

Forest Voice

Fall 2001

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FREE

America: The Beautiful

Conservation is Patriotic

By Timothy Hermach, founder and president

September 11, 2001. Each of us will remember it in our own way. But all of us will share memories of the initial disbelief, giving way to anger and fear, then sadness for those we lost.

I was at the office early that morning when I first heard that terrorists had attacked the World Trade Center. As the rest of our staff began to arrive for the day, we watched the tragedy unfold on television: Shock. Confusion. Then the conflicting news reports. Another attack on the Pentagon and a plane crash in Pennsylvania. And phone calls to make sure friends and loved ones were fine.

Then I sent everyone home. To process. To grieve. To be with loved ones. And to ponder a world forever changed by one morning. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to the victims of this crime, and we continue to reach out to Native Forest Council members who have been touched by these events.

The strength of the Council comes from the diversity of its members: We are republicans and democrats. Hikers and hunters. Retired loggers and working professionals. Fiscal conservatives and social liberals. And we are all united for one clear purpose: saving America's public lands.

And each of us has opinions about September 11, 2001, and what we can and should do now. I've been moved, frustrated, surprised and inspired by the emails and phone calls I've received over the days and weeks following this terrible day in our nation's history: insight and opinions about terrorism, national security,

foreign policy and civil liberties. Discussions about what we've done in the past and what to do now. It goes without saying that these are the issues at the forefront of our nation's consciousness. At times, it seems as if nothing else matters, which is appropriate. Everyone has something to say about why this happened, what will happen now and how we can prevent such tragedies from ever happening again.

How does conservation fit in the context of today's political climate?

Does it fit at all?

First, I'd like to propose the notion (an unfortunately unconventional one) that conservation is patriotic. The U.S. flag is not often used as a symbol of environmentalism. I think that's a mistake. I see no contradiction between pride in America and preserving our nation's mountains, forests, rivers and streams.

Liberty, justice and democracy—These words have been misused and abused by corporate power brokers and politicians. But they are crucial principles that conservationists must embrace, use correctly and, if necessary, reclaim from the dishonest politicians, bureaucrats and their corporate masters who would sacrifice our nation's natural treasures to make a quick buck. And the health of America's environment, our source of clean air, water and soil, is most certainly an issue of liberty and national security.

(continued inside)

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Conservation

Tim Hermach, founder and president



(continued from cover)

Second, we must remain vigilant. It's been a troubling month, and it doesn't look as if the critical issues we face today will be gone anytime soon. We face new challenges, from the minor inconveniences of flying to the prospect of a long and protracted war, from daily anxieties about security to the deep wounds of loved ones lost. Appropriately, the nation is focused on this national crisis. But this focused attention also means there's little room for conservation in the political arena.

Our issue is in the dark, and the timber, oil and mining giants are more than willing to fill the political vacuum. As I write this, industry's friends in Congress are taking advantage of the darkness, tacking unrelated anti-environmental riders onto defense spending bills. Riders that will sacrifice America's most treasured natural places. Riders that others dare not question, because slowing down defense spending during this time in our history is, for obvious reasons, highly impolitic. Partisan bribery is not democracy and our leaders should not use this national tragedy for political leverage.

Third, we must remember the America we are fighting to save: a democracy with free speech, open exchange of ideas and a diversity of opinions. After the attacks, leaders of several mainstream environmental groups (see story, page 3) told

their members to pull ads, remove articles and refrain from saying anything that questioned current policies or the administration.

Certainly, I expect the nation to unite, focus on these critical issues and take time to grieve, reflect and heal from this attack on our homeland. I'd be worried if we didn't rally after such an attack on our own civilians. But censorship (self-imposed or otherwise) is un-American. The foundation of democracy is a diversity of opinions, and we are strengthened, not weakened, when we unite for our country but freely criticize federal policies we know to be fundamentally flawed. In fact, it is our duty to do everything we legally can to fight them.

