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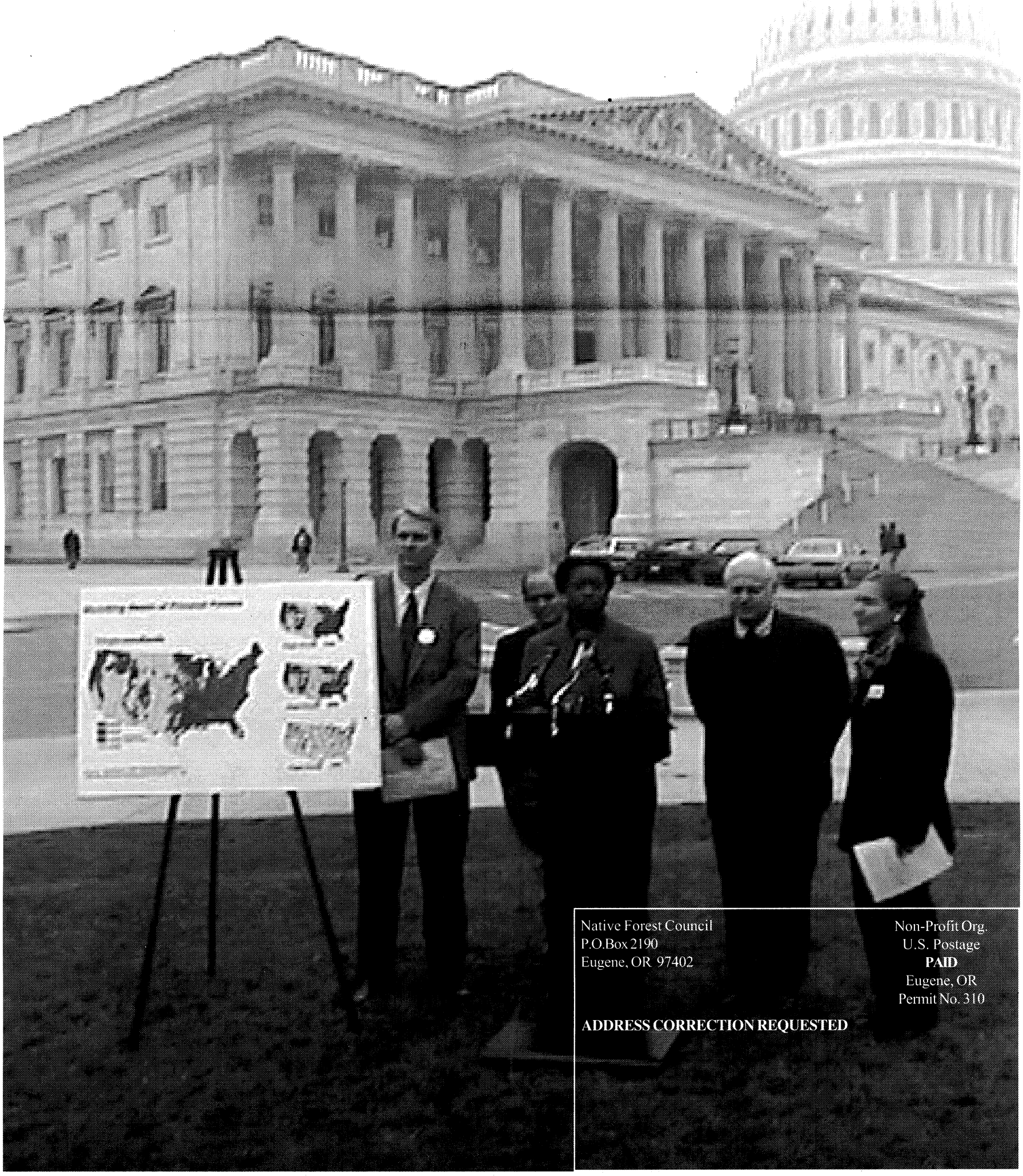
Zero Cut Bill Introduced in Congress



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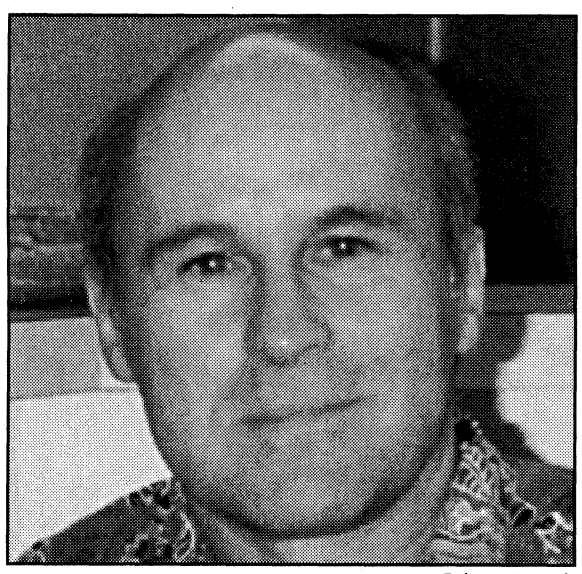

Victor Rozek

With Thanks

I first met Tim Hermach about nine years ago through a mutual friend. I had come to Oregon two years prior searching, like so many people, for a better quality of life; searching for a place where people valued and lived in respectful harmony with the natural world.

In Oregon's fabled forests I thought I'd found it, but it was an illusion carefully sustained by what I later came to know as "the beauty strip," a thin buffer of trees the timber industry graciously left along the roadsides to mask what lay beyond. It didn't take long to discover the reality--destruction on an unimaginably monstrous scale. When I complained to my friend about the deplorable state of Oregon's forests he said, "There's a guy you have to meet."

At the time Tim was working out of his home which, in volume of foot traffic, resembled a minor railway station with people coming and going unannounced at all hours. Almost immediately, I observed a phenomenon which would continue to fascinate me until this day: people would drop by simply to get a "fix" of Tim Hermach. Hermach would hold court and, as people visited, he would launch into a tirade about the forests, their essential value, and the government's failure to protect the last five percent. They would listen, nod their agreement, stay a while, then leave. It was seldom a dialogue; Hermach simply expounded on the forest issue with an infectious and mesmerizing stridency that spoke to people on some profound core level.

I came to realize that it was Hermach's passion people wanted a dose of. In a largely passionless society where most of us worked endlessly at jobs which did not feed our souls; a world in which we had become resigned to injustice and folly, here was this big, bearded, intense, passionate, in-your-face man telling us we could do something about it.

It was an infectious notion, forcefully presented.

But Hermach had something more. Passion without vision is simply manic energy, and Hermach had a very clear vision. And like all worthy visions, it was bigger than he could hope to achieve alone thus requiring an ability to inspire advocates. While other environmental organizations were busy contesting individual timber sales, or protesting some intemperate element of this or that forest plan, Hermach wanted to end logging of native forests altogether. He reasoned, correctly, that stopping logging here, only increased the pressure to log elsewhere and, with only five percent remaining, we could no longer afford to continuously "cut the baby in half", as he descriptively put it, forever chipping away at the tattered remains of our once-great forestlands.

It was dismissed by many as a quixotic notion.

Hermach's heresy, however, extended to condemning (both loudly and persistently) compromise as a tool for environmental issue resolution. Compromise, he observed, may be reasonable when you're debating the disposition of a whole pie. But when 95 percent of the pie has already been consumed, there's no reason to entertain giving away more. In any event, the seemingly reasonable call to "compromise," as applied to the forests, always meant cutting more down.

Hermach's view threatened some very entrenched limiting beliefs held by just about every major national environmental organization. Compromise, in their view, was a political fact of life, a ticket to the negotiating table. Although they would not characterize it as such, it had become a gratuity routinely presented to placate angry timber industry and government powers.

Nonsense, Hermach countered. Industry never comes to the table to compromise. They want it all and are willing to do just about anything to get it. Compromise, in his view, only guaranteed two things: we lose, and the forests lose.

Tim's solution to the forest crisis was more direct: pass national legislation outlawing the cutting of native forests. It was an aspiration that the compromisers ridiculed as politically naive. Nonetheless, in 1989, with input from over 200 grassroots organizations, Hermach crafted draft legislation. He called it the Native Forest Protection Act and it had several elements. Beyond calling for an immediate halt to logging of native and old-growth forests, it banned the export of raw logs, mandated ecological restoration, provided transitional support for timber workers and communities, and included a provision to ensure government accountability. Funding for the bill would come from redirecting a portion of the massive taxpayer subsidies then totalling over $1 billion per year.

Hermach took his proposed legislation to Washington D.C. and shopped it around. In those days Democrats reigned in Congress and fourteen of them expressed support. Their backing, however, was quickly withdrawn when, as Hermach later discovered, they checked with national environmental organizations and found not only the lack of a champion, but active opposition.

So Hermach took his fight to the media and the people. Literally for years, he worked the phone and travelled around the country making contacts and deluging all interested parties with stacks of information on the issue. His persistence paid off and soon editorials questioning and condemning national forest management policy began to appear in *The Washington Post,* the *New York Times* and other major newspapers.

Still, the forests continued to fall. But the Forest Service, increasingly besieged by protest and media criticism, began a series of cosmetic initiatives designed to assuage growing public concerns. New Forestry, New Perspectives, New Horizons, and later, Ecosystem Manage-

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ment, Salvage Logging and Forest Health were high-sounding representations of a supposed new management philosophy. On the ground, however, little changed, and whether the agency called a clearcut a "meadow enhancement," or "even-aged management," or a "linear wildlife opening," it all pretty much looked the same.

It was then Hermach realized his vision was not quite broad enough. Essentially, it became clear to him that he could not trust the Forest Service to manage public lands; that the "get the cut out" mentality was so pervasive, even minor well-intended attempts at reform were met with stiff and predictable resistance. The Forest Service had, in practice, become an extension and servant of the timber industry. Its budget was derived from cutting trees, not from promoting sound stewardship. It allied itself not with the public interest, but with corporate interests. When the cities of Portland and Salem—representing over one million people—petitioned the agency to stop logging their watersheds because excessive sedimentation was fouling their drinking water, the agency flatly refused.

Hermach saw it would do little good to "protect" native forests while allowing logging to continue in second-growth stands. "The industry always finds a way to get what it wants," he asserted, and it was hard to argue the point. A pretense for logging healthy trees could invariably be contrived, and the industry's congressional clout ensured that pretense soon became policy. Whether they cut healthy trees to "protect" them from insects or fire, or to "salvage" them; or whether, after four hundred years of vigorous growth, they were suddenly deemed "decadent" and in urgent need of logging before they toppled over made little difference. Unless, Hermach thought, we can keep the industry out of our forests they will continue to fall.

Six years ago, Hermach proposed a national Zero Cut policy. No logging whatsoever. Not a single twig. Those with somewhat more modest visions, were quick to offer a tangle of reasons why it would not be possible to end public land logging. The usual suspects were trotted out and stood in formidable opposition to meaningful reform: a hostile congress, loss of jobs, economic disruption to communities dependent on revenues from national forest logging, firewood gathering, and ailing crowded stands in need of thinning.

But like any timely notion based on profound truth—this one being that too much abuse had gone on for too long and that simply slowing the rate of the carnage would not remedy the problem—the idea began to catch on and simply would not go away. Most Americans, in fact, didn't even know their national forests were being logged, and were outraged to find otherwise. Within the movement, Zero Cut captured the imagination of much of the grassroots community which had long fought a loosing battle with big timber and unresponsive government, and were now willing to stand and say: No more.

In any event, not only forest ecology but forest economics mandated an end to the national timber program and the facts were increasingly hard to ignore. As the issue gained more national attention, runaway timber subsidies became public knowledge. Taxpayers questioned the wisdom of a government program that built 380,000 miles of logging roads at public expense for the sole purpose of cutting the public's trees.

People were also becoming painfully aware that old-growth forests were rapidly disappearing, as were salmon and other forest-dependent species. In court, the spotted owl had just kicked butt and a federal judge acknowledged that federal management agencies were in "systematic and deliberate" violation of the law.

Whatever the reasons to continue logging, it was clear they could not be justified on the basis of economics or ecology.

Still, no major environmental organization was willing to embrace the cause of Zero Cut.

Hermach redoubled his efforts. For four more years he worked tirelessly, expanding his network and preaching the gospel of Zero Cut. The office became a clearinghouse for forest-related information. Sometimes he would send several hundred faxes a night, each a dozen pages or more. Slowly, supporters emerged. In 1995, the Oregon Natural Resources Council endorsed Zero Cut. Eventually, Washington's Inland Empire Public Lands Council joined the coalition. Numerous grassroots organizations across the nation already backed the effort, including Greenpeace, the Long Island chapter of the Audubon Society, and Heartwood in Indiana.

A pretense for logging healthy trees could invariably be contrived, and the industry's congressional clout ensured that pretense soon became policy.

