's preference for clearcutting was illegal, and that the plan allows damage to watersheds and habitat for native trout.

Martin said the decision also ignores the groups' claim that the forest plan fails to ensure long-term viability of sensitive species and old-growth-dependent species.

— Missoulian, December 1, 1995



Columbia basin project: disconnection between reality, action

By Tim Coleman, Special to Roundtable

For the past three years, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have spent \$35 million developing a long-term plan to manage national forests and grasslands in the Columbia River basin.

Encompassing one-fourth of all national forest lands in the United States, the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project will reshape the way your federal public lands are managed for decades to come. In its current form, the project plan will not fix the environmental problems it claims to address, but rather it proposes to continue management that brought ecosystems in the basin to their current state of decline.

In late May, the project released a draft environmental impact statement, selecting alternative No. 4. What's most striking about this preferred alternative is its proposed land management objectives (or lack thereof) which propose to double logging over current levels, maintain existing amounts of cattle grazing and do little about correcting the source of environmental problems that exist on the public forests and grasslands today.

A panel of scientists, the Science Integration Team, produced a document for the project. A separate panel of federal agency resource specialists authored the draft environmental impact statement, purportedly based on the science panel's findings. However, this is where the real story begins. The draft environmental impact statement recommendations are disconnected from the findings of the Science Integration Team.

The science team found that large-diameter trees (old growth) have declined in the basin to levels well below what previously had been estimated. This startling fact does not, however, result in a new protective standard. Rather, there is an absence of standards that protect old-growth trees — a step back from current protections under which no trees larger than 21 inches may be cut unless their distribution exceeds historic levels for a watershed.

Project scientists note that the watershed with the highest ecological integrity also contains the fewest roads.

Similarly, scientists found that roadless and/or wilderness regions are critically important to sustaining native fish and water resources. The science evaluation found that roadless wilderness constitutes 47 percent of the existence value held by society for public lands in the basin; recreation provides 41 percent; logging, 11 percent.

But the draft environmental impact statement turns a blind eye to these findings by allowing roads to be constructed and logging to occur in pristine areas as long as management proceeds "more cautiously."

Under the proposed action, roads do not even have to be counted as long as they are closed by gate or earthen barrier. This means that once a "cautiously" built road is gated, another can be built nearby to replace it. And this also means that wilderness values will cease to exist. Roads, whether open or gated, are accessible to off-road

vehicles and still have an impact on wildlife, water quality and fisheries. They must, therefore, be counted.

The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project looked at only four types of employment in its analysis: timber, ranching, recreation and restoration. Draft environmental impact statement calculations estimate that 108,000 jobs on the East Side are associated with recreation on federal public lands, compared with 3,105 in logging and milling.

The Science Integration Team found that 80 percent of eastern Oregon and Washington rangelands have "low ecological integrity."

In addition, it acknowledges that grazing has had — and will continue to have — negative environmental impacts on aquatic ecosystems. But the draft environmental impact statement ignores these revelations, making no changes in current grazing standards or livestock numbers.

Clearly, there is a noticeable disconnect between the science findings and the draft environmental

impact statement. Shortcomings in the science findings, including such huge discrepancies as a determination of wildlife viability; lack of standards to protect soils, reduce cattle damage and stop the spread of noxious weeds further diminishes the credibility of the draft environmental impact statement alternatives.

In general, the project's findings confirm what conservationists have warned for years: The ecosystem is damaged, and management must change if these trends are to be reversed.

The disconnect between the science findings and the preferred management direction will result in further environmental degradation. At the root of this disconnect is the overt implication that Earth's ecosystems cannot maintain themselves without the intervention of chain saw and bulldozer.

The project's final environmental impact statement will not be released until sometime in 1998. Changes must be made to correct inherent deficiencies in the draft environmental impact statement. This can be done only through the issuance of a supplementary environmental impact statement, with public comment, before a credible, scientifically based final environmental impact statement and decision document are released.

To express concerns about the management of our national forests and grasslands before the Oct. 6 deadline write to: ICBEMP, 112 E. Poplar, Walla Walla 99362, or send e-mail to ICBEMP@bmi.net

• Timothy J. Coleman is executive director of the Kettle Range Conservation Group and a member of the advisory council of the Columbia River Bioregion Campaign, a coalition of 41 natural resource conservation organizations working to protect ecosystems of the Columbia River basin.

— *Spokesman-Review*, July 28, 1997, Copyright 1997, *The Spokesman-Review*. Used with permission of *The Spokesman-Review*

At the root of this disconnect is the overt implication that Earth's ecosystems cannot maintain themselves without the intervention of chain saw and bulldozer.

(6) Forest – Stealing

Forest Service accused of hampering probe Watchdog groups say agency tipped Weyerhaeuser

By Alan C. Miller, Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Forest Service obstructed an investigation into allegations that Weyerhaeuser Co. illegally harvested millions of dollars of timber from national forests in Oregon and Northern California, according to whistle-blowers and two watchdog groups.

Further, the groups contend, the Forest Service acquiesced in the harvesting and has failed to combat large-scale thefts in the nation's vast national forests.

And, they said, Forest Service officials warned Weyerhaeuser employees that they were the targets of the investigation and relayed confidential information about it.

The allegations are contained in a 24-page report produced by the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and the Government Accountability Project. The first group is an association of state and federal resource-management and environmental employees. The second is a public-interest law firm that represents government whistle-blowers.

The report is based on interviews with 12 current and former Forest Service special agents and investigators as well as whistleblower complaints.

The groups represent six former members of a now-defunct federal task force created by the Forest Service in 1991 to investigate allegations of timber theft against some companies that hold contracts with the Forest Service. The task force was dismantled last year by Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas.

Seven of the timber task force members have filed whistle-blower complaints with the federal government against the Forest Service. They assert that they were harassed and that their jobs tracking the commercial theft of wood were eliminated because their disclosures embarrassed the agency.

Weyerhaeuser denies claims

The Forest Service has rejected such claims and has insisted that curtailing timber theft remains a priority.

No charges have ever been filed against Weyerhaeuser, and the company denies the groups' allegations.

Weyerhaeuser spokesman Frank Mendizabal said: "We operate this company in a legal manner at all times. Period."

Repeated attempts to obtain a response from Forest Service management were unsuccessful.

The report describes a major investigation that was begun in 1990 and picked up by the task force in 1991. The report does not

specifically name Weyerhaeuser, but investigators say the Tacoma-based corporation was the primary target of the inquiry into about a dozen timber sales in four national forests between 1989 and 1994: the Klamath and Modoc in California and the Fremont and Winema in Oregon.

The Forest Service is responsible for ensuring that companies remove only the trees they are entitled to harvest and pay their full contracted value.