While I welcome the increase in airline security, I question the wisdom of giving officials carte blanche to rescind the civil liberties we enjoy in a free society. Let's not let fear obscure our judgment. We owe it to one another, to our Constitution and to future generations to save the liberties we have fought—and continue to fight—so hard to preserve.

Finally, I invite you to do what you need to do to heal. We're all trying to put these events into some context for our daily lives. Like a snapshot, September 11 will someday have a veneer of perspective. In time, we'll understand its historical relevance. Right now, though, the wounds are still fresh. The anger and sadness are still raw. And our future is uncertain. Take the time you need to reflect and heal in your own way.

As for me, I'm going to take my two boys out into the woods. As autumn settles here in Oregon, the leaves along the McKenzie Pass are transforming from lush green into a brilliant palette of yellow, red and orange. The scenery won't erase the horrific images from September 11. I won't forget the historic importance of what direction our nation takes. And I will still mourn for the victims of this horrific attack. But I will take some time to appreciate the mountains and the forests that make our country so great. And spend some time with two members of the next generation—the generation that compels me to keep fighting for the forests. With liberty and justice for all. ■



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Submission Guidelines
We welcome unsolicited submissions that address issues relevant to public lands protection and support the Native Forest Council's mission. If you would like us to return your work, please include a SASE.

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 public land management practices are devastating to both.

The mission of the Native Forest Council is to fully protect and preserve every acre of publicly owned land in the United States.

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New Evidence: Old Growth More Valuable Than Previously Thought, Say Scientists

In September, a group of seven scientists called for the cutting of old growth forests west of the Cascades Mountains of Washington, Oregon and California. Their letter to federal forestry officials, David Peckham, professor emeritus in ecosystem studies at Oregon State University and six other scientists explain that scientific understanding of the importance of old growth has increased dramatically since 1994, when President Clinton orchestrated his Northwest Forest Plan. Under the plan, 24.5 million acres are slated for cutting, and federal agencies predict the plan will allow approximately 240,000 acres of old growth to be cut over the next decade.



Growing Opposition to Fee Demo Program

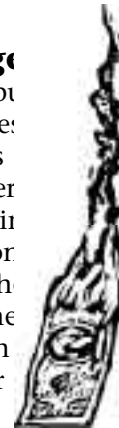
Hikers, climbers, campers and others across the nation are calling on Congress to end the Forest Service "Fee Demo" program before it becomes standard policy, noting that little more than half of the fees actually go toward the intended purpose of the plan: maintenance backlog. In October, Congress considered public comments during a hearing about the program. Several bills, including one to terminate the program, are currently under consideration in Congress.

Wyoming Businesses Call For End To Drilling

A group of about 50 businesses is asking President Bush to stop plans to drill for oil and gas near Yellowstone National Park, according to an August 29 report in *The Wall Street Journal*. The coalition of tourism-related businesses claims that drilling would drive away tourists, who visit the area for its natural beauty.

Forest Service Overspends Fire Budget

For the first time, the Forest Service will delay projects to cover the costs of fire suppression. Despite a fire season that was milder than last year's \$1.9 billion from Congress in 2000, the Forest Service overspent more than \$200 million fighting fires this year. This year, fires burned approximately one-fourth the number of acres as last year, but the agency spent twice as much per acre to fight the fires. Funds for campgrounds, trail construction and other projects have been put on hold to cover the costs.



Native Forest Council Update

It's been a busy summer for the Council. The taxpayers stand to lose millions in a timber-industry-orchestrated land exchange scheduled for Oregon's Umpqua Watershed. We've been working to stop the exchange and spread the word to the media and the public: It's a bad deal (see story, page 13). Council President Tim Hermach was invited to join the Roster of Experts at the Institute for Public Accuracy, a nationwide consortium of public policy researchers and analysts. We're also working to preserve protection for America's roadless areas (see map, page eight) and help build a national coalition opposed to the Forest Service Fee Demo program.