In the summer of 1992, a bright and energetic law student came to the office to volunteer. Chad Hanson had hiked the length of the Pacific Crest trail with his brother and was outraged by the miles of clearcuts he saw on what he assumed was protected public land. He wanted to stop it. Hanson was studying law because he said he wished to sue the Forest Service, and in him Hermach saw a kindred spirit. He hired Hanson to promote Zero Cut. Hanson was active in the Sierra Club, which Hermach had been lobbying for some time, and although the Club's management was hostile to Zero Cut, both men believed the membership would embrace it if given a chance to vote.

A year later Hanson left the NFC and, with the help of David Orr, took it upon himself to visit every Sierra Club chapter from San Diego to Washington, make the case for Zero Cut and ask for their endorsement. He got every one. Getting the issue on the ballot was another matter. The Club's management was determined to cloud the issue and prevent its presentation to the membership. They threw a number of obstacles in Hanson's path (see "But I'm Just One Person, What Can I Do?" *Forest Voice*, 1996 Vol9 No2) but he would not be dissuaded. Finally, the Club allowed the issue to come to a vote but twisted the wording of the proposition so that a "No" vote signified support.

The measure lost.

Hanson tried again the following year. This time he ensured the proposal was fairly worded. It passed overwhelmingly. In spite of itself, the Sierra Club was officially on board.

Buoyed by his success, Hanson dedicated himself to introducing Zero Cut legislation in Congress. Hermach continued to play the part of the itinerant evangelist preaching Zero Cut; attending conferences, schooling the media, and incessantly working the phones.

On October 31, 1997 Hermach's vision became a reality. He had carried Zero Cut on his back against insurmountable odds for the better part of the decade. He carried it right to the door of Congress and Hanson had kicked it across. In a bipartisan announcement on the Capital steps, Representatives Cynthia McKinney (D-GA) and Jim Leach (R-IA), chairman of the House Banking and Financial Services Committee, introduced a bill that would halt commercial logging on public lands. Of the timber program, Leach said, "The U.S. government is the only property owner that I know of that pays private parties to deplete its own resources." The bill gained precedent-setting support when a representative from the Northwest delegation, James McDermott (D-WA), broke ranks with the timber industry and signed on as one of fourteen cosponsors.

Although the bill is not expected to pass in this session, it wasn't expected to ever be introduced so in a sense it has already surpassed expectations. The mere fact of its introduction has breathed new life into the forest movement and is indicative of how mainstream Zero Cut has become. With respect to the forest issue one activist observed: "Most national environmental organizations now oddly find themselves to the right of the Republican chairman of the House Banking Committee."

The bill, in truth, has something for everybody. It appeals to the left by promoting ecological sanity, and to the right in its devotion to fiscal probity. As Representative Leach observed, "the bill will draw support both from environmentalists in the House and from those lawmakers who have campaigned against corporate welfare."

Now, it's only a matter of time.

It was an extraordinary accomplishment, in the face of a hostile Congress, limited funding, and active opposition. It stands as a monument to Tim's persistence, his unshakable vision, tireless effort, absolute unwillingness to compromise his values, and his steadfast refusal to succumb to despair.

Hermach continues to be a remarkable and a courageous man. His commitment to his vision remains as strong as ever, and I have no doubt that he will continue the fight until Zero Cut is the law of the land.

His infectious passion that has touched so many, has certainly had an impact on me. A year after we met I left a highly lucrative job at IBM and went to work for the Native Forest Council. That I am still with the NFC indicates it was a decision I have never regretted.

History may or may not accurately record Tim's part in the struggle to save America's forests. He may not stand on the podium when the accolades are distributed; it will, I suspect, be a crowded place. But I know his to be a leading and crucial role; one that sustained the movement during dark times, and should rightfully be acknowledged.

Only a handful of people in every generation move the ball ahead for the rest of us. I believe Tim Hermach to be one of those people. Certainly, as I look back across the years of our collaboration, he stands as one of the few people in the movement that I am proud to call a colleague and a friend.

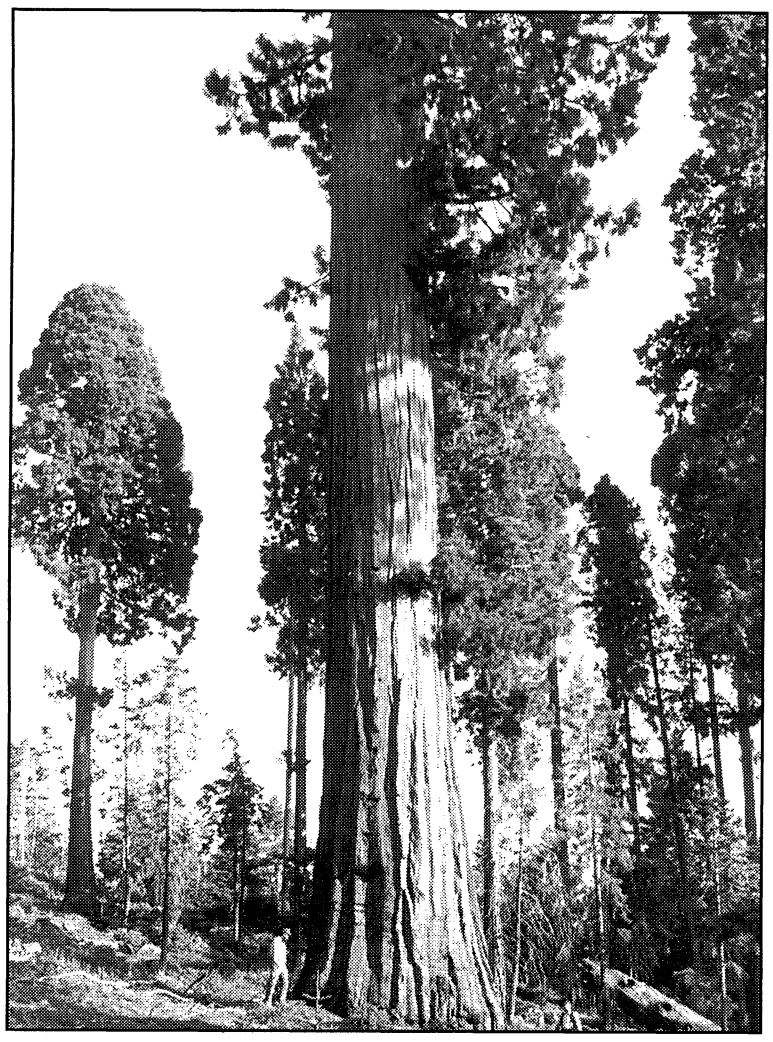
Victor Rozek
Editor

The effort to end logging in our National Forest Reserves ought to begin in the Sequoia National Forest

Saving the Sacred Forests

"The battle we have fought, and are still fighting, for the forest is a part of the eternal conflict between right and wrong, and we cannot expect to see the end of it... So we must count on watching and striving for these trees, and should always be glad to find anything so surely good and noble to strive for."

John Muir, Nov. 23, 1895



by Roy Keene

The Gentle Giants

The giant Sequoias stand as great shrines within a sacred forest. They are the largest and among the oldest living beings. Rare elders from a past age, they are a connection with our ancient beginnings; the monarchs of the vegetative world upon which our human culture depends .

Giganteum, the name that denotes their unique species, grows larger and older than their more abundant lowland relative, *Sequoia sempervirens,* the coastal redwood tree. By migrating gradually to moist westside elevations, the giant Sequoia survived the rain shadow desertification caused by the prehistoric uplift of the Sierra Nevada. Now as climate warming, air pollution, fire suppression, and Forest Service logging create a desert out of their refuge, the gentle old giants are again threatened.

Out of the 75 groves that exist on the entire earth, over half of them are managed by the Forest Service. Most Americans think that Sequoia groves in national forests are managed like Yosemite or Sequoia National Park groves—with respect and dignity. Instead, the Forest Service, unable to see themselves as the trustees of a global treasure, is intent on logging in Sequoia forests at a huge loss.

Selling the Sacred

Logging in the Sequoia National Forest has caused some of the highest average deficit returns of any western National Forest. Only a few bidders bid on timber sales, typically resulting in 95% of the volume going to two mills. Low bidding pressure allows purchasers to buy old-growth pine cheaply in the Sequoia forest and truck it north to higher priced markets, making fat profits with relatively little local labor. The cutting of ancient pine stands destroys the integrity of the Sequoia forest and threatens their survival. It also encourages purchasers like Sierra Forest Products to make handsome contributions to their local congressmen.

Logging in the Sequoia National Forest is some of the roughest to be seen in the region. Larger trees are extracted, instead of removing the crowded smaller ones that create the fire hazard and stress the forest. There has been no effort to minimize heavy machinery impacts on dry hillsides or fragile stream sides. Soil disturbance and compaction, riparian degradation, and log wastage are often excessive. Clearcuts, hot slash burns, and heavy handed fire salvage have set many forested sites back to chaparral or desert. Even minimal reforestation has failed to take hold in many parts of the forest.

The Wheel of Salvage

The old trees, stressed and weakened due to the crowded understories of young trees that have grown up during the suppression of fire, are the ones extracted during salvage logging. By failing to remove the small trees, salvage sales are treating symptoms rather than causes of forest mortality. This self-feeding cycle is the salvage wheel of fortune for the mill, not the forest or the people. Many "salvage" sales, like the Pocket Sale, supposedly under a million board feet to meet salvage exclusion language, produced far over a million board feet. My inquiry with the Pocket Sale purchaser indicated that over 3 million board feet was removed, including "green" pine. If our management agency can't be honest with salvage sales, how can we trust them to care for the great Sequoias?

In 1994, there was an brief effort to pass The Giant Sequoia Preservation Act. If passed, the Act would have put an end to commercial logging in the critical parts of the Sequoia National Forest. The people hired to promote the Act in Washington DC apparently left it to die after spending the donated funds. The Sierra Club, rather than actively supporting the proposed Sequoia Preservation Act, deferred instead to their own product, a pitifully weak Mediated Agreement cooked up between "environmentalists", timber industry, and the Forest Service. The Agreement, powerless to stop fraudulent salvage logging as an excuse for industry to pork out on public pine, will probably condone more grabs under the bogus banner of "fire protection".

Fire in the Forest

The unprotected Sequoia National Forest is now being subjected to a potentially biologically devastating fuel break experiment of forest-wide scale. In order to "reduce wildfires", the Forest Service proposes to create "defensible fuel profile zones", DFPZ's, by dozing fragile soils and cutting the big trees across hundreds of miles of forest, resulting in a huge network of dried out, highly flammable brush filled clearings. This DFPZ scheme will further fragment the forest, resulting in higher levels of stress on ancient Sequoias, already struggling to survive the Industrial Age.

The National Park, supported by less biased science and years of management-by-fire experience, attempts to reverse industrial degradation of the Sequoia by encouraging fire in the forest. Every year, along with allowing most wildfires to burn, the Park Service ignites thousands of acres in appropriate seasons and places. Fire still does what it has done for millennia, reducing dense and competitive vegetative understories beneath the towering, fire resistant Sequoia. The result is a healthy, diverse, well-balanced and resilient forest—a model of what many dry western National Forests should be.

A Preserve for the Human Spirit

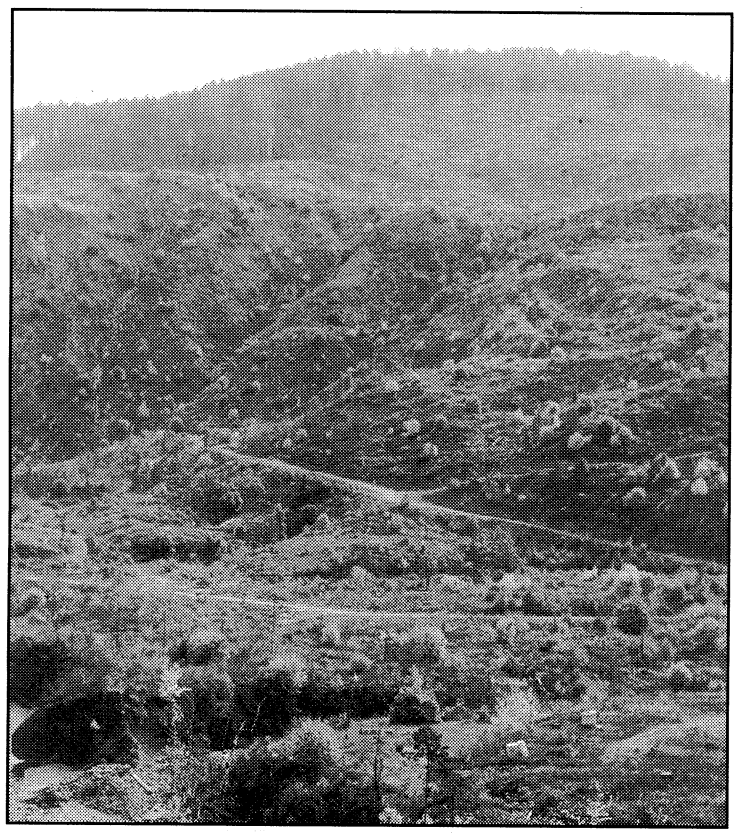
John Muir called the Sequoia Forest "The grandest forest of all!" Though tarnished by decades of Forest Service logging, the Sequoia National Forest is still the crown jewel of our national forest system. Although the Forest Service has treated the Sequoia as if this living heritage belonged to them and a local timber mill, the Sequoia should be preserved for current and future generations.