The allegations

The watchdog groups said agents, including two of the whistle-blowers, were investigating charges that Weyerhaeuser:

- Illegally cut up to 32,000 healthy trees per month in a so-called salvage sale that limited the company to clearing only dead and diseased timber.
- Defrauded the government by understating the amount of timber it had harvested.
- Exported raw logs in violation of a law that requires federal timber be processed domestically before it is sent overseas.

The report claims the Forest Service:

- Approved of the illegally cut healthy timber after investigators discovered it had been harvested in violation of the contract.
- Erroneously recalculated the formula used to determine how much money Weyerhaeuser owed the government, benefiting the company to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Although it is difficult to document the extent of timber theft, estimates have ranged from an industry-backed annual figure of \$10 million to \$100 million or more.

— *Seattle Times*, March 25, 1996

Seven of the timber task force members have filed whistle-blower complaints with the federal government against the Forest Service. They assert that they were harassed

Weyerhaeuser was the primary target of the inquiry into about a dozen timber sales in four national forests between 1989 and 1994

Ex-agent: Forest Service falsified reports

He'll testify Freedom Of Information Act responses doctored

By Scott Sonner, Associated Press

WASHINGTON—The former special agent in charge of the Forest Service's whistleblower unit says the agency regularly falsified responses to public requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

John McCormick, who told a House subcommittee of alleged illegal activity at the Forest Service last year, said the agency denied existence of some records and tried to get him to alter others to cover up alleged wrongdoing from 1989-1991.

Some of the documents related to government logging operations in violation of environmental laws.

Others concerned evidence of reprisals against workers resisting orders to break the laws, he said.

McCormick told The Associated Press he is prepared to testify about the incidents in a discrimination lawsuit filed by a former Forest Service official against the agency in Portland.

In one case, McCormick said he was instructed to rewrite a report and return it to the person who requested it as if it was the requested report, he said.

"Basically, they would try to get me to withhold information. They would claim they don't have the records in the Washington office," McCormick said in an interview.

"Hell, I put those records in the files. I can lead the Justice Department and the General Accounting Office right down to the basement there and open up their eyes," he said.

McCormick told the House Civil Service subcommittee in January 1992 he was forced into retirement that month because he pursued investigations of alleged timber theft on national forests in defiance of orders from his superiors.

The panel has scheduled another hearing on Tuesday to investigate claims that Forest Service managers are interfering in the investigation and prosecution of crimes by the agency's law enforcement arm, the subcommittee said last week.

Witnesses scheduled to testify include Charles Turner, former U.S. attorney in Portland; Mike Nitsch, a special agent on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in Washington state; and Dennis Schrader, an agent with the agency's Timber Theft Task Force in Eugene, Ore.

Investigators for the House Appropriations Committee said in a report in May that timber thefts on national forests may exceed \$100 million. They said Forest Service investigations into the cases have been hampered by the timber industry's political influence and interference from the agency's own managers.

Forest Service spokesman Denver James referred calls regarding McCormick's claims to the Agriculture Department.

"We have no evidence of falsifying FOIA requests. Anybody caught doing anything like that will be dealt with severely," said Tom Amontree, a spokesman for Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy.

Jim Lyons, assistant agriculture secretary for natural resources, personally is reviewing the allegations regarding timber theft and interference in investigations, Amontree said.

"The Clinton administration will not tolerate law enforcement interference. If policies need to be changed, they will," he said.

McCormick, who now runs a private consulting service in Townsend, Ga., once was the head of the vice squad for the county sheriff's office in Las Vegas. He later worked as a law officer and criminal investigator for the Forest Service in Oregon and Alaska.

McCormick said he was ordered transferred to Forest Service headquarters in Washington, D.C., in November 1989 as punishment for his refusal to toe the agency line.

He told the subcommittee last year the agency failed to keep the names of whistleblowers confidential. He said Forest Service managers accused of wrongdoing often were assigned to look into the whistleblowers' complaints.

During his more than 2 years at the whistleblower unit, McCormick said he was involved with approximately 50 requests under the Freedom of Information Act. He said "more often than not" the agency's responses were untruthful.

McCormick said he could not discuss details of the discrimination suit in Oregon because of a federal judge's gag order.

Michael Ballard, a former employee of the Deschutes National Forest in central Oregon, filed the \$3.5 million suit in May accusing the Forest Service and seven agency officials of racketeering and racial discrimination. He claims his superiors looked the other way when trucks loaded with timber were illegally removed from national forests.

Dean Webb, one of the Portland attorneys representing Ballard, said U.S. District Judge Malcolm Marsh has scheduled a Nov. 3 hearing to consider the government's request to dismiss the lawsuit. But he said neither he nor Ballard could discuss the case before then.

McCormick said if he is called as a witness in the case his testimony would speak generally to the agency's handling of FOIA requests. A source familiar with the case, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Ballard has been unsuccessful with FOIA requests aimed at obtaining documents from the agency.

"I'm going to testify that they tried to force me to falsify government records," McCormick said in the interview.

"It involved requests for FOIAs, reports that should have been released in their entirety. They tried to get me to break them up, disguise the case report, pick out certain exhibits and rewrite the summary of it. They wanted me to send it to a law firm and tell them that was the report," he said.

McCormick said that one instance in 1991 involved a Forest Service claim against a public utility for damages in a forest fire along the California-Nevada border.

He said lawyers for the Agriculture Department, overseeing the Forest Service, "told me clearly what they wanted me to do. I would not do it, so they withheld what they wanted to."

Most of McCormick's run-ins were with officials at Forest Service headquarters, he said.

"I was going by the book. They basically were withholding things that they would have been better off releasing," he said.

McCormick said he filed FOIA requests of his own beginning in July 1989 to try to gather evidence that he was the victim of agency reprisals intended to push him off timber theft probes.

"They denied the documents existed. But when I got to the office and was working as a FOIA person, I was going through the records in a computer and discovered the records did exist," he said.

McCormick said he lodged a complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, but that the office said the complaint was moot because he had found the documents.

Paul Ellis, a spokesman for the special counsel, said, "We are not in a position to talk about individual cases because of Privacy Act restrictions."

— *Spokesman-Review*, October 4, 1993, Copyright 1993, *The Spokesman-Review*. Used with permission of *The Spokesman-Review*

Secret log plan uncovered

Timber firm, Forest Service kept old-growth surveys from public

By Scott Sonner, Associated Press

WASHINGTON—Combing through 11,000 pages of court documents, environmentalists trying to stop logging of centuries-old trees in the Snake River basin have found old-growth surveys they had been told did not exist.

They also found a letter from Boise Cascade Corp., one of the biggest timber companies in the region, that they think explains why the U.S. Forest Service denied their Freedom of Information Act request for the surveys two years ago.

"We respectfully request that documents and information concerning this timber sale not be released to anybody under the Freedom of Information Act or any other laws — that appear to require release," Robert W. Crawford, Boise Cascade's regional logging manager, said in the April 24, 1995, letter to the Forest Service.