Sierra Club, NRDC Impose Self-Censorship

In response to the September 11 terrorist attacks, both the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) backed off from any criticism of the Bush administration, according to a September 17 Associated Press report. NRDC pulled an ad calling for reduced arsenic levels in water. The Sierra Club ordered staff to stop criticizing the Bush administration altogether.

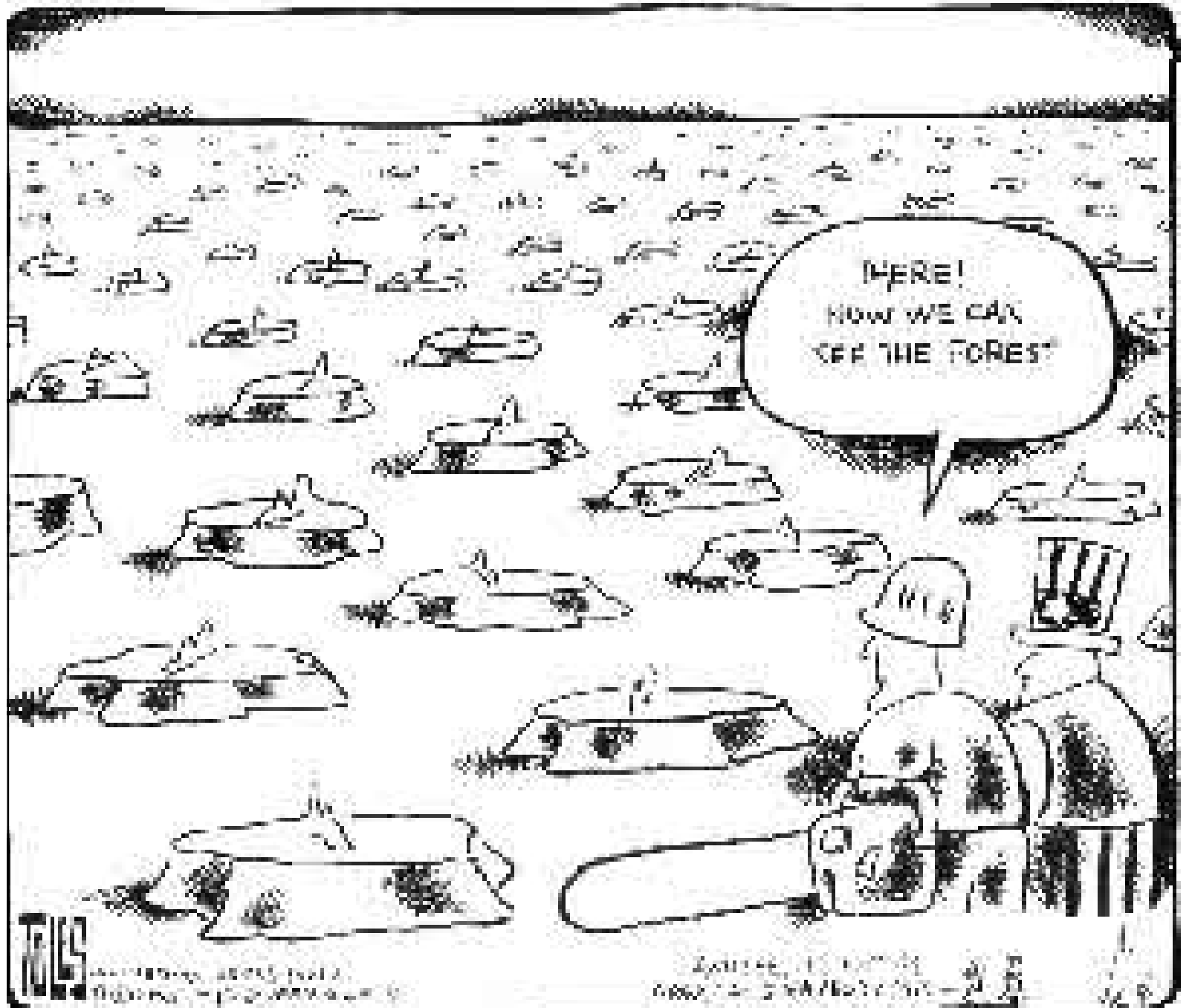
ATVs Ruin Land, Says Report

All terrain vehicles (ATVs) are damaging Alaska's public lands and land managers have few resources to stop them, according to a report written by a former national park superintendent. The report states that federal prohibitions against cutting new trails in National Parks are frequently violated when ATV operators go off trail. Many trails have been widened to several hundred feet and detour around streams and bogs, damaging the soil and vegetation and rerouting the streams. While ATV use has become more popular over the years, the number of enforcement agents has not increased. The report recommends closing some public lands to ATV access to preserve integrity and to allow for restoration.



Senate Tables ANWR Bill

The Senate tabled the defense authorization bill, S. 1438, September 25 after a refusal to withdraw an energy/drilling amendment that would allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Senators recognized the need for extensive debate of the energy bill, and refused to streamline the Defense bill with the amendment attached. Even if the amendment is removed from the defense bill, it will likely be attached to another quick-moving bill.



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AMERICA'S SERENGETI



Above: The transition from high mountain peaks to grasslands in the Rocky Mountain Front of the Lewis and Clark National Forest provides winter habitat for many species. Below: The Lewis and Clark National Forest and greater Bob Marshall/Glacier Wilderness Area provide countless recreation opportunities for backpackers, campers and hunters. Photographs courtesy of The Wilderness Society.

The Lewis and Clark National Forest

By Jessica Brittsan

A struggle as dramatic as the rocky spires that rise from the plains: the debate over gas drilling in the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

There is a place in Montana where the rolling grasslands of the plains meet the jagged, indigo peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Called "America's Serengeti," Montana's Lewis and Clark National Forest's open meadows and rocky hillsides teem with wildlife.