In the parking lot of the Mariposa Grove of big trees in Yosemite National Park just to the north, you can hear a dozen languages spoken on any day. The Sequoia, "trees of life" for the many seekers who come to refresh themselves in this Sierran Garden of Eden, are a preserve for the human spirit. Maintaining the Sequoia groves and their surrounding habitat is a sacred trust, one that the National Park Service takes seriously.

The Park Service's noble standard makes it even more inexcusable to allow the Forest Service to continue squandering half the Sequoia groves on the planet. There is no more striking proof of the need to end logging on public lands, and no more fitting place to start, than the Sequoia National Forest.

Roy Keene is a forester and founder of the Public Forestry Foundation

The Private Cost of



Public Activism

an excerpt from a new book by Charles Pezeshki

My life is out of control this month, my schedule full, no slack in the system. But that doesn't matter. Idaho Senator Larry Craig is trying to move legislation that would give federal lands to the states. That would be the end of any wild country in Idaho, and we—myself and Larry McLaud, my partner in environmental activism—have got to show the public the consequences of such a plan.

Craig says state governments should respond to locals' concerns; those that live close to the land should be the ones who manage it—not bureaucrats in D.C. If so, no more Clearwater National Forest. And what about the Pierce Local Forest? In our neck of the woods, with most of the timber gone and a weak forest supervisor, this is already pretty much the case. Local people get the lion's share of input when determining logging plans, and there is never a problem with constructing more off-road vehicle trails to satisfy the endless local demands of the Blue Ribbon Coalition.

Craig knows all of these things. He also knows that in Idaho, citizens concerned about wildlife and water quality have no opportunities for input on management decisions impacting state forest lands. Everything is decided by the state Department of Lands and the legislature, which has outlawed citizen input and lawsuits over state land planning. State lands, they say, are supposed to be managed for maximum financial gain, which means chopping down all the trees, the money going to support public schools and other state institutions. But the charter says nothing about the length of this fiduciary decision. An old-growth cedar can live more than six hundred years. What will future generations say about the stump desert they will inherit?

Larry—the Trout Man, I call him—and I drive through the Floodwood State Forest, in north-central Idaho. It's hacked bad, clearcuts for miles, cut over decades. Driving along, I see a pattern, a wave of tree ages running out from the mill communities of Pierce, Elk River, and Clarkia. Trees closest to the towns were cut first—the further out we get, smaller trees and bigger clearcuts predominate.

Every stream the Trout Man and I drive by today is annihilated, so filled with dirt the stream actually changes its channel every time it rains. In response to this resource damage, the industry and state have implemented "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) that include various provisions such as the number of trees per acre that must be left in order to satisfy the Idaho Forest Practices Act. A law written by industry for industry. BMPs have been so effective that Idaho now has 962 stream segments of concern under the Clean Water Act. As we drive along Stony Creek today, we see the occasional log that has been tossed into the channel. This supposedly creates more pools in the creek to "mitigate" for pools filled in with silt from the logging. But the new, man-generated pools are also filled in with dirt. The streams have been transformed into constant riffles, evenly spaced. Trout need slow, deep waters to winter in, and the industry knows this. But the bastards won't get out until the forest is replaced by churned earth and shrub fields.

"Boy, any fish swimming in here would get tired really quick, Trout Man," I say, looking at him. "But don't worry, the fish are all dead."

The Trout Man nods. "We have to come up with a rap, Chuck. Something the media can use for their readers," he says. We stop at a new cedar clearcut. A huge slash pile, 25 feet high, blocks the skidder road. On the side spray-painted in neon orange are the words "Bob's Barbecue." We cruise the side of the hill, looking for stumps, finding them a quarter of a mile down the trail. Cedar didn't get cut out of this country the first or second time the loggers came through—it's only relatively recently that the vogue has shifted. Mandates for natural wood to cover roofs drive the demand. Never mind that cedar catches fire quickly. It doesn't rot easily, and no one's asking where it comes from. This patch of cedar was the last real forest cover on this mountain side—a horrible loss of a small oasis. But on the Floodwood, it doesn't matter—it's out of sight, out of mind, in this Third World part of a First World country.

The Trout Man is standing in the mud, cussing up a mean streak. I am sad. It must have been beautiful here in this last spot. We look at the map—there's Potlatch ground out here, too. But there's no line of demarcation visible from the results of management practices. The destruction is panoramic.

We cruise for another twenty miles, onto Potlatch ground, then down toward the Little North Fork of the Clearwater. Logging trucks are hauling logs off another clearcut of old-growth cedar. We pull off to let them pass, snapping post-apocalyptic photos of the trucks above the cut. In the background, the angry chainsaw bees buzz, punctuated by the crashes of trees falling. Like a pathologist on a lunch break in the morgue, the Trout Man hands me a tomato and cheese sandwich, asking again for media ideas. I bite off a chunk, shrugging my shoulders. I suggest explaining the pattern over the landscape, the magnitude of the problem, instead of taking reporters only to the worst spot. The Trout Man says it might work. But I know nothing will really help this beautiful, desperate, and hopelessly out-of-the-way place.

Back in town, we contact the media for a tour, recruiting two reporters and a photographer. The days are filled with meetings, seminars, letter writing, my full-time job, but no breaks. Two weeks later, we go out with the press. The trip runs smoothly, and the planning pays off. It rains, but the gray lifts off the mountains long enough for the photographer to take pictures of the state-sponsored clearcuts. I ask him what he thinks. He is a young man, only in his mid-twenties. He says he is neutral. We drive up the mountain, then down into the Little North Fork again, stopping at the edge of the huge cedar clearcut. Next to a giant slash pile, I can hear him mumbling to himself, "this is just horrible." We stage closing comments on the bridge over the river, mouthing lines memorized for the evening news. Looking at the clearcuts, I tell the reporters that the issue is not "log versus not log." The issue is "do we want to apply this version of nuclear forestry everywhere?" The reporters stare at me. I pray the message gets through.

Tuesday brings a front-page spread, me in the photo looking despondent in front of a clearcut. The Trout Man and I exchange high-fives. I show the article to my wife. She looks worried. "Good picture of you. Anyone can recognize you now. What if someone wanted to shoot you?" she says. I pay no attention, and prepare to go out the door for more interviews. I tell her about a timber sale monitoring trip next week—just one more week of this, I say. She turns away, cold.

Next Monday, I work at my regular teaching job, then jump in my car bound for the Clearwater. Cruising a clearcut off Big Smith Ridge the following day, I start faltering. I need to get back to work—my paying job, as opposed to this. I drive home. Students are waiting by my office door when I arrive. I work late. The next morning, up at 3:30, I fly to Seattle—more university business. I collapse in my plane seat on the return flight. I arrive at home late, at 10:00pm.

Black circles ring my eyes. Kelley comes out of the bedroom, looking at me slumped on the couch. She has been busy with our house remodel. "Any time for me?" she says, anger in her words. Mary, my dog, butts my hand insistently with her head. "Any time for the dogs? For the house? Only time for looking at clearcuts? What in the hell is the point of that? Am I the only person you can say 'No' to?" I shrug my shoulders, staring at the wall in our empty living room. "I had to move all the furniture out of the room. Where were you when I needed you? Am I supposed to take care of everything? What do you think all of this is going to accomplish?" I drop my head in my hands, a migraine rising in my head, mumbling, "I don't know."

She turns around, heading for the bedroom, shaking her head. "Is this your delusion that someone made you Jesus Christ for a month? A year? The rest of your life? Do you really think you're going to save the world by Christmas?"

Charles Pezeshki is an associate professor of mechanical engineering at Washington State University. An avid backpacker, whitewater kayaker, and environmental activist, he directs the Clearwater Biodiversity Project with his wife Kelley from their home in Troy, Idaho.

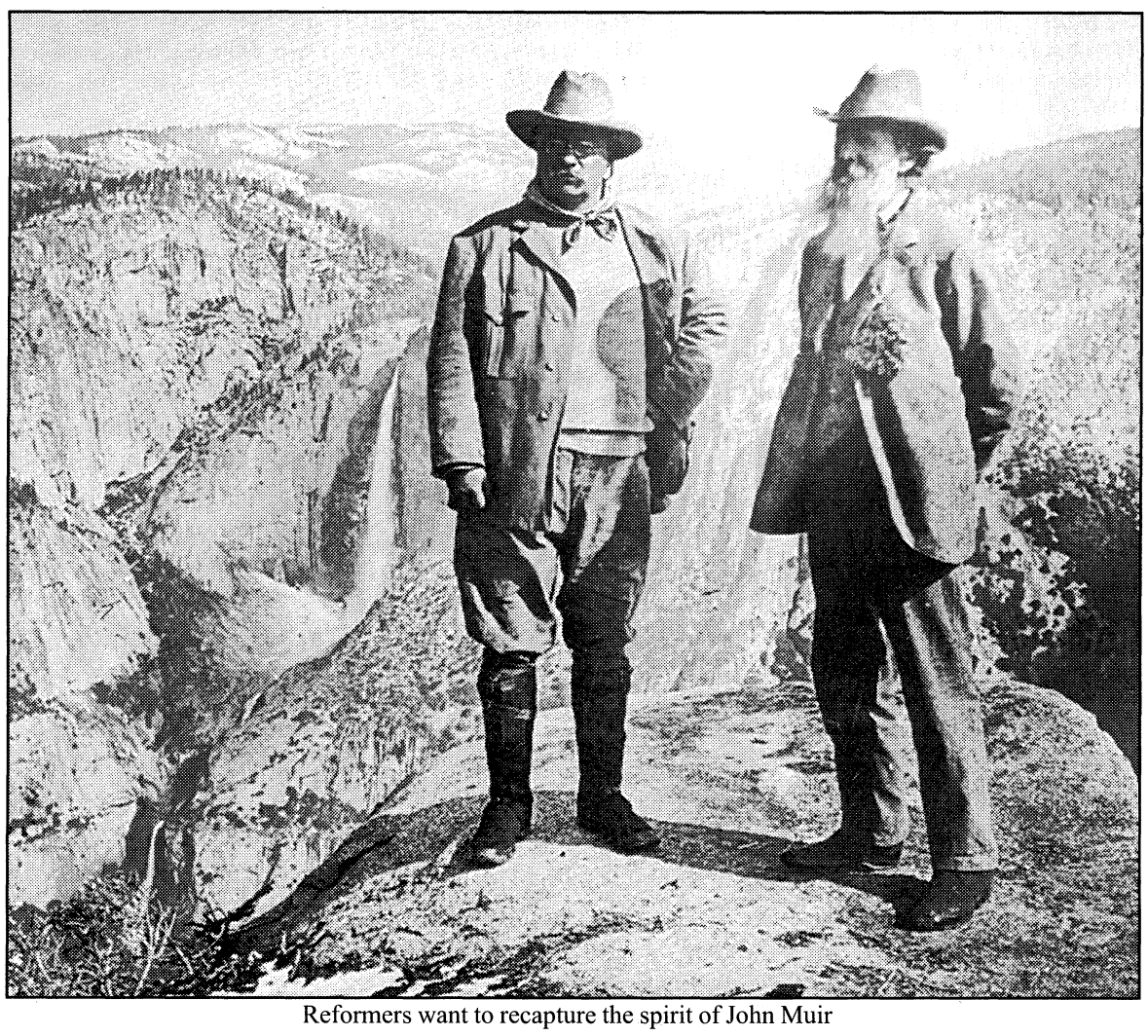
Mr. Pezeshki's first book, 'Wild to the Last: Environmental Conflict in the Clearwater Country'*, will be published March 1, 1998, by Washington State University Press P.O. Box 645910, Pullman, WA 99164-5910, for $22.95.*

Pre-orders are available before that date, for a discounted price of $18.36 ($2.50 s&h), by calling 1-800-354-7360. Please mention the discounted price when you order.

Courting the Impossible:

The Struggle for the Soul of the Sierra Club

By Chad Hanson



Reformers want to recapture the spirit of John Muir

*I*n Peter Sellers' last movie, *Being There*, Sellers plays an innocent and simple gardener named Chance who has spent his entire life tending the grounds of an opulent estate. When the owner dies, Chance is forced to venture into the outside world for the first time in his life. Since he knows only one thing, everything he says is expressed in terms of gardening tasks: "changing seasons," "growth," the need to "water the garden." He soon catches the attention of Washington, D.C., mistaken for a political genius who can predict the future through gardening metaphors. Ultimately he becomes the President's top advisor.