"I've never seen anything like it in my life," said Tom Woodbury, an attorney for the Idaho Sporting Congress, one of the plaintiffs in a U.S. District Court lawsuit challenging the logging.

"It smacks of criminal conspiracy between Boise Cascade and the Forest Service to defraud the public," he said.

Officials for Boise Cascade have denied any wrongdoing. They say the request to keep their logging plan secret was prompted by concerns that eco-terrorists would use the information to locate and sabotage their contractors' equipment.

"At the time, there had been a lot of activity, a lot of damage done to equipment by activists. We had some real concerns," company spokesman Doug Bartels said last week from headquarters in Boise.

Forest Service officials said Boise Cascade's letter had no bearing on their response to the Freedom of Information Act requests for data on the logging planned in the Payette National Forest on the east side of Hells Canyon near the Idaho-Oregon border.

"Anybody can send a letter, but it has no influence on the releasing of FOIA information," said Miera Crawford, Forest Service spokeswoman for the Payette forest and no relation to Robert Crawford at Boise Cascade.

Nevertheless, in responding to Freedom of Information Act requests in the months after Boise Cascade's letter, the Forest Service twice denied it had the old-growth surveys that conservationists were seeking.

"There are no records available," Forest Service regional boss Dale Bosworth of Ogden, Utah, wrote on June 20, 1995.

Several "old-growth data sheets" were found among material the agency turned over to U.S. District Judge Mikel Williams in Boise. The papers document the number of trees larger than 21 inches in circumference as well as areas with multiple canopy

levels, maximum crown closures and other characteristics of old growth. Some of the trees are more than three centuries old.

"From what we've seen, this stand appears to be entirely old growth from end to end," one Forest Service surveyor wrote on a data sheet on July 23, 1992, for part of a timber sale on Idaho's Cuddy Mountain.

None of the old-growth data now emerging was included in the Forest Service's formal environmental impact statement for the proposed logging and road-building over an area larger than a square mile.

"We caught them lying. They had these documents all along," said Ron Mitchell, executive director of the Idaho Sporting Congress based in Boise.

A copy of the Boise Cascade letter obtained by The Associated Press shows Robert Crawford made the unusual request regarding Freedom of Information Act documents to David Mathis, the Forest Service's contracting officer for the Payette National Forest in McCall, Idaho.

"This sale has had considerable controversy and it is very possible that problems may arise causing delays in our operations and/or damage to our contractors' equipment which could make it difficult to fulfill our contractual obligations," Crawford wrote in April 1995.

"If a particular situation arises where the Forest Service believes this information must be released, we request prior notice so that we may take appropriate action," he wrote.

Miera Crawford said it isn't clear why the old-growth data sheets weren't released in response to earlier requests.

"It could have been that they didn't know about them. I can only think it was an oversight," she said.

Boise Cascade's request was the only one of its kind, to her knowledge, "but I can understand where they were coming from," she said.

"About 100 miles up the road, there was environmental terrorism going on. There were some arrests made."

Boise Cascade paid \$9 million in August 1994 for rights to the Grade-Dukes timber sale, which includes about 18 million board feet of timber and about 18 miles of new logging roads. It is the largest timber sale currently planned in the Payette forest northwest of Boise.

The Idaho Sporting Congress filed suit to challenge the logging plans in December, citing earlier warnings by biologists at the Forest Service and Idaho Fish and Game Department that the timber harvests would harm two species of owls, the pileated woodpecker, northern goshawk and redband trout.

Woodbury, of the Idaho Sporting Congress, brought the Boise Cascade letter up in court during a hearing on the lawsuit last month. Williams could make a decision this month on whether to block the logging.

Paper Trail

What they said: "There are no records available."

—Forest Service letter, June 1995.

What they knew: "From what we've seen, this stand appears to be entirely old growth from end to end."

—Forest Service data sheet on July 1992.

Group says agency fails to stop illegal logging

Violations met with light penalties as Forest Service 'looks the other way'

By Ken Olsen, Staff writer

Logging contractors were caught illegally harvesting trees near salvage sales on the Kootenai National Forest nine different times between 1992 and 1994, the Inland Empire Public Lands Council charged Monday.

Although it happened several times the Forest Service failed to levy substantial penalties that would have stopped the practice, said Jeff Juel of the Lands Council's Forest Watch Program.

About 20,000 board feet of timber was illegally cut, the Lands Council said.

Forest Service documents show "an unusual number of contract infractions." They involve at least one logging contractor taking trees that should have been left for wildlife or trees outside of timber sale boundaries.

In addition, the logging contractor for W-I Forest Products' Bonners Ferry operation was caught skidding logs down stream banks, documents show. In at least one case, the contractor dragged logs up the middle of a stream to get them to a road, Juel said.

The Lands Council also raises questions about 5.2 miles of road reconstruction that was supposed to cost \$19,000. W-I was paid \$275,000 for the project, Juel said.

"All of the promises and environmental safeguards don't mean much when loggers arrive and do the wrong thing and the Forest Service looks the other way," Juel said.

But the Three Rivers District of the Kootenai Forest, which supplies North Idaho mills with lots of timber, has changed district

rangers since the alleged incidents took place. Most of the Kootenai is in Montana, but the forest includes a slice of North Idaho.

"We did penalize W-I several times for taking trees outside of the (timber sale) boundary," said Mike Balboni, who became district ranger a year ago. The Lands Council asked the Forest Service for the documents and "I've got to believe if we documented it, we took action," he added.

But because he is new, Balboni said he couldn't discuss any other specific charges without reviewing the files and talking to his staff.

W-I's assets were sold to Crown Pacific in late 1993, and the company was dissolved. Crown Pacific is investigating the allegations, said Fletcher Chamberlin, a company spokesman.

However, most of the incidents occurred before Crown Pacific bought W-I, he said.

Meanwhile, although Lands Council members acknowledge that there wasn't a huge amount of timber illegally cut — roughly enough to build two homes — they say it's a sign much more is amiss.

"There were probably many, many times they were not caught," Juel said. For example, in early 1993 the Forest Service received a report of two loaded logging trucks coming from one of the salvage sales at 2:30 a.m.

Two large salvage timber sales are scheduled to be sold on the Kootenai soon. So "this is a perfect example of what will happen under the salvage law," said Liz Sedler, an environmental activist who owns property near the timber sales.

— November 14, 1995, *Spokesman-Review*, Copyright 1995, *The Spokesman-Review*. Used with permission of *The Spokesman-Review*

Continued from page 22

Marc Haws, civil chief for the U.S. attorney's office in Boise and the attorney representing the Forest Service in the case, said last week he has not seen the letter.

It came up in court "as sort of a last-minute deal that never was part of the pleadings," he said.