The 1.8-million-acre forest consists of seven separate regions, the largest of which is the Rocky Mountain Front. The 100-mile-long Front, adjacent to the Blackfoot Indian Reservation, extends south from the border of Glacier National Park and contains a section of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area.

The forest appears as it did when Lewis and Clark descended the Great Falls and took their first glimpse of the snow-covered peaks that stood between them and the West. All the original species, except buffalo, currently live in the region. Mountain goats and big horn sheep forage the rocky hillsides, leaping from ledge to ledge on sheer canyon walls. Herds of elk and mule deer graze the plains, and pure strains of westslope cutthroat trout swim in icy mountain streams.

The Front boasts the highest population of grizzly bears in the lower 48 states, and is one of the few places where bears wander their traditional habitat: the plains. It is a critical part of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, most of which is located at too high an elevation for many species to winter. The Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department ranked the five million-acre Glacier/Bob Marshall Wilderness Ecosystem in the top one percent of wildlife habitat in North America. The Front also provides a vantage point for hikers and hunters to explore the rugged beauty of the unique landscape.

Yet a struggle as dramatic as the rocky spires that rise from the plains is brewing over the use of the forest. Conservationists and gas companies are battling over a pocket of natural gas believed to lie under the Front. Drilling in the region has a long history, but land-use regulations have, up to this point, limited development. However, with recent increases in gas prices and the blessing of the Bush administration, oil and gas companies have renewed their interest in the region.

While gas companies say disruption of the region would be minor, those who oppose drilling believe that it will not only fragment wildlife habitat but also ruin the character of the region. "This is a unique area; it has other values than money," says Mark Good of the Montana Wilderness Association. "It is not an appropriate place for drilling."

Over the years, attempts to develop the Front have been met with vocal opposition from local communities. Maintaining the region's pristine appearance not only provides habitat for wildlife, but also supports many local communities, which depend on tourism, hunting and fishing.