The entire time Chance the gardener truly believes that he and all these politicians and power brokers are just talking about gardening. He doesn't know any better. Nevertheless, he ends up influencing national and international policy. Because he is so innocent, he fundamentally fails to understand that it is impossible for a humble gardener to have a political impact. And this is why he succeeds.

In the final scene, Chance is walking alone by a lake. He stops, looks thoughtfully to the opposite shore, and calmly walks across the lake—on top of the water. Having never seen a lake, he doesn't know that this is impossible either.

In this simple tale, Sellers conveys a profound political message which goes to the heart of the struggle for the soul of the Sierra Club, and the environmental movement as a whole. Still largely in control, but with a weakening grip, is the "old guard." They value political access, the "insider game," and have a deep and abiding belief that many things are not possible. They knew, for example, that the Sierra Club's members would never vote to support Zero Cut. They knew that it would be impossible to get a bill introduced in Congress to end logging on public lands, and especially impossible to achieve bipartisan support for such a measure.

Over the years the Club's ruling elite have attempted to share their sacred knowledge of the impossible with a ragtag band of Sierra Club Zero-Cutters calling themselves the "John Muir Sierrans," who have persistently refused to recognize the very concept of impossibility. Because of the refusal of these upstarts to accept "what cannot be done," the Sierra Club now supports ending all logging on public lands. And, in spite of the nay-sayers, a bipartisan bill to enact this policy was introduced into Congress on October 31st—H.R. 2789, the National Forest Protection and Restoration Act. The impossible has happened.

I became involved in the Sierra Club in 1990, apocalyptic images of clearcuts on national forests still fresh in my mind after hiking the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada. I joined the Club because I thought they would help me stop logging on national forests. I organized a letter-writing group which met monthly in the Club's Southern California/Nevada field office and began churning out letters to federal elected officials, urging them to kick the timber industry off our national forests—completely, utterly, and forever. Nervous staffers loomed in the hallway and eventually attempted to politely steer us toward politically safer grounds and more realistic goals. But our little group didn't stop, not because we were being obstinate but because we were innocent and simply didn't know any better. That small group later became the spark that catalyzed the entire Zero Cut movement within the Club.

By 1993, I had became *persona non grata,* shunned and attacked by the national leadership for daring to speak out for what I dreamed, rather than acquiescing to what I'd been told I had to accept. I joined with the John Muir Sierrans (JMS) and we began running slates of reform candidates for the national Board. Four John Muir Sierrans including myself, have been elected. But we'll need to elect four more before we can truly effect fundamental change in the organization. There are eight JMS candidates on the Club's 1998 ballot: David Brower, David Orr, Susan Schock, Jennifer Ferenstein, Jeff DeBonis, Emily Miggins, Veronica Eady, and Richard Worthen. Members may vote for five.

I cannot overstate how important it is that we succeed. During the watch of the guardians of impossibility, the Sierra Club hasn't led the passage of new nationwide public lands protection legislation for over a third of a century. And they allocate less than 1% of the budget to all national conservation priority campaigns combined. Meanwhile the forests keep falling, and the last wild places are being paved over and ground under.

We live in a cynical world where powerful and malevolent forces control so many aspects of our lives and future. Despite this, there are still some who refuse to extinguish a core of child-like hope, innocence, and enthusiasm—people who refuse to succumb to the psychology of the impossible. We must do whatever it takes to elect these people to positions of leadership, whether it be the Sierra Club's national Board of Directors or Congress. We must. Because in the final analysis it is the attitude with which we set and pursue our goals that determines our successes and failures. As Chance the gardener walks on water at the close of *Being There,* a speech echoing in the background delivers the film's final line: "All the aims I have pursued will soon be realized...Life is a state of mind."

Chad Hanson is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Pasadena-based John Muir Project (626-792-0109). He is also a national director of the Sierra Club, and is one of the leaders of the John Muir Sierrans.

Idaho Falls Post Register

Sunday, Nov. 16, 1997

Stop logging in America's forests

by U.S. Representative Cynthia McKinney

The American people overwhelmingly oppose logging on our national forests. Everyone knows that.

However, determined timber executives and their supporters in Congress have adapted well to the challenge of public opinion. Timber sales are now creatively referred to as "linear wildlife openings," "vista enhancement projects," "meadow restoration," "salvage," and most recently, "forest health."

Nothing inspires creativity like the prospect of turning a buck.

The deception, is more far-reaching than the use of mere euphemisms, however, and often invokes the absurd. A September memo from the Payette National Forest in Idaho obtained by The Associated Press from an inside source speaks volumes. The Forest Service had already logged 10,000 acres of forest claiming that the trees were "dying" and must be cut down for "forest health" reasons. The author of the incriminating memo wrote: ''Currently, our biggest errors are associated with trees living which have been expected to die from our selection guidelines... Hopefully some of these green grand firs and Douglas firs...will die over time.''

More than a year later, however, the unlogged areas were still alive and healthy, leaving the Forest Service and the timber interests they protect in a public relations quandary. "These trees are dead; they just don't know it yet," quipped a Forest Service timber sale planner in Idaho.

Congress, it seems, is a willing accomplice to this deception. Sen. Larry Craig's logging bill (S.1253), billed as a "forest health" measure, reads like a logging corporation's wish list.

The bill incorporates 23 of 28 timber industry recommendations for weakening and ultimately overriding federal environmental laws. These include exemptions from the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and open meeting laws.

Sen. Craig's bill also seeks to promote increased logging in the interest of "community stability." However, Sen. Craig's altruism and deep sense of community notwithstanding, nothing has been more destructive and destabilizing to Northwest communities than logging. Between 1979 and 1989, when logging levels on Northwest national forests were at their peak, tens of thousands of timber workers lost their jobs—20,000 in Oregon and Washington alone.

According to a recent University of Wisconsin study, the vast majority of Northwest logging job losses and mill closures occurred before environmental restrictions on logging were put in place in the early 1990s, largely as a result of automation and the loss of old-growth forests due to logging itself.

Meanwhile, from 1991 to 1994, as federal logging levels declined and endangered species listings rose, the Northwest added 940,000 jobs and real income of the region's households increased by 24 percent, according to a consensus report by dozens of Northwest economists. Further, Forest Service figures show that by the year 2000, recreation, hunting, and fishing on national forests will contribute 38.1 times more income to the nation's economy and create 31.4 times more jobs than logging on national forests.

Yet the basis of the recreation economy is destroyed by logging. Finally, Craig's proposal argues that we must further restrict the right of citizens to enforce the law because of the supposedly high cost of citizen involvement in management decisions on public lands.

The truth, however, is that the costs of environmental appeals and litigation combined amounted to less than 6 percent of the total cost of the timber sales program in 1996.

The truth is that we simply do not need to continue logging on our national forests.

The timber cut annually on all national forests now comprises less than 4 percent of total U.S. wood consumption. In addition and most damning of all, according to the Congressional Research Service, the timber sales program on national forests operated at a net loss to taxpayers of $791 million in 1996, and failed to return a single dime to the General Fund of the U.S. Treasury.

By ending the timber sales program on national forests, we not only save taxpayer money, but also secure jobs and promote real forms of community stability.

By no longer subsidizing the logging industry, we could provide more than $25,000 in worker retraining for each public lands timber employee and still have more than $200 million left over to reduce the federal deficit in the first year alone!

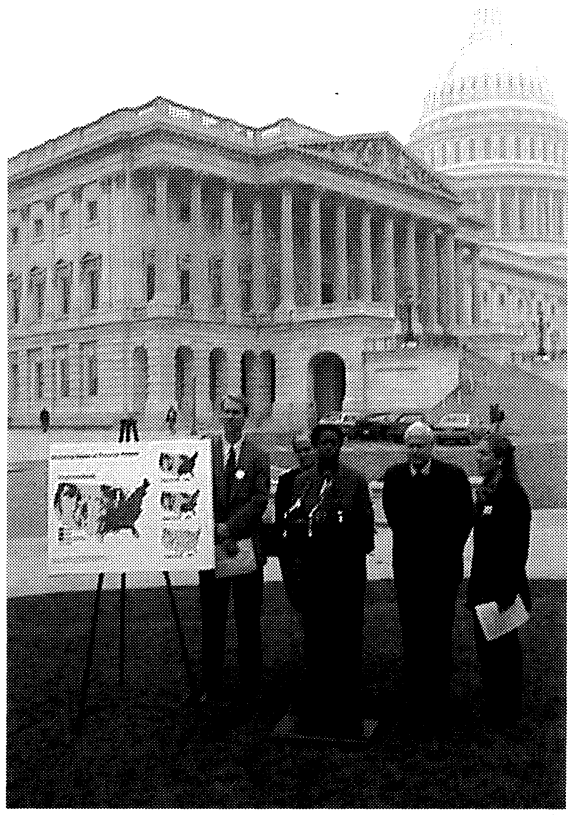
If Idaho's congressional delegation cares about jobs, the economy, and forest health—as it says it does—they must support the National Forest Protection and Restoration Act (H.R. 2789), introduced by Rep. Jim Leach (R-Iowa) and me last month in the House.

This important legislation will end the timber sales program on our federal public lands, phasing it out over two years, and will redirect the hundreds of millions of dollars in the agencies' off-budget logging funds into worker retraining, revenue-sharing payments for counties, and grants for development of tree-free paper and construction alternatives.

The bill will also reduce federal spending, saving taxpayers more than $300 million annually, and redirect a portion of the previous logging subsidy into funds for ecological restoration, with a hiring preference for dislocated timber workers.

McKinney, D-GA., represents Georgia's 4th Congressional District.
You can write to her at 124 Cannon Bldg., Washington, D.C., 20515.

They said it couldn't be done, but...



Zero Cut comes to Congress!

On October 31, 1997 a bill that would end logging in America's 155 national forests was introduced in Congress. Zero Cut was nearing the completion of an improbable journey from the Oregon backwoods to the D.C. Beltway.

Although a great many activists around the country had, for years, pushed on the lever that finally shifted this bit of intransigent political

Representative Cynthia A. McKinney, D-GA

reality, the final act of introduction can be attributed to a handful of people.

The vision was Tim Hermach's. For six years he held it aloft, nurtured it, defended it against cynics and defeatists, and sold his colleagues—and, in part, the nation—on its possibilities. The lobbying credit goes to Chad Hanson, who took the vision to Congress and worked tirelessly to find supporters. The actual introduction was made by two extraordinary people, Cynthia McKinney and Jim Leach.

Ms. McKinney is a representative from the Fourth Congressional District in Georgia. She is a Democrat with a reputation as a tenacious human rights advocate and a history of taking on the tough issues. For the last five years, she has been the House sponsor of the Arms Transfer Code of Conduct, long-overdue legislation that would prevent the shameful sale of U.S. weapons to dictators. Largely through her persistent effort, it finally passed the House in June of 1997. As one of her staff observed: "Once she decides to do something, she sticks with an issue, heat or no heat, good press or bad."

It should be noted that certainly not all members of Congress are swayed by the "rightness" of an issue. What is right frequently bumps up against what is expedient; and when it mandates the loss of some perceived entitlement, powerful interests quickly align against it. There are, therefore, political considerations which include keeping powerful constituents and donors happy and—especially for representatives with two-year terms—constant worries about reelection. Politicians know that support of any contentious issue instantly engenders opposition, sometimes fierce, frequently well organized, well funded and vindictive. Often, a representative will confide private support for an issue but will be reluctant to take a frontline stance, particularly as lead sponsor of controversial legislation. It takes a courageous public official to stand against powerful special interests on an issue of limited relevance to their state.

McKinney and Leach are such officials.

Chad Hanson recounts what happened when he arrived in Representative McKinney's office to make his pitch on behalf of Zero Cut legislation:

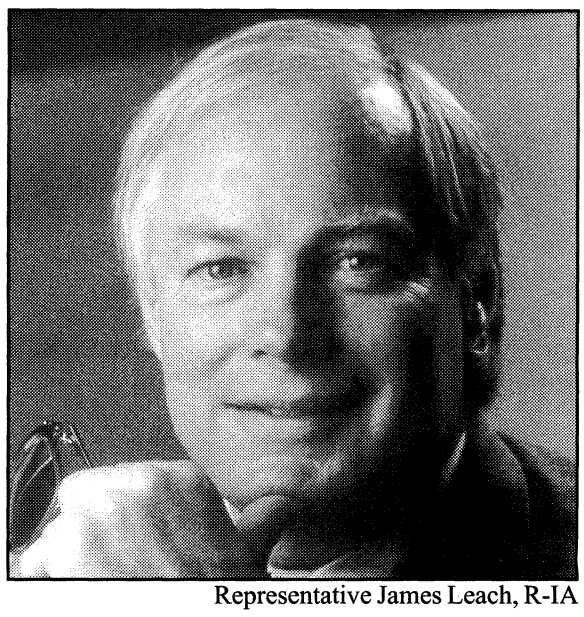
> I had just introduced myself and started my presentation. I was explaining the gravity and magnitude of the problem, but after listening for perhaps a minute she held up her hand and stopped me. She looked at me for a long moment and asked, "What do you want, Mr. Hanson?"
>
> I told her I wanted a champion for the legislation.
>
> She stood up, extended her hand, and said: "I'm your champion."