"I would strongly contend there was no animosity, hostility or recalcitrance on the part of the Forest Service in its response," Haws said.

The Forest Service regional office in Ogden, where the Freedom of Information Act request was sent, "did not have the data," he said.

"We are talking about thousands and thousands of documents," Haws said. "If a particular office doesn't have the information and doesn't believe the information exists, that is not a formal denial under FOIA. It wouldn't be a violation of the law."

At Boise Cascade, Bartels said last week the company's request for protection against certain Freedom of Information Act disclosures "certainly was not out of line."

"What it boils down to is we prefer not to publicize our logging schedule simply for the security of the equipment," he said.

Furthermore, Bartels said, Boise Cascade lawyer William R. VanHole had written to Idaho Sporting Congress attorney D.

Bernard Zaleha on April 21, 1995 — three days before the letter to the Forest Service — notifying the group, "as a courtesy, ... that Boise Cascade expects to move forward in the near future" with the logging contract.

"We told them we would be proceeding and if they had any questions to contact us," Bartels said. "They never did. Then they come back 20 months later and file litigation after the road work was done."

Erik Ryberg of the Ecology Center in McCall filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the Forest Service on May 12, 1995, seeking maps and surveys of old growth throughout the western half of the Payette National Forest.

After the agency rejected the request in June, Ryberg wrote then-Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas on June 26, 1995, saying the responses he had received "simply defy credulity."

Agency officials claim "they do not map the stands they visit, they do not map the stands that meet old-growth requirements and they do not write down the results of their findings anywhere," Ryberg said.

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(7) Pacific Northwest In Transition

New Forest Service chief stresses restoration

Dombeck wants to end perceptions of infighting, he tells workers

By Scott Sonner, Associated Press

WASHINGTON — New Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck told his workers Monday to make protection and restoration of national forests their top priority and disregard those who want to gut U.S. environmental laws.

Dombeck, former acting director of the Bureau of Land Management, also said he has several changes planned to strengthen the office of the chief and help end perceptions of “bureaucratic infighting” and “conflicting agendas” in U.S. logging policy.

“We must maintain healthy, diverse and productive ecosystems,” Dombeck said in a speech to about 500 Forest Service workers in an auditorium at the Agriculture Department.

“We cannot meet the needs of the people if we do not first conserve and restore the health of the land. So our first priority is to protect and restore the health of the land. Failing this, nothing else we do really matters,” said the former fisheries biologist and guide from northern Wisconsin.

“My expectation is that everything we do — every environmental impact statement we write, every timber sale, recreation plan, mining plan or allotment management plan we approve — will not compromise the health of the land,” he said in setting the tone for his tenure as the 14th chief of the 91-year-old Forest Service.

Dombeck, 48, was picked last month to succeed retiring Chief Jack Ward Thomas. On Monday, he acknowledged some of the criticisms of perceived contradictions in Clinton administration and Forest Service logging policies.

He said he intends to add a new senior staff member to serve as a liaison between the Forest Service, White House and other federal agencies, and create a new slot of Forest chief of staff to help articulate service policies.

“Few believe that we are operating as smoothly as we should,” Dombeck said.

“Effective conservation and the strength and credibility of the Forest Service are weakened by perceptions of bureaucratic infighting, end runs, conflicting agendas, and insufficient attention to basic business areas such as financial controls and communications.”

Although laid back in his style, he indicated he’ll be ready to do battle with Republican leaders in Congress who have pressed in recent years for a weakening of various environmental laws.

“This country is blessed with having elected people of foresight and wisdom who just a few decades ago gave us a legacy that included the most progressive and effective network of conservation laws in the world. And they have worked,” Dombeck said.

“We are a better, more secure and stronger nation because of laws such as the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act and the National Forest Management Act.

“These laws represent the conservation values of mainstream America. Do not be disturbed by the debate surrounding their execution. Don’t worry about it. This is background noise to a complex society and a healthy, properly functioning democracy.”

Dombeck emphasized “no Forest Service program has dominance over another.

“Timber is not more important than wildlife and fisheries. Nor is wildlife and fisheries more important than timber or recreation or cultural resources and so on,” he said.

“It wasn’t too many decades ago that managing natural resources was a lot simpler. . . Because there were fewer people and demands on the land, we could achieve many of our goals with less conflict. Today we are faced with competing demands, new pressures on the land and greater challenges than ever before.”

Dombeck said his chief of staff will be Francis Pandolfi, a former CEO of Times Mirror Magazines, vice president of CBS and a board member of several conservation groups including Trout Unlimited and the National Audubon Society.

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Loggers on the move — from NW

Letters foretold decline of NW timber industry

By Ken Olsen, Staff writer

After spending a long summer searching through searing attics and forgotten storage rooms, Nancy Langston unearthed an antique paper trail predicting the current demise of Inland Northwest sawmills.

U.S. Forest Service correspondence predating World War II said mills would begin closing in eastern Oregon by the late 1980s, said Langston, now a University of Wisconsin professor.

Langston dug through the forgotten archives for her doctoral research at the University of Washington in 1992 and later recounted her treasure hunt in the book, "Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares."

She learned the Forest Service knew, 60 years in advance, that at the rate timber companies and the agency preferred to log, the trees would run out and timber companies would have to move on by the late 1980s.

The letters Langston discovered were one of the early hints that timber would not rule the region's economy forever but would rise, fall and, much of it, depart. That departure is well under way.

"I just looked at 5.5 million acres in eastern Oregon and Washington," Langston said. "But I expect it was the same in North Idaho and Western Montana."

Similar archives weren't available for national forests in northeastern Washington, North Idaho and Western Montana. Still, historians and economists say they aren't surprised Northwest timber companies are moving to the southeastern United States or to South America or are converting timberland to lakefront ranchettes instead of clearcuts.

"It's always been a migratory industry," said Washington State University historian Paul Hirt. "We're never going to see the timber industry leave the Northwest, but this decline was inevitable, was predicted. We can't go back to the golden age, and if everyone recognizes that, we can go forward instead of backward."

For timber-dependent communities in Washington, Idaho and Montana, this means recognizing the economic shift to retirement and service industries, which have overtaken the region's economy in recent years.

Going south

The future of the timber industry is thousands of miles away. Last winter, timber giant Weyerhaeuser put 600,000 acres and its sawmills in southern Oregon up for sale. A few months later, it bought 661,200 acres and four sawmills in Louisiana and Mississippi.

This spring, Plum Creek Timber Co., second only to Weyerhaeuser in its private land holdings, advertised the sale of between 80,000 and 100,000 acres of Montana land it deemed more valuable for selling as recreational property than timber. The company almost simultaneously announced it wanted to buy more productive land — in the southeastern United States and on the West Coast.