"This area is of utmost importance to Montana sportsmen, outfitters and recreationists," wrote Senator Max Baucus, the sole Montana political leader voicing opposition to drilling, in a letter to Interior Secretary Gale Norton. "Opening the Front to oil and gas exploration could result in irreversible impacts to this beautiful yet fragile area that Montanans care deeply about." ■

Learn more about LCNF at www.forestcouncil.org.



The Threat

Gas and oil industries set their sights on the Rocky Mountain Front

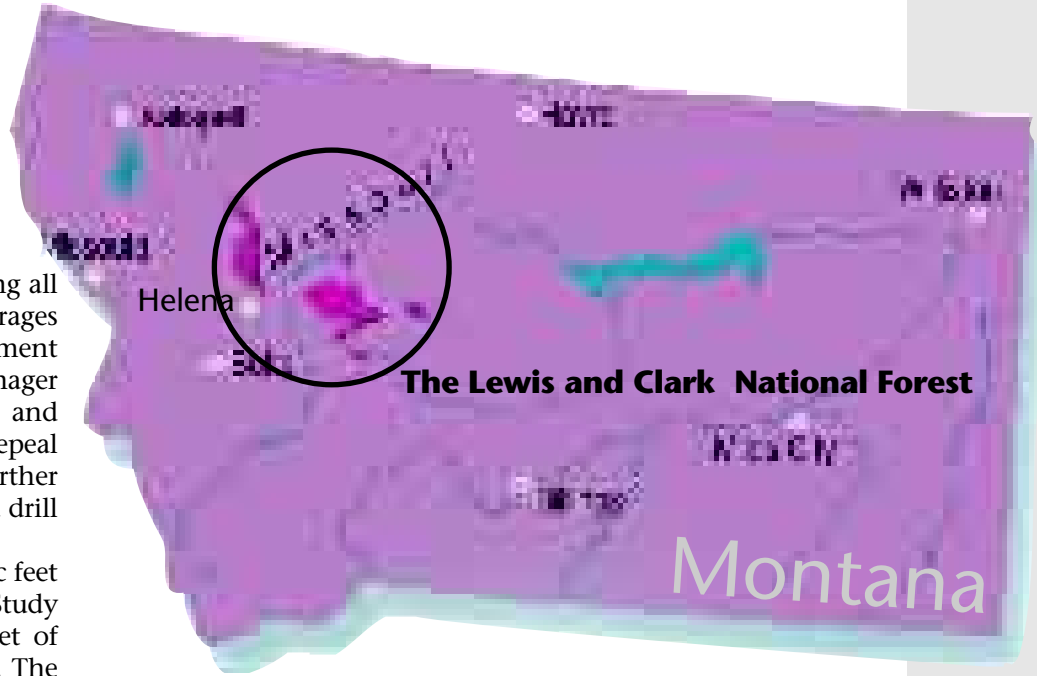
While drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) is the focal point of much opposition to the Bush Energy Plan, the Arctic is just one of many proposed drilling sites. The Plan also proposes opening all public lands to oil, gas and mineral exploration. It encourages mineral exploration, provides industry incentives for development on all public lands and removes individual forest manager autonomy. There is a very real fear in Montana's Lewis and Clark National Forest that the present administration will repeal a current ban on drilling leases and the Roadless Rule to further its energy agenda. Many believe action within the proposed drill areas could begin any time.

On average, the United States consumes 26 trillion cubic feet of natural gas each year. In 1989, a U.S. Geological Survey Study gave a 50 percent chance of finding 2.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem. The area includes the Rocky Mountain Front of the Lewis and Clark National Forest. However, a 1995 revision of the study brought the estimate down to 1.8 trillion cubic feet. Using the highest estimates, drilling in the region would produce enough gas to fuel the country for just a few months.