One of her aides counseled her to reconsider, recalled Hanson, and to proceed cautiously, reminding her that she was already taking on a number of heavyweight opponents, including military contractors. McKinney waved the concerns aside. "It's what I do." she said.

In her clarity and courage, her commitment and selflessness, Ms. McKinney conjures what is often believed to be an antiquated, idealized notion of what government service could and should be—a people's representative championing the common man in a worthy cause against powerful and often unethical interests.

It is the surviving flicker of representative government, all the more precious for being rare.

A week before Ms. McKinney was scheduled to introduce the legislation, she was approached by Representative Jim Leach. Mr. Leach is a Republican from the First District of Iowa. At first glance he would seem a curious champion of the forests since Iowa has none. As a fiscal conservative, however, and chairman of the House Banking Committee, the congressman is sensitive to issues of corporate welfare and waste. After having carefully studied the economics of the issue, Mr. Leach offered to cosponsor the legislation. In a *New York Times* editorial, Congressman Leach observed: "Ending the logging subsidy makes good environmental and economic sense and should be a high priority for a free-market economy."



Representative James Leach, R-IA

Beyond fiscal prudence, Mr. Leach also expressed concern for the level of environmental degradation resulting from industrial logging operations. Those concerns may reflect a deeper allegiance. Mr. Leach is a devout Episcopalian and some who have worked with the Congressman believe that stewardship of the Earth is a deeply-held personal value. The appalling waste and irrationality of public land logging was clearly on his mind during the bill's introduction when he observed: "The U.S. government is the only property owner that I know of that pays private parties to deplete its own resources."

We are grateful to Representatives McKinney and Leach for their leadership in bringing Zero Cut to Congress. It is also important to honor the efforts of many, many unnamed people who were responsible for the hard, thankless work of grassroots organizing, research, phone banking, lobbying, and hundreds of other tasks—big and small—that paved the way for the bill's introduction.

What You Can Do

The rest of the work is now up to us. HR 2789, the National Forest Protection and Restoration Act, will need additional champions if it is to be considered by the full Congress.

- Write, visit, or call your congressional office and ask you representative to support this vital legislation. (Congressional switchboard 202 224-3121)

- Get the endorsement of your church or civic group and send it to your congressional delegation.

- Write or call the White House and express your support for HR 2789 and ending logging on public lands. (202 456-1414)

- Write a letter to your local paper expressing support for Zero Cut and the National Forest Protection and Restoration Act.

The New York Times

Wednesday, Nov. 19, 1997

Too Many Trees Are Falling

by U.S. Representative James A. Leach

Washington - "The only trouble with the movement for the preservation of our forests," Theodore Roosevelt noted in 1908, "is that it has not gone nearly far enough." That is still the problem today.

In the waning hours of the just-concluded session, Congress passed a bill intended to set up a pilot "fuel break" project in certain national forests in California. But is the bill landmark legislation because it places modest limits on logging, or will its allowance of cutting on more than 40,000 acres only continue the 300-year hemorrhaging of one of our most precious resources?

Like the bison herds that sustained the Plains Indians, the sea of trees that covered the eastern half and far west of America seemed to early settlers to be an inexhaustible resource.

In 1891, with the effect of two centuries of profligate tree cutting becoming apparent, Congress established the national forest system. But a short six years later it created the Federal timber sales program, and logging in our new national forests began.

Today, with 95 percent of the country's original forests already logged, most of the remaining 5 percent are subject to being cut, with logs hauled from public land on access roads constructed at public expense.

Less than 4 percent of the country's wood products come from public lands, yet Federal subsidies for this logging are inexcusably large; last year alone, the subsidy was $791 million. And the Government not only subsidizes roads for logging companies, it also pays communities to support schools and other services for the families of loggers.

But the program's real cost extends beyond this corporate welfare. Continued logging in national forests worsens soil erosion, lake and stream sedimentation, and air and water quality. Some jobs may be created, but whether their number exceeds those in the fishing, recreation and tourism industries that are jeopardized when machines intrude on nature's habitat is open to question.

Indeed, according to the Forest Service, logging jobs represent less than 3 percent of all jobs in our national forests.

If we are to be good stewards of public lands, we must protect what remains of our national forests. One way to do this is to create programs to insure maximum use of recyclable materials.

In 1992 almost half of all American hardwood lumber production was used to make pallets for shipping. And according to the industry, more than half of these pallets are used just once and then discarded, ending up in landfills. Subsidized wood products promote this type of waste.

Ending the logging subsidy makes good environmental and economic sense and should be a high priority for a free-market economy. That is why Representative Cynthia A. McKinney, a Georgia Democrat, and I have introduced legislation to end logging on public lands.

Our bill would provide for the retraining of displaced timber workers, economic development assistance to affected lumbering communities, and research into recycling and ecological restoration.

At first blush, some might think ending logging on Federal land is environmental extremism, but in fact, it is common sense.

Insuring the environmental future requires a global effort, and we should do our part. The United States is quick to scold third world countries that destroy tropical forests, decrying the impact on global warming and biodiversity.

If we are going to exhort other countries to preserve their forests, we ought to act to save our own. Forest preservation is neither a regional nor a partisan issue. The national forests belong to all Americans, and their proper management is everybody's business.

James A. Leach, a Republican, is a United States Representative from Iowa and is the Chair of the House Banking and Financial Services Committee.

LoneVoice

In the end, all you have are your convictions and, if you're courageous, the heart to stand by them.

by Victor Rozek

"I'd speculate we farm boys growing up in little towns in Western Oregon, which were adjacent to vast stretches of primeval timber, were a lot like the Texas or Dakota boys who couldn't wait to be cowboys. The macho, swaggering loggers who came to town on Saturday from their railroad camps were our admired heroes."

I'm driving to meet the man who wrote those words. And I feel a sense of urgency. Homer Millard, after all, is 81 years old. We have been corresponding for about a year on subjects of passionate interest to us both. Today, he invited me to his home town, Powers, Oregon, to tour the distressed Powers Ranger District.

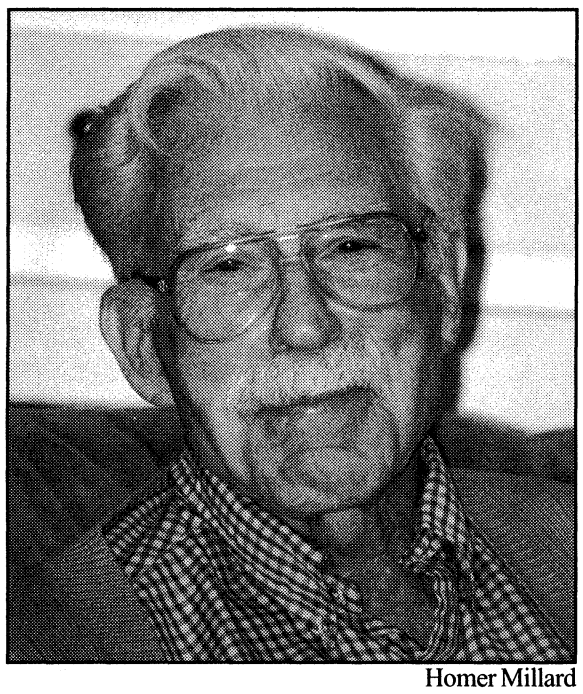
The town is nestled at the end of an 18-mile meandering river valley, several hours from nowhere. Since its inception over 100 years ago, Powers has survived on an opulence of natural resources; streams bulging with fish, rich grazing land in the valley, and the seemingly endless timbered hills of the Siskiyou range which rise as majestic barriers on the town's southern end.

It is a modest town, with modest homes, and people whose survival depends on their physical capacity to work. Homer Millard has worked all of his life. He arrived in Powers 45 years ago to become the principal at the local high school. During the summer months, he continued working as a logger as he had done, on and off, since 1934.

Millard's home is small, cluttered, and comfortable. As we enter, he points to a feral cat with several kittens in a kindling box just outside his back door. Seeing me, it tenses and stares with suspicious eyes. Millard built the house himself and apologizes for the architectural "mistakes" only he can see. Whatever its design flaws, it adroitly adheres to real estate's first law: location. The house is perched directly over the South Fork of the Coquille River, with a view of the Siskiyou foothills.

The man himself looks a decade younger than his years, with a full shock of white hair and a matching mustache. His body remains slender, with the sinewy musculature of a still-strong and active man. At an age when most men are content with quiet seclusion, Millard refuses to go gently into that good night. In a town built on timber extraction, he has become an environmental advocate. His letters appear frequently in local and regional papers, and he argues eloquently for changes in attitude and behavior toward the natural world; views that often meet with resistance in his community.

The day I arrive he shows me three of his letters that appeared in recent publications. One of them clears up a minor mystery. "Did you notice those great mounds of gravel as you were driving toward town?" he asks. Indeed, they were hard to miss, and "mounds" hardly begins to describe their size. I recall wondering where they came from and why anyone would amass such quantities?



Homer Millard

"That's river gravel," said Millard. "And it comes from this river," he says pointing to what he claims was once southwest Oregon's finest winter steelhead stream. "Local landowners dredge it up."

Forty years ago, Millard recalled, he helped a fisheries biologist conduct a fish count. In those days the river was rich with salmon. Each day they would trap fry in nets strung across sections of the stream. He learned, he said, how fry hid in the gravel to escape detection and predators. Millard wrote to a local editor to say he thought it ironic that the state was now spending millions of dollars to recover depleted salmon runs, while allowing landowners to destroy salmon habitat. "You know who buys most of that gravel?" he asked with a wry grin. "The state."

Millard graciously offers me lunch and explains the day's itinerary. The timber lands surrounding Powers, his area maps reveal, are in checkerboard ownership. The government has the largest holdings, but private corporations also control vast tracts. The area, he tells me, suffered numerous slides, road closures, and blowouts during last winter's storms, and Millard wants to show me the practices that contribute to these annual disasters.

Our first stop was a steeply-sloping tract owned by Georgia-Pacific (G/P). "I often take my daily constitutional here," he explained pointing up the angular logging road. The road, he says, was poorly constructed. "See, there's no drainage on either side; nowhere for the water to go. You'll see the results of this kind of road building as we head up into the watershed."

More troubling, were the company's chemical spraying practices. Herbicides were used here to kill competing vegetation and Millard notes that when heavy rains follow spraying, the chemicals leach into the nearby river. While displaying little regard for the safety of the community's water supply, G/P apparently has a similar lack of concern for its own employees. "I've seen crews of Mexicans spraying this stuff on at least five occasions," he says. "I've never seen them wearing protective clothing."

We get back into the truck and head toward the Siskiyou National Forest. "See that building over there?" he says, pointing to a large structure with a blue metal roof. "That's our million dollar water filtration plant."

Given Powers diminutive size and location, it should have had some of the purest drinking water in the world. When I voiced my surprise, Millard explained that logging and grazing practices had so fouled the water with sedimentation and manure, that the tiny community was forced to bear the cost of building an expensive filtration system. I wondered aloud if the system would remedy chemical spraying? He thought not.

For many months, Millard had noticed a steady procession of log trucks hauling old-growth timber past his home; trees released under provisions of the salvage rider. He downshifts as we make our way up a muddy logging road toward their source. The road follows a steeply-banked creek which Millard remembers fondly. "Over the years, I must have caught 1,000 trout on this stream," he said. "But then G/P logged up here several years ago and used chemicals. The fish disappeared for two years."

We go only a short way before we reach the first slide. A section of road is missing. It slid into the trout stream below leaving a brown scar on the hillside. "I want to take you up toward the divide between the Coquille and Rogue rivers, but we'll have to go a different way."

The approach to the divide is steep, and the dirt road treacherous in the light but steady rain. But Millard has been a logger most of his life and he expertly maneuvers the two-wheel drive truck up the slope. Evidence of past logging operations abounds. Most of the remaining trees are young, spindly, and crowded, genetically identical single-species Douglas fir. But eventually we reach a grove of old-growth. "I wanted to show you this, because it was here that a citizen's watch group I belong to was able to halt a timber sale on extremely steep terrain."

Indeed, the land falls away abruptly to our left, held in place by the ancient roots of stubborn trees. The difference here is striking. The trees are tall and majestic and the forest holds a diversity of species including cedar and hemlock. The understory is lush and there is a silent reverence in the spaces between the living pillars.

"They didn't cut it, but they did something else in a subsequent sale. They dragged out every fallen and decaying tree on the forest floor."

"Why in the world would they do that?" I wondered.