The Plum Creek acreage in Western Montana likely will be converted to lakefront ranchettes and other subdivisions if conservation groups are unable to buy it for wildlife habitat. If stockbrokers are right, more vacation homes will sprout on timber land. One stockbroker bought a newspaper advertisement saying as much as 200,000 acres of Plum Creek's land is "located in recreational areas or near expanding population centers."

Other timber companies are moving to Canada, Russia, Argentina and even Tierra Del Fuego — at the southern tip of South America.

The migration also is part of a long-term trend of timber companies going south, where trees grow faster, labor costs are lower, and most timber is on private land — unfettered by many environmental regulations.

Not only is this shift expected to continue, it has been occurring longer than most people realize, in part because tax laws and federal agricultural programs encouraged Southerners to switch from cotton crops to trees.

Southern dominance nothing new

By some measures, the Inland Northwest hasn't been a significant timber player, compared to the rest of the nation, for decades. The Southeast produces nearly five times as much pine and other softwood when compared to the Inland Northwest.

In the last decade, lumber production in the Western United States has fallen nearly 3 billion board feet from 1986 production of 10.2 billion board feet. The Southeast has more than taken up that slack, now pumping out nearly 15 billion board feet a year.

Tennessee alone lists 50,000 wood products workers, in part because of its furniture trade. Washington state has only 35,000 in lumber and wood products and has little of Tennessee's furniture manufacturing.

The Canadian question

As the South climbed to timber dominance, Canada invaded from the north, capturing a third of the U.S. lumber market. The threat is significant enough to prompt congressional hearings, threats of trade wars, and plenty of rhetoric. A new trade deal signed this spring will levy tariffs on the lumber Canada sends southward, once those exports exceed 14.7 billion board feet.

Tariffs or not, Canada will want to send lumber south as long as a strong dollar beckons. Canada shipped 16.1 billion board feet of lumber to the U.S. last year, enough to build more than 1 million homes.

The Western Wood Products Association expects Canada to send 17 billion board feet this year, three times the Inland Northwest's production.

Keeping what remains

Some argue that keeping what's left of the timber industry depends upon opening much more of the national forests.

"The key is timber availability," said Charles Keegan, director of forest industry research at the University of Montana. Since industry land and private land are running out of logs, "where the industry goes depends upon what the national forest does."

Stan Smith, a small logger who helps run his family's timber land near Plummer, Idaho, also believes more national forest logging is vital to keeping any timber industry here. But he wants to see a lighter touch on the land.

"They are going to have to open the federal forests and manage them on a true, sustained-yield basis," Smith said. Companies "can't go on with the same version of clear cutting."

continued on next page

State's population expected to grow 51% by year 2020

Increase will be fourth-fastest in nation

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pacific Northwest will continue its population boom over the next three decades, with Washington state ranking fourth nationally in terms of both growth rate and net increase, the U.S. Census Bureau said Wednesday.

Washington state, currently the 15th-most-populated state with 5.3 million people, is forecast to have a net gain of 2.7 million by the year 2020 — a 51.5 percent increase from 1993.

Only California, expected to add 16 million people, Texas and Florida will experience larger net increases in population than Washington during that period, the Census Bureau projected. Only Nevada, Texas and New Mexico will have higher percentage increases.

Idaho will gain more than 500,000 population by 2020. Idaho's population also is expected to get older and less white during the next 27 years, mirroring the national trend.

The population projection put Idaho's 1993 count at 1,097,000. Oregon, which is currently the 29th-most-populated state with 3 million people, will experience a net gain of 1.3 million people over the 30 years for a percentage increase of 44.1 percent — ninth-highest in the country.

The populations of both Oregon and Washington in 2020 will be slightly less white than they are now.

In Washington, the percentage of whites will drop from 89.9 percent of the population to 84.8 percent. In Oregon, the drop will be from 93.7 percent to 89.1 percent.

Significant Asian population growth is expected in the region, especially in Washington, where the Asian share of the population is expected to more than double — from 5.3 percent in 1993 to 10.8 percent in 2020.

The proportion of persons in Washington describing themselves as Hispanic will grow from 5 percent to 8.9 percent.

— *Spokesman-Review*, April 21, 1994, Copyright 1994, *The Spokesman-Review*. Used with permission of *The Spokesman-Review*

continued from page 25

Plentiful trees are only one part of the question, said Haynes, the Forest Service economist.

"The lumber industry wants to tell you the problem is supply," he said. "The other part of the problem is prices never recovered from the recession of 1990-91. It's competitive pressure compounded by low (lumber) prices."

Restrictive regulation not the culprit

Repealing all of the environmental regulations and making every acre of the national forests available for logging won't keep the industry from migrating. It might temporarily delay the inevitable, historians argue.

The bottom line is there's no way to return to the high harvest heydays that stretched from the 1960s to 1980s. Most of the remaining prime timber is more difficult to reach and more expensive to buy, said Hirt, the WSU historian.

Public attitude will restrict how much of the last old-growth timber from public land in Idaho, Montana and Eastern Washington is turned into plywood and dimension lumber.

"You have to go farther and farther to get more trees, and you have to clear-cut larger and larger blocks to get the same volume," Hirt said.

"You have to go to steeper and more unstable country and that's making more and more people angry."

There also is increasing opposition to publicly subsidized timber which comprises the bulk of what comes from the region's national forests, he said.

Personal costs, long-term solutions

Number crunchers, historians and industry experts share one common worry: what happens to the every-day people who still look to the timber industry for their income?

"For people in some rural communities, this is a depression, as bad as the depression of the 1930s," historian Hirt said. Rather than discard timber workers as expendable, "we owe them some consideration, compassion, retraining.

"But we don't owe them something we can't deliver — harvest levels of the 1960s through the 1980s," Hirt said.

Simply put, its time to deal with the change, economists and historians argue.

If the Inland Northwest refuses to understand the problems that led to the demise of the timber industry in Western Washington and Oregon, the same lesson will be forced upon it, Haynes said.

"The Forest Service and the industry haven't studied the spotted owl wars, so they are doomed to repeat them," he said. "There's a shift in public values, where timber supply isn't the primary focus of the national forests.

"People are going to refuse to recognize the change in social values," Haynes predicted. Sadly, "the only way the Forest Service and the communities are going to get the message is to cut it off."

Staff writer Eric Torbenson contributed this report.
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A changing landscape of jobs

Economists say Pacific Northwest's economy can be fruitful without natural resources base

By Sherry Devlin of the Missoulian

The natural landscape of the Pacific Northwest can create more new jobs and income by providing the amenities that make the region an attractive place to live, work and do business, an unprecedented coalition of economists said Wednesday.

In a consensus report on "Economic Well-Being and Environmental Protection in the Pacific Northwest," 34 economists said the region's natural landscape no longer creates jobs and incomes primarily as warehouses from which loggers, miners, farmers and fishermen extract raw materials.