Regional estimates are largely based on productive drilling fields in an area with similar geographic features just across the border in Canada. Ironically, those who want to keep the Front off limits to drilling also look to its Canadian counterpart as an example. They point to the miles of roads, semi trucks, sparse wildlife, and an ever expanding number of gas wells and hillsides that are clearcut and leveled as evidence that drilling will disrupt the region.

Oil and gas industry officials have repeatedly said that impacts to the area will be minimal due to new technology, which allows drilling to leave a "light footprint." Peter Aengst of the Wilderness Society agrees that oil and gas development is not as wasteful as it used to be, but says industrial development of any kind is still damaging. "Show me a place where they have gone to full field development and not impacted wildlife," he says. He also opposes leases for exploratory drilling. "Once you let them get their foot in the door, they can blow it wide open if they want."

Over the past decades, gas and oil companies acquired a number of leases in the Front, most of which have yet to be developed. In 1997, under the direction of Forest Manager Gloria



Flora, a 15-year ban was placed on issuing new oil and gas leases in the Front. The ban, which withstood a number of legal challenges by industry groups, does not affect old leases. Before the 1997 decision, the Forest Service received thousands of submissions during a public comment period. According to the Montana Environmental Information Center, more than 80 percent of the comments supported the ban.

Aengst says that if development is allowed, the local economy will suffer. Hunters and backpackers won't use areas with sparse wildlife and industrial eyesores, he says. Maintaining the integrity of the region is important to local communities for many reasons.

One of these communities is the Blackfoot Reservation. The 200-square-mile Badger-Two Medicine area of the forest lies near the reservation and includes lands sacred to the Blackfoot Nation. Gas companies hold almost 50 leases in the area. Currently, the leases are suspended pending completion of a study to place the area on a list of historical sites. Elsewhere, leases are on hold pending additional environmental impact studies and challenges to their validity.

Mark Good of the Montana Wilderness Association recently visited a site on BLM land in the Front where Startech, a Canadian gas company, proposed to begin exploratory drilling. The area, just a half mile from the Forest Service boundary, is prime grizzly bear habitat. "They will have to clear and level the side of a hill, build roads into mountainsides, clearcut for pipelines to bring the gas down, plus vehicle traffic and a certain amount of infrastructure," he says. "It changes the character of an area." ■

Using the highest estimates, drilling in the region would produce enough gas to fuel the country for a few months.

Threatened Species

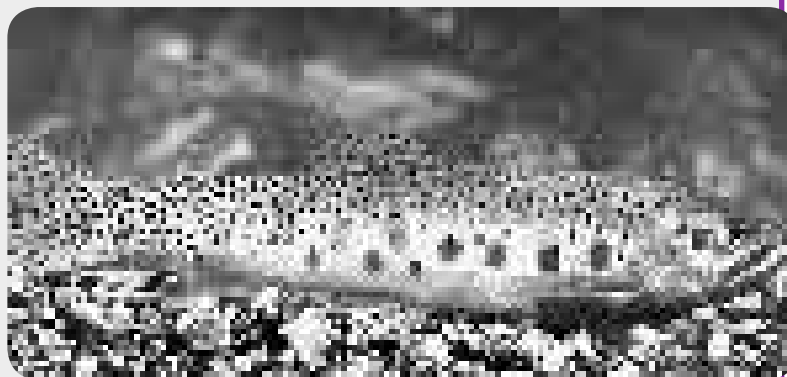
Westslope Cutthroat Trout: Native to Lewis and Clark

The westslope cutthroat trout crossed the Continental Divide into northwest Montana about 10,000 years ago from the upper Columbia River Basin. It is the only trout native to the streams of the Lewis and Clark National Forest. Currently, it occupies only three percent of its original historical range and 90 percent of the population is predicted to become extinct within the next ten years. Populations are threatened by loss of habitat and the introduction of non-native species such as the rainbow and brook trout. Conservation and restoration efforts by the Forest Service are currently underway to replenish the trout population.