Millard just shook his head. The reason, of course, was obvious. They took the trees because they were marketable. My puzzlement was directed more toward the damage such an operation would do to the ancient grove. Fallen


"Salvaging" old-growth in the watershed above Sand Creek

trees play a crucial part in the health of the forest system. They store and release water, are home to insects critical to the process of decay and renewal. As they decompose, they enrich the soil and may serve as nurselogs, providing nutrition to growing seedlings. It made no sense. It was like destroying the nursery.

Such deeds, however, are not without consequence, and we would see the results on the far side of the ridge.

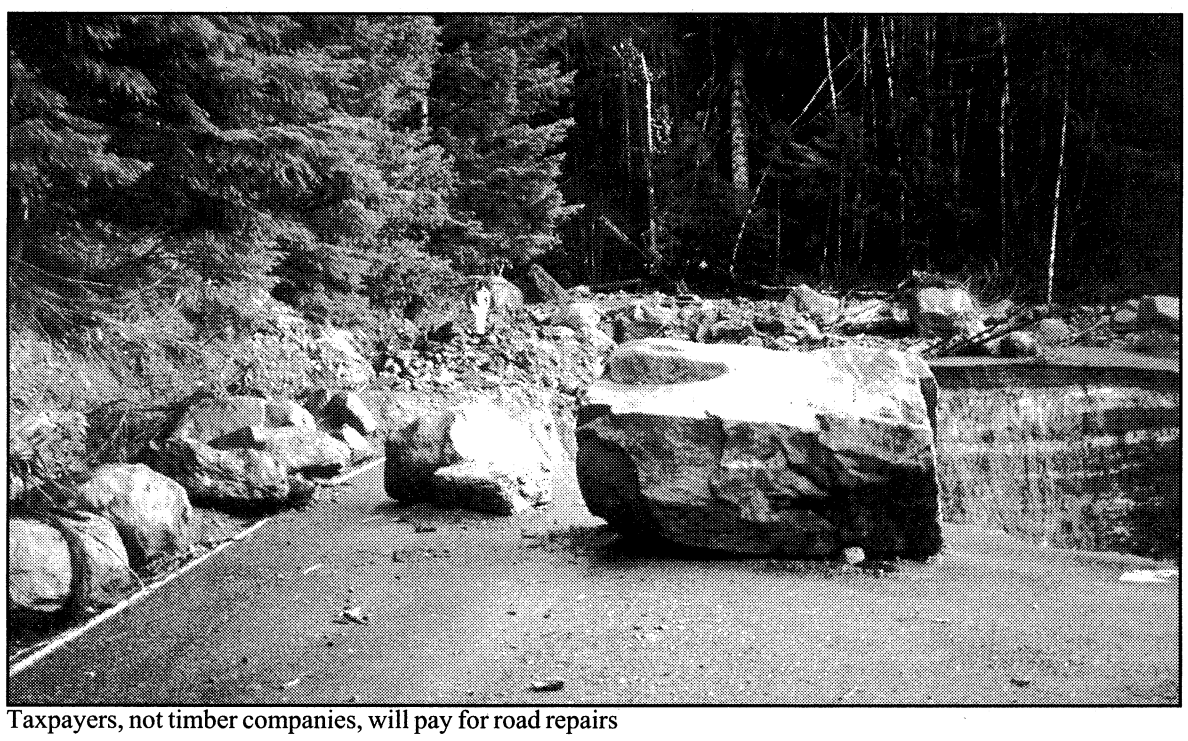
storms dropped rain on barren hillsides, leftover slash and mud were washed down the creekbed smashing everything in their path.

As we drive further upstream, the damage intensifies. McCurdy Creek has been scoured by slash and piles of it have been bulldozed across the road and dumped onto the slope above the river into which they will eventually slide. A bit further up the road, Delta Creek shows signs of major damage.


The results of logging above Sand Creek

We descend the same road to a paved Forest Service road that winds along the South Fork of the Coquille and links Powers with the town of Agness. Two miles upstream, we come to a series of creeks that cross under the road and spill into the river. The first, Hall Creek, shows signs of damage from logging debris. As earlier

Boulders have been disturbed and large mounds of twisted logging debris have been pushed to the side of the road. The drainage is much wider than it previously was, because plants and trees that lined both sides of the creek have been torn loose by the avalanche of mud and rubble.


Taxpayers, not timber companies, will pay for road repairs

But all of this pales compared to the destruction at Sand Creek. We are forced to stop well before we reach the creek, our path blocked by trees and boulders. Just ahead, the road has completely blown out. Boulders, the size of compact cars, are strewn about like so many pebbles. Trees lay in tangled piles like monstrous pick-up sticks. A section of road perhaps two hundred feet long and twenty feet deep is simply gone. It is hard to imagine the force of the raging torrent that swept through this drainage. Millard points uphill. Near the ridgeline, I can see evidence of recent logging.

We take a few photographs and drive back in silence. After a time he tells me that the Forest Service says it doesn't know where it will get the money to repair the road. That, however, should be no mystery. They'll get it where all government agencies get their money, from the taxpayers who not only subsidize the timber program, but are forced to pay for its ancillary damage.

Although the destruction is shocking, it is not unusual. It is, in fact, indicative of what is happening throughout the Northwest and, indeed, wherever industrial logging is allowed to supersede all other forest values. In the wake of industrial deforestation, both nature and the communities directly dependent on it, struggle to stay afloat.

As for Powers, despite the many scars both visible and hidden, the town still retains much of its rural charm, as nature tenaciously continues to try and heal itself. But too much has been taken, too quickly, for too long. Millard does not object to people making a living. He objects to the damage; to the indifferent and wholly preventable impacts of industrial resource extraction. He objects to a system that seeks value but ignores values; a system that foolishly claims to profit from depleting streams and rivers of fish, poisoning the water and land with chemicals, and stripping the hills of forest cover.

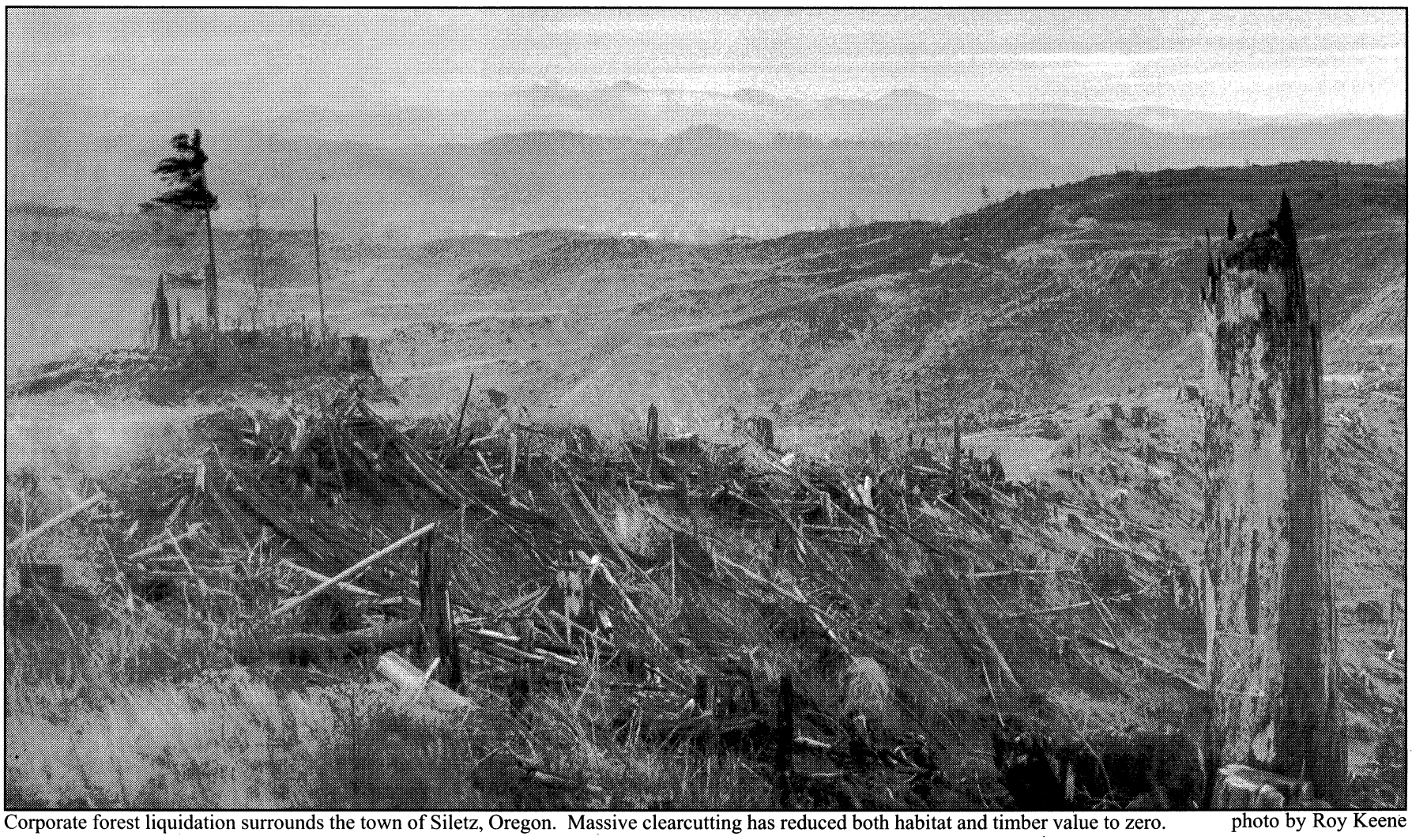
The truth of it, Millard sadly recalls, was known all along. "I'd suspect modern folk would never believe that loggers 60 years ago ever worried about running out of timber to cut. But I'll tell you they did. Among all the trivia, gossip, and talk—and loggers were terrible gossipers—there would be the occasional murmured speculation: '...wonder how much longer it'll last?'"

In his lifetime, Homer Millard has seen his home become impoverished. What is left, is not what was once here. His family, he observes, has made Oregon its home since 1845. The natural world they encountered was much richer then. In the space of several generations the rate of decline has surpassed the rate of recovery. He wonders, too, how long it can go on.

We return to his home. The cat greets us with wary eyes. I thank Millard for his time and we shake hands briefly. I look at him with admiration. At 81, he remains vitally alive and fully engaged. I admire this man's courage, his tireless commitment, his perseverance, his optimism, and his love of the land. With sadness, it occurs to me that I may possibly never see Homer Millard again. A sudden wave of affection and appreciation washes over me and I have an impulse to hug him. But I don't. Instead, I get into my car, wave one last time, and head back home the way I came.

Taking the Fight to the Corporate Forests

by Roy Keene



Corporate forest liquidation surrounds the town of Siletz, Oregon. Massive clearcutting has reduced both habitat and timber value to zero. photo by Roy Keene

*F*or thirty years Northwestern conservationists have been fighting with the timber industry over "rock and ice" wilderness protection and, more recently, with the federal government over forest management. Continually settling for less than a call for "no more logging," many conservation groups are still enabling industry's entrenchment in our forests. In an obvious attempt to privatize the intact remnants of our public forestlands, industry digs in deeper at every opportunity. Although corporate forest practices have caused most of the region's critical habitat degradation, overcutting, log shortages, and job losses, the struggle to conserve forests in the Northwest has been cleverly confined to public lands.

Conservation is Compromised

Often thought to be dominated by public lands, the Pacific Northwest would seem to suffer the least from exploitative private forestry practices. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Although less than half of the region's forests are in private ownership, over three quarters of the logging now occurs in these largely corporate forests. To the detriment of water quality, wildlife, fish, and "downstream" human populations, the largest share of the logging in the Northwest is, by far, the least regulated.

At President Clinton's historic Forest Summit in Portland, Oregon, participants had a chance to address private forest practices and regional log exports. Corporate forest liquidation and private log exports, the two major documented causes of the region's domestic timber shortages, were not mentioned even by the environmentalists sitting at the round table. Addressing private forest practices was simply not considered politically correct. Instead, the Summit participants jointly blessed further compromising our federal forests and the continued liquidation of public old growth as solutions for regional timber "gridlock".

Bolder Conservationists

Earlier democratic champions were much bolder. Gifford Pinchot, demonized by the timber industry of his day, led a national movement to federally regulate private forestry. His efforts culminated in the 1930's with the visionary National Plan For American Forestry. Unlike President Clinton's politically compromised Northwest Forest Plan, this bold plan addressed both private and public forests, acknowledging that forests are not constrained by maps and deeds. The Copeland Plan, as it was often called, recognized the importance of restricting destructive logging on private lands and formed the basis for federal regulation of industrial forest practices under Roosevelt's National Recovery Act, only to be struck down later in a Republican controlled Supreme Court decision. The Plan was successful, however, in expanding the National Forest System through the acquisition and restoration of ravished private forestlands in the Southern and Eastern United States.

To the detriment of water quality, wildlife, fish, and "downstream" human populations, the largest share of the logging in the Northwest is, by far, the least regulated.