"A shift is taking place in the economic role that natural resources play," said the report, authored in part by University of Montana economists Thomas Power, Richard Barrett and John Duffield.

At a morning news briefing, Power said the report was six months in the making and is unprecedented in its region-wide endorsement. Power said the conventional wisdom had it all wrong. The economies of Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon are booming, despite drastic changes in the aerospace and natural-resource industries. Between 1988 and 1994, the number of jobs in the region increased by 940,000 or 18 percent, total personal real income of the region's households increased by \$42 billion per year or 24 percent, and total real earnings of the region's workers increased by \$28 billion a year or 24 percent.

Economic growth in the Northwest is two to three times the national rate, Power said, primarily because of quality-of-life factors.

"Everyone assumed that because lumber mills, metals mines, farms and ranches were struggling, then the economy also must be in difficulty," Power said. "The cause and the cure also seemed obvious to many. Environmental regulation, they believed, had run amok."

The diagnosis was inaccurate, according to Power. The Pacific Northwest is booming. Regional economies have diversified, creating many new sources of high-paying jobs. The region no longer relies on extractive industries.

Environmental protections have not been the source of widespread job losses or economic disruption, said Ron Trosper, a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, now on the Northern Arizona University forestry faculty.

And any effort to reverse environmental protections comes at considerable risk, Trosper said. The highest value use of natural is often protection and enhancement; future jobs depend more on environmental protection than on degradation, he warned.

That does not mean, of course, that everyone in the Pacific Northwest has a bright future, the economists said in their report. Workers in the region with fewer skills or less education will see their earnings shrink - and will have trouble finding new jobs if theirs are lost.

"The workers being harmed by the transformation of the economy are those whose skills and work experience are not easily transferred to the new

expanding sectors of the economy," the report said. "But the pain of the lost jobs should not obscure the new jobs that are being created."

Communities must help unskilled workers gain the capability and flexibility to take advantage of the new jobs, the economists said. "The winners in our increasingly risky economy need to assist those disadvantaged by the changes to successfully negotiate the transition."

Seth Diamond, a spokesman for the Intermountain Forest Industry Association in Missoula, provided the counterpoint.

"One flaw in this report is that it masks the impact that reductions in resource development have had on small towns," Diamond said. "Do we want to have homogenous suburbia or do we want to have towns like Eureka and other small resource-based communities?"

Diamond said the report did include one positive twist for his industry.

"Past resource management has left an attractive landscape that can support both resource industries and other service sectors of the economy," he said. "We can have both and do have both, and that should be maintained and preserved."

It is not a choice between resource industries and the environment, Diamond said. "There is no either-or. Resource-based industry is part of a modern economy."

THE ECONOMISTS

Economists endorsing the statement on the importance of environmental protection to economic well-being in the Pacific Northwest included:

From Montana: Richard Barrett, University of Montana; John Duffield, UM; David Jackson, UM; Alan McQuillan, UM; Thomas Power, UM; Ronald Trosper, member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Northern Arizona University School of Forestry.

From California: Timothy Duane, University of California-Berkeley; William Stewart, Pacific Institute.

From Idaho: Gerald Draayer, Boise State University; Joel Hamilton, University of Idaho; Don Reading, consultant; Larry Reynolds, Boise State; Gundars Rudzitis, UI; Charles Skoro, Boise State.

From Oregon: Emery Castle, Oregon State University; C. Russell Beaton, Willamette University; Zena Cook, Portland State; Eban Goodstein, Lewis and Clark College; Thomas Hibbard, Willamette; Raymond Mikesell, University of Oregon; Ernie Niemi ECONorthwest; Art O'Sullivan, OSU; Ed Whitelaw, UO.

From Washington: Gardner Brown, University of Washington; Paul Barkley, Washington State University; James Barron, WSU; Walter Butcher, WSU; Daniel Hagen, Western Washington University; Steven Henson, WWU; David Holland, WSU; Tom Thomas, UW; Norman Whittlesey, WSU.

• Also: Paul Courant, University of Michigan; and Michael Martin, University of Minnesota.

- Missoulian, January 4, 1996

(8) "This land is your land . . ."

American public doesn't support timber industry

By Larry Swisher

WASHINGTON — The timber industry has joined the ranks of American industries whose federal benefits have become endangered or even extinct because they no longer enjoy public support.

Timber country congressmen of both parties conceded this historic change last week when they gave in to demands that the government stop subsidizing the construction of logging roads in national forests. To avoid the elimination of next year's approximately \$90 million budget for timber roads by the House of Representatives, leading Northwest members sprung a last-minute compromise that cuts the amount in half.

Three Oregon members favored the more drastic "green hawk" amendment to the fiscal 1998 spending bill for the Interior Department Forest Service and related agencies. Reps. Elizabeth Furse, Earl Blumenauer and Darlene Hooley said the timber road program was a fiscal and environmental disaster.

All three support a halt to road construction in roadless forests and more funding for repairing and obliterating existing roads, which have been a major cause of landslides, erosion and stream sedimentation.

Despite the split in the delegation — with Reps. Bob Smith, Republican, and Peter DeFazio, Democrat, supporting continued

funding — all but Smith agreed that the Forest Service needs to spend less on building new roads and more on maintaining and fixing existing ones.

Furse summed up the "green scissors" view, saying, "The taxpayer pays three times for these roads." First, the government pays for building them, then for maintaining them and, when flood and environmental damage occur, fixing them and the environmental problems.

DeFazio, who fought to save the road program, nevertheless agreed. "What we really need is to have a debate where we make a more rational forest policy in this country and a more rational roads policy at the Forest Service," he said.

Smith, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, is holding hearings on national forests issues with an eye to introducing legislation later this year. But Smith is a leading booster of industry, successfully using a parliamentary rule last week to kill a change in the interior spending bill that would have restricted a type of road subsidy only to small companies. His move served the interests of about 30 large corporations.