Today's forest conservation movement has yet to catch up with the vision or the goals of this landmark conservation effort to reform private forest practices. The corporate promoters of various salvage riders and "forest health" logging schemes—the main purchasers of federal timber—are also major private forest owners. Prior to the 20th century, many northwestern corporate forests were public domain, until "fronted" to the timber industry by corrupt western congressmen, never again to be available to the public. Why, then, a century later, are these corporate forest "rights" still treated by many forest conservationist as an untouchable shrine?

The Myth of Responsibility-free Private Property Rights

The private property manifesto preached by the wise users has apparently permeated the conservation movement. We should remind ourselves of the social reality of not-so-sacred private property rights. Private property is not, in spite of myth, "untouchable". Local governments exercise legitimate control over a private property owner's activities through zoning laws designed to minimize the loss of value or enjoyment of one owner's property due to the actions of another. The taxation of personal income and property creates de facto liens on private property by local and federal governments, who can confiscate property if taxes aren't paid. Private property can also be condemned for purposes relating to the "public good," such as building a highway, a dam, or conserving a watershed. Private property as a sacred, untouchable "right," without attendant responsibilities is a dangerous myth and does not exist.

For that matter, the public also has certain property rights. There are laws whose common origins date back to early Europe prohibiting wasting soil, fouling the air and water, and destroying the forests. In the Northwest, the water that flows in private forest belongs to the public, as do the fish and wildlife. The public has the right to collect taxes on private land, yet

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concedes huge exemptions to private forest owners. Is it unreasonable for us to receive equal respect for our "rights," or to demand reforms of the destructive logging practices that degrade our forest resources?

Private Forest Practices Don't Protect Public Resources

Throughout the Northwest, the overcutting of private forests and exporting of private logs continues to put incredible logging pressure on public forests. Salmon habitat continues to be methodically eradicated by industrial "forestry" practices. City watersheds are routinely polluted by harsh and excessive upstream logging. Last winter's damaging floods and lethal landslides were exacerbated by clearcut logging practices which represent the Region's shameful silvicultural "norm". In spite of the waste and destruction, industrial forest practices are still largely unaddressed and unchecked by forest conservationists. Nor is wasteful and destructive private forest logging curbed by existing forest practice rules.

Oregon's forestry officials claim to have the most progressive private forest practice regulations in the region. Their much lauded rules, however, still allow a corporate forest owner to quickly strip 85% of every square mile of forest. Last winter, in Oregon's Coast Range, a slide roaring out of a huge clearcut above killed a family living below, yet the State still allows clearcutting on steep slopes above residential areas. In spite of endangered salmon runs and the voluntary "protection" plan now replacing endangered species listings, critical headwaters are still being denuded and three quarters of the forest canopy over fish-bearing streams can still be logged away.

Corporate industry, driven strictly by quarterly profits, will dodge any "voluntary" logging reforms that reduce opportunities to profitably liquidate forests and export logs. When a failing CEO needs to show profits, or the value of the yen rockets above the dollar, Northwestern forests will fall to massive cutting. Almost two million acres of corporate timberland changed hands in Oregon alone over the last few years. Many of these acres are now being rapidly cut over to repay venture capital, with the new owners continuing to log public forests while liquidating their own. Meanwhile, timber corporations sit in meetings with environmentalists, government representatives, and Indian tribes, and continue the endless talks about saving critical salmon habitat, two-thirds of which is in private forests.

Voters Can Force Logging Reforms

Twenty five years ago, forest conservationists were successful in reforming California's comparatively archaic private forest practices. They were able to force logging reforms on an angry and resistant timber industry by educating citizens and prevailing in the legislative process. Classic clearcuts are no longer permitted in California, and retention cutting, where a distinct percentage of trees are left, is mandatory. Timber operators are held accountable by licensing. A site-approved forest plan is required prior to logging, and streams are buffered from logging to a higher degree than anywhere else in the west. Prior to the passing of significant forestry reforms, there had been the usual endless talk and rumors of voluntary improvements. In the end it took regulation to produce reform.

The beginnings of a long overdue reconciliation of private forest "rights" with public well being and common forest resources is underway in Oregon. There is a growing grassroots effort to restrict irresponsible and abusive logging in private forests through the voter initiative process. Corporately controlled state legislators may be able to resist conservationists, but to ignore the voters is politically suicidal. But as of yet, few of the state's major conservation groups are actively supporting budding efforts to reform private forest practices through the initiative process. They are apparently waiting for the timber industry to self correct!

One version of a reform initiative, currently gathering signatures in Oregon, seeks to replace clearcutting with tree retention cuts. Forest owners will be required to maintain a threshold density (commonly referred to as "basal area" in forestry jargon) of trees better than 11 inches diameter at breast height (DBH). On the average acre of private forest in Oregon, this implies that each timber stand will have to be fifty years old or better to provide sufficient leave trees of this diameter. If passed by the voters, this initiative will not guarantee "sustainable" forestry, but it will help to reduce logging-exacerbated flooding, landslides, water pollution, species extinction, and aesthetic degradation. By potentially reducing the rate of cut in the private forest, the initiative will also slow forest liquidation, thereby reducing cyclic timber shortages.

Reform Requires Good Models

There are various examples in the Northwest of ecologically and economically successful logging that leave a significant retention of trees and generous stream buffers. Retention cutting, far kinder to streams and wildlife, is also socially more acceptable and aesthetically more pleasing. The power of retention forestry models to improve on clearcutting can not be overstated. Reform will, in part, be catalyzed by the recognition of good examples and by resultant pressure from the public for higher standards.

Designating prudent models or "templates" that show successful alternative forest practices helps to intelligently engage the public and policy makers with reasonable logging reforms. A good template will illustrate the ecological gains and long term economic benefits weighed against immediate timber dollar losses from various levels of retention cutting and riparian reserves. Good logging looks comparatively good, and examples can effectively be visually contrasted with wasteful practices. When people see that forests have been carefully and selectively logged in consideration of a full range of values and resources, the folly of liquidating them is glaringly evident.

Focusing Forest Practice Reform Where it is Most Needed

Today, most of the logging damage to soil, air, and water quality, species habitat, and the downstream human environment is occurring in private forestlands. As increasing flood severity and the growing number of endangered salmon runs continue to bring private forest practices under scientific and public scrutiny, conservationists have a strategic opportunity to promote logging reforms. Bringing about substantial reforms in the region's vast and potentially highly productive industrial forests will, in part, help to relieve pressure to log public forests.

For fifty years, the timber industry has exerted a continually negative influence on our forests, it's time to begin exerting a positive influence on theirs. For fifty years we've been fighting industry in our forests, it's time to take the fight to their forests!

Patti Keene examines a natural seedling sprouting up in a multi-age Doug fir forest that has been logged three times over thirty years, doubled in volume, and quadrupled in timber value. photo by Roy Keene

These Days

by Susi Klare

These days, signs are provided on clearcuts.
They label what happened, New Forest, just in case you wondered.
They tell you what year it was planted.
I see them by the roads where I live.

Where I live once was forest. When I came young, it was old.
I played in the forest where I live (the once-upon-a-time forest).
Soft carpet cushioned bare feet. Miniature flowers covered moss-upholstered seats.

The signs are probably planted to answer passing minds.
Querulous motorists who might question
suddenly bared crests, naked buttes in plain view.
Centuries of secrets
stripped.
Seared by hot sun.

(Some things aren't meant to be seen.)

Canyon cleavage, cool shadowed stream.
Green pool conceals redd! Coho egg nest.
She lays.
He sprays.
Salmon sex. (Some things are made to be hidden.)

But I want truth in labeling these New Forests.
They don't list the ingredients.
I fear they forget too much.

I eat spring. Bring it home in salads.
Pluck red-stemmed bouquets of miner's lettuce, flowers palest pink.
Graze green sour wood sorrel. Its purple-veined white blossoms.
Nibble wild violets. Heart-shaped leaves and dainty yellow blooms.

The signs don't list ingredients: atrozene, garlon, triclopyr, kerosene.

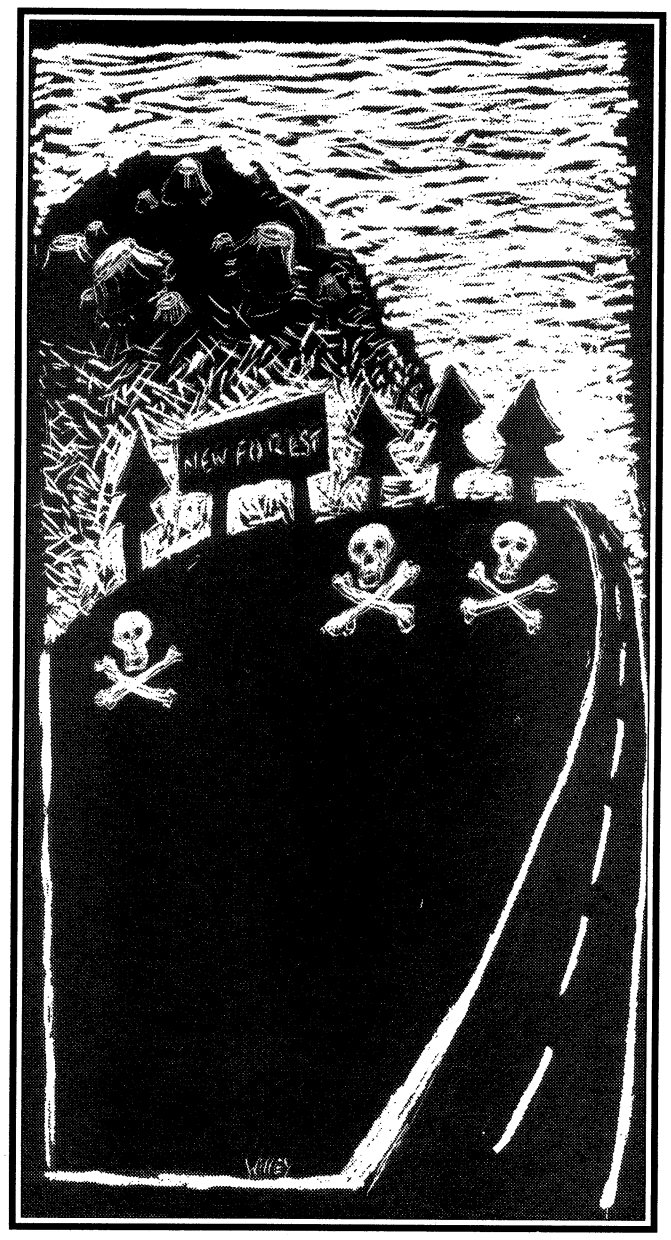
Like bear, I feast of forest berries.
Along streams, salmonberry, tangerine glow.
At the edges, thimbleberry, redder than red.
In arboreal shadow, red huckleberry, baubles infused with light.
Leather-leafed salal, starchy purple staple.
My teeth tear from bush evergreen huckleberry, black clustered mouthfuls.

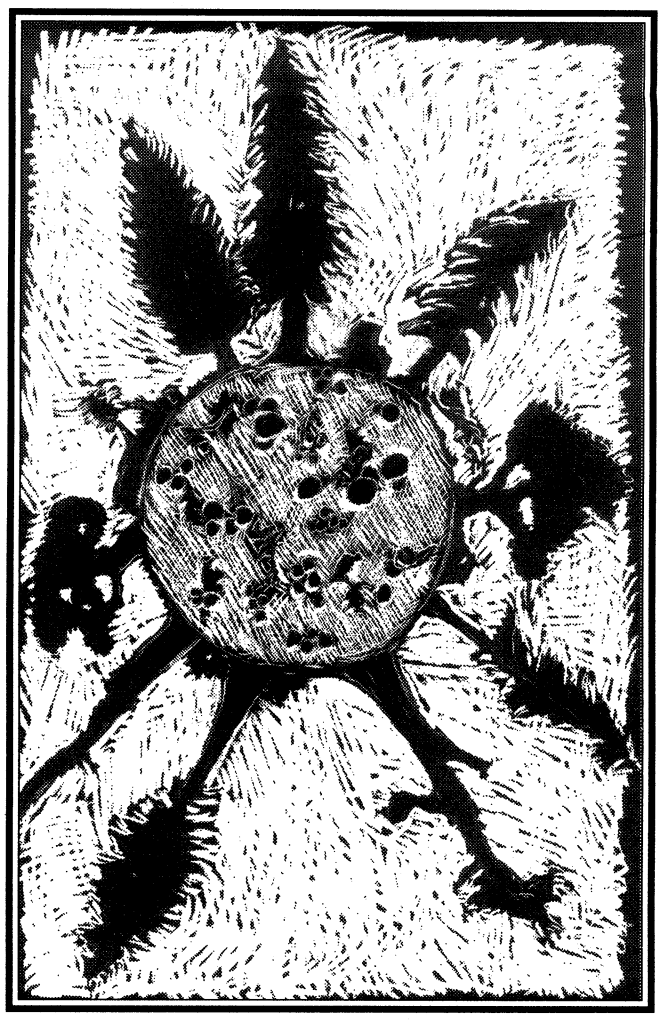
Under present rein, plants with leaves are not permitted to live in the New Forest where I live.
Where I live,
designer trees, genetically engineered to grow faster on a helicopter-fed chemical diet,
stand stranded.
Alone
in ordered rows.