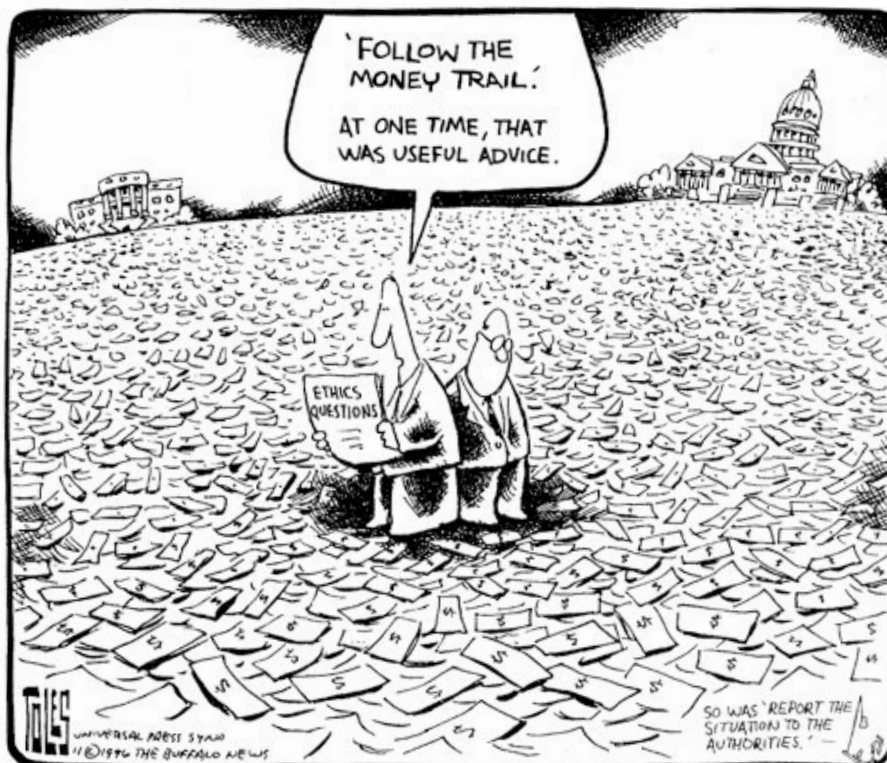
There was a time, especially after World War II when the nation was rapidly building homes, that government help for the Northwest timber industry made sense to many people. But unsustainable logging and road building on national forests showed itself to be highly destructive of native fish, wildlife, water quality and ecosystems.

The momentum now is on the side of balancing the budget and eliminating "corporate welfare," while support for environmental protection remains strong. The most extreme example, the tobacco industry, has become public enemy No. 1 for politicians everywhere. It hasn't merely lost its federal subsidies, but has been forced to agree to ever stricter regulation and to pay billions to government.

The status of the timber industry has not sunk as low as that of the tobacco industry, but it has followed a similar pattern of industry resistance to facing reality followed by a sharp downward slide of government support. Plainly, its ballroom days are over.

Larry Swisher, a columnist based in Washington, D.C., writes for Pacific Northwest newspapers.

— Register Guard, Eugene, OR, July 16, 1997



Forest survey: 3 in 4 value wilderness

Forest Service finds 73 percent of poll concerned about Clearwater's wilderness

By Bill Loftus of the Tribune

A survey shows that some 73 percent of those who focus on the Clearwater National Forest want more attention paid to its wilderness values.

The survey was commissioned by the U.S. Forest Service to plot a communications plan for the public that values the 1.8-million-acre national forest.

"I guess I'd have to say there weren't a lot of surprises in it for me," said Win Green, Clearwater forest supervisor at Orofino.

The finding that wilderness and fish and wildlife are important to Clearwater fans is something he's heard repeatedly, Green added.

The survey will help the Clearwater staff implement the long range forest plan by reaching those who have an interest in various issues, Green said.

The survey of 222 Inland Northwest residents from Spokane to Grangeville and Missoula to Lewiston was conducted by A & A Research of Kalispell, Mont. The Clearwater's percentage on the wilderness question is the highest among the 13 national forests in the agency's Northern Region, said E.B. Eiselein of A & A Research.

That's not to say those responding were calling for more wilderness, he added.

"We included that in the survey because we basically wanted to find out a little bit more about whether people valued wilderness, the concept," he said.

The survey's goal was to tell the Forest Service who was using the Clearwater and what they use it for. The survey will help the agency communicate with those users, Eiselein said.

Had the survey been focused on what to do rather than who to talk to, the wilderness question would have been phrased much differently.

With its audience's attraction for wilderness, the Clearwater did rank at the top of the Northern Region, which covers forests from northern Idaho east across Montana to the Dakotas.

Ironically, the neighboring Nez Perce National Forest in Idaho ranked near the bottom on the wilderness question. Some 51 percent of Nez Perce users called for more attention to wilderness. Lowest on the list was the Flathead National Forest of Montana.

Eiselein said the calls to Spokane, Coeur d'Alene and Missoula residents had a bearing on the popularity of wilderness in the Clearwater survey.

The Clearwater stood apart from the other national forests on another question, too. Asked if the Clearwater should allow more logging even if it meant entering roadless areas, 16 percent agreed.

On the neighboring Nez Perce 42 percent of those agreed with the question, Eiselein said. The urban factor played a role in the disparity there too, Eiselein said.

The Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics seized the survey of the Clearwater and Idaho Panhandle National Forests to advance its agenda. The surveys show the public is worried that the agency is logging too much timber from the Clearwater because 31 percent said that was their main concern, the group said.

"Of those people who are actual users of the forest (loggers, campers, hunters, anglers, hikers, etc.) only 25 percent said that more logging should occur," the group added. In a prepared statement, Brian Hunt, AFSEE's lead organizer at Eugene, Ore., said the survey shows the Forest Service is out of touch with national forest users.

— Lewiston Tribune, January 27, 1993

Forest Service to log 105 roadless areas

Boise

The Forest Service has plans to develop more than 250,000 acres of roadless Idaho forest into the next century, under more than 100 logging projects, the Idaho Conservation League reports.

The 105 projects will add 262 miles of roads to a national forest road network already estimated at up to 50,000 miles in Idaho alone. The report takes in from 1997 to 2001.

"The Forest Service talks about ecosystem management and forest health but it continues to log and to build roads in the remaining healthy, intact forests," said John McCarthy, league conservation director.

Key roadless lands on the docket include the Deadwood River on the Boise National Forest, French Creek on the Payette, Cove Mallard on the Nez Perce, and Mallard Larkins on the Clearwater.

"Second growth and secondary harvest from existing roads should be providing logs for Idaho forest products, but past

logging practices failed to lead to sustainable harvest," McCarthy said.

The report is down from 142 projects over seven years, 1994 to 2000, in the last league study.

"I was surprised so many projects are being continued after all the attention to roadless lands in the last five years," said Vern Buchta, a league volunteer who compiled the report from Forest Service documents.

Half of the Idaho roadless tracts have high ecological integrity, compared with only 21 percent of the nonwilderness, national forest lands, according to the government's Interior Columbia Ecosystem Management Study. A July report by the Wilderness Society found 1 million acres of Idaho roadless land were developed in the last decade, leaving 8.4 million acres.

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Poll: Most Americans don't want forests used for commercial ventures

By Scott Sonner of the Associated Press

WASHINGTON—Most Americans want national forests used for recreation and wildlife protection rather than lumber production or other commercial ventures, according to a recent poll conducted for the U.S. Forest Service.

Results of the survey are being considered as the agency works to reorganize and streamline some services, Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas says. The poll was conducted last year by a private, Florida-based consulting firm.

Environmentalists contend the Forest Service has tried to keep results of the random sample under wraps because of the support for cutbacks in logging, mining and livestock grazing on federal lands.

For example:

- 61 percent of the respondents agree threatened and endangered species in U.S. public forests and grasslands should be protected even if that results in a negative economic impact for some.
- 65 percent support increased regulation of commercial use of public forests. Some 38 percent said they “strongly agreed” with that statement. About 22 percent disagreed and 13 percent had no opinion.
- 79 percent agree the long-term health of public forests should not be compromised by short-term need for natural resources.
- 36 percent agree natural resources in public forests should be made available to produce consumer goods, while 47 percent disagree.

The poll, conducted last year by a private, Florida-based consulting firm, has a margin of error of 5 percentage points.

The Forest Service used the survey to develop the internal reorganization plan proposed for congressional approval. The agency also published a so-called “reinvention document” last year that includes some of the poll’s general findings but not all the details.

“The authors of the report made selective use of the findings of the poll,” said Phil Pittman of the advocacy group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility in an interview this week.

Jeff DeBonis, the group’s executive director and a former Forest Service worker, said the omission of actual survey data from the reinvention report “demonstrates the Forest Service’s well-known penchant for burying information that contradicts the emphasis of current programs.

“The real meaning of the national opinion poll is that the public wants long-term environmental health and protection — not short-term commodity needs — to be the primary purposes of national forest management,” DeBonis said.

Thomas denies his agency was trying to keep the results secret, noting they were published and made available to the public last summer, separate from the reinvention report.

“I hardly see how you can publish the poll in June in its entirety and then be accused of covering it up.

“There’s been absolutely no cover-up,” Thomas said in an interview.

“If we are going to be consumer sensitive, we need to understand their views,” he said of the survey.

Still, Thomas said, “It is very difficult to understand what the public was thinking about when they responded to these questions.”

Chris West, vice president of the timber industry’s Northwest Forestry Association in Portland, Ore., also questioned the respondents’ understanding of the national forest system.

“It’s obvious many people don’t understand the difference between national forests and national parks,” West said.

“In parts of the country where there are national forests, the public has a different understanding about the real value of forests and how they can be used for many things,” he said.

Kaset International of Tampa, Fla., which conducted the poll surveyed 500 U.S. residents last spring. About one-fourth were from the Northeast, another fourth were from the Southeast and the remaining half from the West, Midwest, Mountain and Southwest regions.

The responses “indicate that the overriding concern of United States residents is maintaining healthy public forests and grasslands” and that most believe this is “somehow tied to the quality of life in this country,” the firm said in a summary of responses to the 26 statements in the survey.

“The public does not seem willing to sacrifice the health of the forests in order to produce consumer goods or increase profits to private companies,” the summary said.

“The people in this country also seem to recognize that the public does today will impact tomorrow. Put another way, any shortsighted excesses of the past will not be permitted in the present and the public expects the federal government to be responsible for conserving the forests for those yet to be born.”

— *Lewiston Tribune*, March 11, 1995

Time to end commercial logging in the national forests

by John Osborn, M.D.

For over 15 years citizens in our region have worked within the laws and through public processes to end damaging logging operations on federal forests. Our experience? Laws interfering with getting out "the cut" are flouted, suspended, or gutted. Corporate plunder has replaced law and order on our national forests.

When Teddy Roosevelt established millions of acres of national forests, he did so to keep these forests out of the hands of timber syndicates. From the beginning there was debate on how best to protect and preserve these forests. Central to this debate has always been the question: is commercial logging consistent with the mission of America's federal forests?

The debate is often personified by two great Americans, John Muir and Gifford Pinchot. Muir, the farmboy and naturalist who founded the Sierra Club, advocated keeping the national forests forever wild to ensure that Americans always have clean rivers and lakes, wildlife, and forests. Pinchot, a forester-politician trained in Europe, believed that the national forests could be preserved through uses that included logging — so long as logging was scientifically sound and showed profit.

Today the dreams of both Muir and Pinchot lie in the ditches next to the costly 380,000 miles of logging roads bulldozed into the mountains of the national forest system. Their dreams are buried in the millions of tons of sediment that choke the spawning beds of our vanishing native trout and salmon. Logging roads and clearcuts, corporate plunder, and huge costs to taxpayers have transformed the national forests from an American dream to nightmare.

Follow the money: Congress funds the Forest Service... the Forest Service delivers taxpayer-subsidized federal timber to the corporations... the corporations "donate" to the re-election campaigns of the politicians who fund the Forest Service. Get the picture? As the General Accounting Office pointed out in 1995, the timber program for 1992-1994 cost the taxpayers \$1 billion more than receipts. In 1996, the condition was even worse: losses exceeded \$400 million, not including damage to flooded homes, ruined hunting and fishing, and other forest values.

Upstream from Spokane and Coeur d'Alene is the Coeur d'Alene National Forest: the most heavily damaged of America's 156 National Forests. The Coeur d'Alene has 8,000 miles of logging roads — averaging 10 miles of logging road per square

mile of forest, (in some places exceeding 20 and even 30 road miles per square mile). The North Fork, once among the region's most popular fishing streams, is demolished from clearcuts and roads. Its floodwaters carry something "special": lead — millions of pounds of lead — into Lake Coeur d'Alene, the Spokane River and the lives of the 500,000 people who live here. Estimated costs for restoring the North Fork: \$100 million and up.

The Kootenai National Forest, in the extreme northwest corner of Montana, is another "poster child". While logging the 4th of July and Arbo timber sales, the Forest Service "found" an extra 12 million board feet (about 5000 board feet fit on a loaded logging truck) for the timber companies that bought the sale. When the timber company violated the government contract by logging streambanks and trees from outside the already expanded timber sale boundaries, the Forest Service virtually looked the other way.

The Kootenai National Forest is being massively clearcut.

Demolished. Plundered.

Remember the flooding in downtown Chewelah and the sandbags along Highway 395? Look upstream. First Plum Creek hammered headwater streams around Chewelah. Now the Forest Service is logging another 40 million board feet, and building/rebuilding 177 miles of roads. Expect more floods.

The Forest Service will soon celebrate the Lewis and Clark bicentennial by massively clearcutting near the historic trail on the Clearwater National Forest. Above the Lochsa River — remaining refuge to wild trout, salmon and steelhead — the federal agency is planning a 63 million board foot sale and huge clearcuts. This despite hundreds of mudslides in 1995, 1996, and 1997 that devastated the Clearwater National Forest.

Parents immediately know when they return home to find the baby-sitter abusing their child that it's time to take action. For the national forests, it's time to end commercial logging and put people to work restoring the damage.

• John Osborn is founder of the Inland Empire Public Lands Council

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Follow the money
Congress funds the Forest Service... the Forest Service delivers taxpayer-subsidized federal timber to the corporations... the corporations "donate" to the re-election campaigns of the politicians who fund the Forest Service.
Get the picture?



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