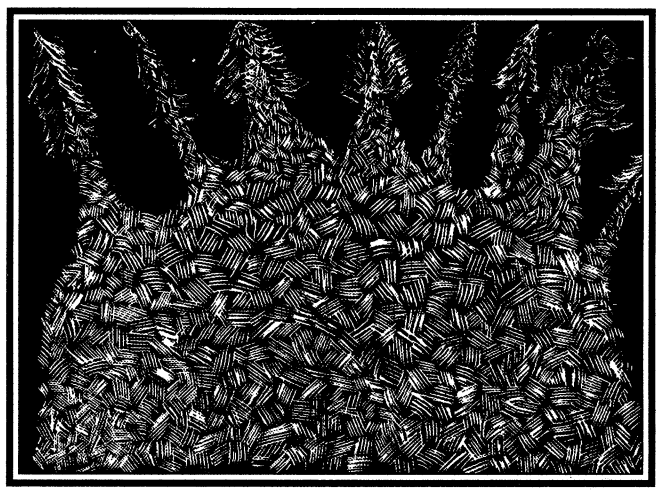
Who has standing in the New Forest?
Not
woman-healing Pacific yew, curing breast, ovarian cancer. Three trees (100 years old)
save one life. One mother, sister, lover, wife.
Not
lacy dainty hemlock, straddling ancient fallen fir,
intended for lofty climax of late-successional process.
Not
fallen Douglas fir nurse log--nutrient storage tank, savings account, link to past,
home to lush community, stable structure holding the slope, holding soil, holding water, mosses,
liverworts, ferns, shrubs, insects, amphibians, mammals.
Holding life.

Who has standing in the New Forest?
Not
gentle aromatic cedar, spirit sacred to the People--Salish, Nootka, Tlingit, Makah, Haida.
"Tree of Life," providing home, shelter, graceful dugout canoe.
"Healing Woman," giving tough flexible fiber.
"Rich Woman Maker," supplying soft waterproof clothes.
"Long Life Maker," spirit sacred to the People
Not
lungwort lichen, living high like flying squirrel in crown of centuried fir.
Gray-green crumpled oddity dropping from canopy to feed soil food captured from sky--
five to none nitrogen pounds per year, per acre. Secured and delivered by *Lobaria oregana*.
Not
mycorrhizal fungi--invisible microscopic threads beneath the surface,
weaving the forest together.
Billions of miles of delicate filament extracting nutrients, nitrogen, water.
Preparing roots to feed on soil. Resisting pathogens. Immune system of the forest.
Mycorrhizal fungi mantled plant roots (unnoticed) for four hundred million years.

TRICLOPYR IS HIGHLY TOXIC TO MYCORRHIZAL FUNGI
(the signs don't have warning labels).







Now, scientists scrutinize soil,
start to suspect humble foundation. Unseen underground secrets. Inner workings.
Soil--placenta of the earth.

Following fall's first rain, I am a fungus eater,
like deer mouse, creeping vole, red-backed vole, northern flying squirrel.
On gently rotting forest floor, softly stalking supper.
Learning from the forest
where to look, how to see what is hidden.
Poked-up needles tell a story. Lifted leaves describe disturbance.
Pushing through, moist emergence, head crowning, forest birthing--
King Boletus!

A fragment remains where I live.
Where I hunt chanterelle, needle-toothed dentinum, oyster mushrooms, angel wings.
Where I find sanctuary, cathedral, ashram, refuge, ark.
A remnant of the once was forest.

Garlon is highly toxic (the signs don't have warning labels) to fungus.

Highly toxic, and it's not just poison.
Helicopters rain white pellets of urea to replace nitrogen lost with topsoil scraped loose by felled timber.
Dying giants dragged up mountain side rake raw wounds. Rude gashes, ravaged by winter rain.
Truncated roots rot, no longer bind soil to rock.

Centuries come undone.
Mudslide.
Slope failure.
Silted streams.

When I was young, winter was a time to wonder.
Time to dream in the once was forest by morning stove, sipping tea.
Watching fog float through treetops across the way.
Masts of ancient ships
drifting in and out
defined by fog.

When I was young (when forest still stood around me), winter was the time to wander.
When leaves that fill the space between things--alder, ash, hazel, cascara, dogwood, vine and bigleaf maple--are bedded down for the season.
You see more in winter. The lay of the land. Contours.
Animal tracks--elk, coyote, deer, bear, skunk, raccoon, bobcat, fox, cougar, heron.
Beaver footprints get rubbed out by drag of heavy tail.
Cougar tracks (no claws) dent mud of beaver tail. Beaver feast?
I seek some subtle clue, when...Suddenly!
Splashing eruption--airborne steelhead, skyward bound, flings aroused fishself (flouting beaver dam) into higher pool.
Bear waits
for consummation. Relieves spawned-out floating fish of decomposing flesh.

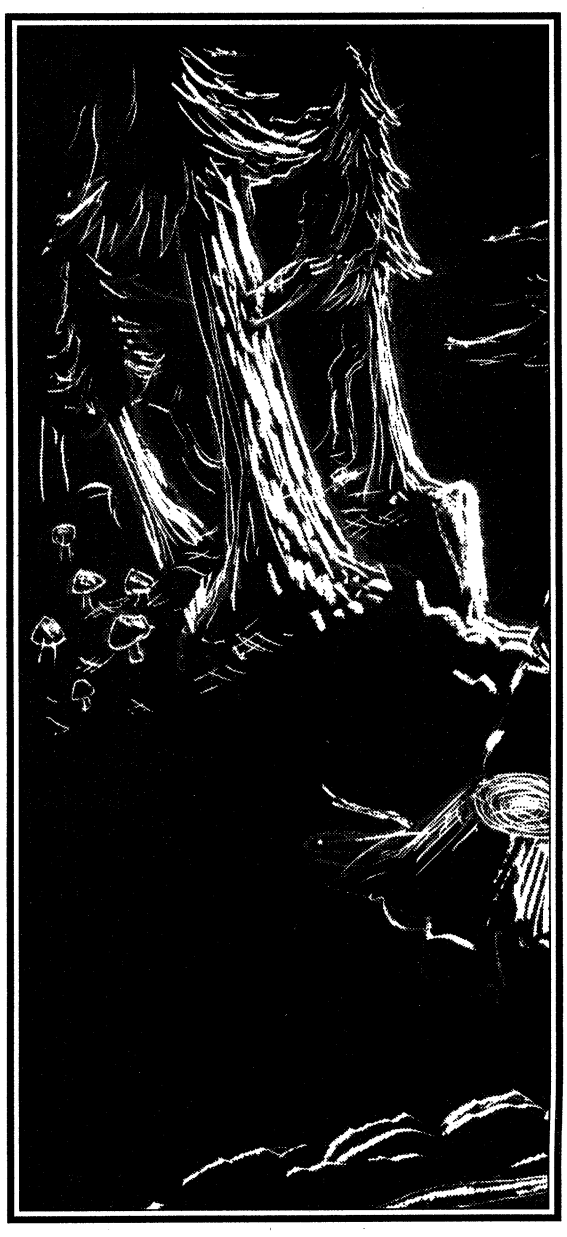
These days, pools fill with mud, where I live.
Red eggs entombed.
Sun glares where it never did. Water warms where it never should.
Fish flounders in stranded confusion, so close to finish of ten thousand mile pilgrimage.
This can't be my home!
How can
this
be home?

Where I live,
during the first dry days of spring (when leaves emerge in tender birth),
helicopters spew a lethal rain--atrozene, garlon, kerosene, tricl0pyr--to kill *competing* vegetation.
Red alder--protective scab on grated flesh, repairer of land, short lived, rapidly decaying, nitrogen-fixing soil builder.
You cover, cool, soothe, heal.

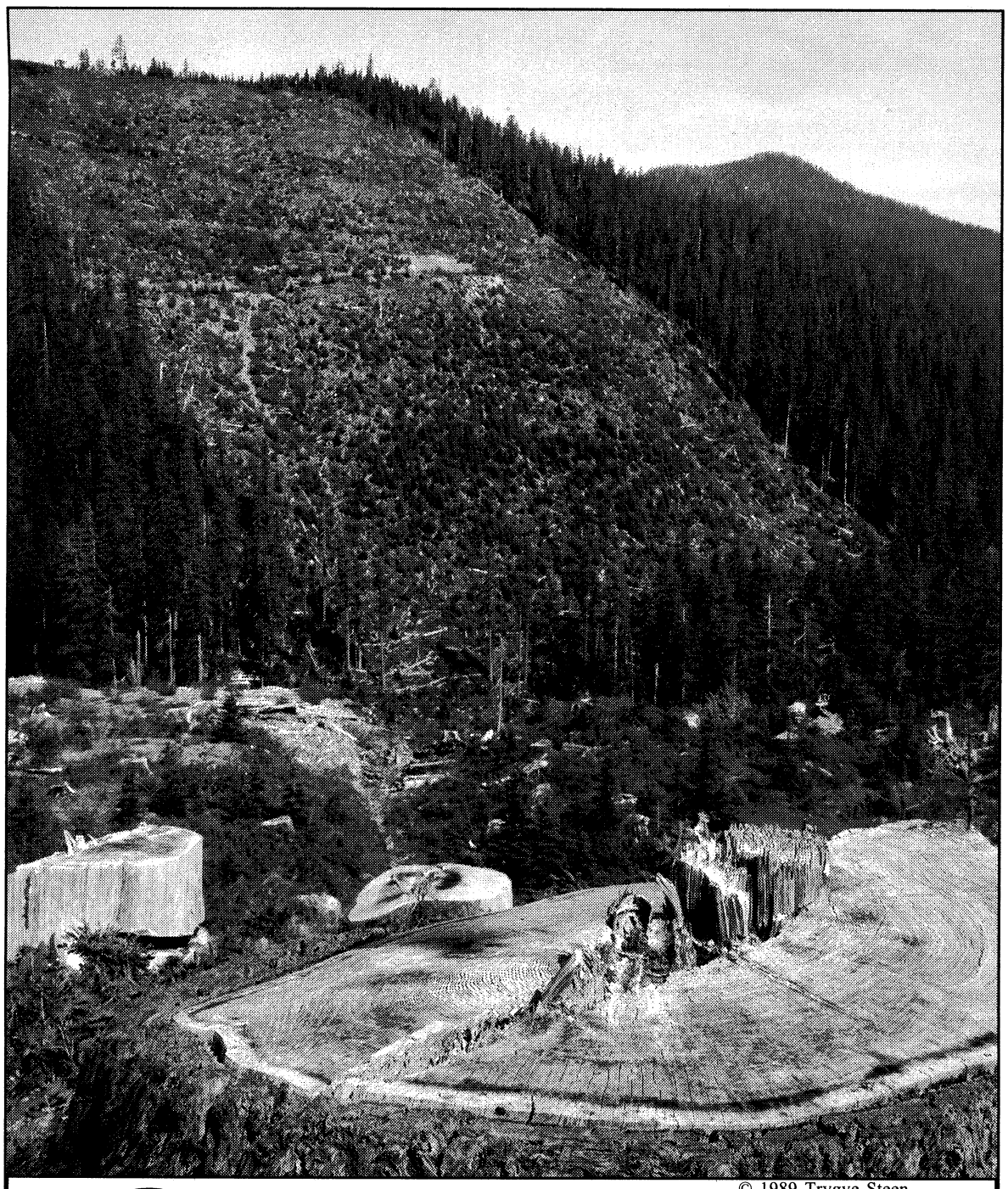
Deadly brew
kills all that leafs
and more.
Not mentioned on the label: carcinogenic compounds
(chronic toxicity tests are not available to the *public*),
genetic damage, persistent in soils, toxic to fish, contaminates surface and ground water supplies.

At home,
where I live, watching westerly sickle moonset dusk,
I face naked mountain slope, freshly flayed flat-topped humps
across the way from where I live, eat, breed, give birth, suckle, ripen.
Where once lion screamed awake my pounding heart.

Yes!
I howl for the once was forest.
Yes!
Howl for heart of dog-chased cougar.
Bear, whose mudprint claws forever pierce *my* heart.
Yes,
howl across coast range canyon to piercing points of moon.
Hear my cry unsilencing the night!
Hear the echo answer
across from where I live.



Artwork by Anthony Willey



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About the Native Forest Council

The Native Forest Council is a nonprofit, tax-deductible organization founded by a group of business and professional people alarmed by the willful destruction of our national forests. We believe a sound economy and a sound environment need not be incompatible, and that current forestry practices are devastating to both.

Therefore, it is the mission of the Native Forest Council to provide visionary leadership, to ensure the integrity of native forest ecosystems, without compromising people or forests.

ForestVoice

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