Wolverine: Candidate for endangered list

The largest member of the weasel family, the wolverine is legendary for its strength and fierce disposition. They average 30 to 40 pounds and three to four feet in length. Primarily scavengers, wolverines are known to prey upon deer, wild sheep and elk and to drive wolf, mountain lion and bear away from a kill. This solitary and shy animal depends on untouched wilderness for survival. Although some trapping is still allowed, the wolverine is listed as a sensitive species within the Lewis and Clark National Forest. The exact number of wolverines still in existence is not known, but experts estimate that only about 1,000 survive in the lower 48. Listing as threatened or endangered is pending further study of the animal's numbers.



USDA Forest Service Photo

Grizzly Bear: Down to two percent of original habitat

When Lewis and Clark crossed into what is now Montana, they heard stories about large, ferocious, brown bears. During the troupe's almost daily encounters with the bear, they were amazed by its strength and numbers. Now, the grizzly bear, North America's largest and most majestic predator, is also one of its most endangered. The Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem provides one of the last remaining strongholds for the plains grizzly bear. Currently, bears range only two percent of their original habitat. Fragmentation of habitat zones and hunting reduced populations from an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 before the West was settled to the 1,000 that currently inhabit the lower 48 states. According to the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department, there are about 350 grizzlies in the northwest Montana Rockies.



From the Lewis and Clark journals: First encounter with a grizzly

"It was a most tremendous looking animal, and extremely hard to kill notwithstanding he had five balls through his lungs and five others in various parts. He swam more than half the distance across the river to a sandbar, and it was at least 20 minutes before he died; he did not attempt to attack, but fled and made the most tremendous roaring from the moment he was shot. We had no means of weighing this monster."

Meriwether Lewis
May 5, 1805

Staff Spotlight: Jessica Brittsan

Jessica Brittsan began working with Native Forest Council last June, filling the shoes of Ben Scott, who is pursuing a career in freelance photojournalism. Brittsan, a recent graduate of the University of Oregon School of Journalism, brings a wealth of publishing experience and a commitment to activism to her role as managing editor of the *Forest Voice*.

Born and raised in the Rogue Valley of southern Oregon, Brittsan learned to appreciate public lands at an early age. Her family enjoyed camping and hiking in Oregon's wilderness, and her father was an avid mountain climber. "As far back as I can



Family hiking trip: Brittsan, age five, sitting atop Mt. Lassen in Northern California's Lassen Volcanic National Park.

"As far back as I can remember," says Brittsan, "my dad was always taking us climbing. I think he dragged me up every mountain in Oregon by the time I was eleven years old."

"I got involved in journalism because I saw that, in order to change people's minds, they must first learn the facts."

remember," says Brittsan, "my dad was always taking us climbing. I think he dragged me up every mountain in Oregon by the time I was eleven years old."

As a student at the University of Oregon, Brittsan spent several months studying in Cape Town, South Africa. The experience was an important turning point for her, bolstering her resolve to become an activist. "South Africa opened my eyes to the world outside of the United States, and to the way things really were," she says. And I met people, smart people, who were involved with organizations and trying to change the world, not just make as much money as they can. When I came back to the states, I knew I wanted to do something more with my life."

Brittsan got involved with the student Women's Center, producing its newsletter. She also served on the editorial board of the student paper, edited another newsletter for the university's Multicultural Center and worked as an editor for a Romanian publishing company while living in Bucharest.

Journalism is a crucial, and often-ignored, piece of the conservation puzzle, says Brittsan. "I got involved in journalism because I saw that, in order to change people's minds, they must first learn the facts. Different people are fighting for the environment in different ways, but you have to let people know what's going on, particularly those who don't care or don't agree with us. We have to reach out to them. With the media the way they are today, publicity is a crucial part of everything we

do. And that's why I was drawn to the *Forest Voice* and Native Forest Council. We're saying conservation is patriotic: loving your country means preserving these natural resources. And we stick to the economic facts. We're reaching out to a much broader audience, explaining our basic message to people who aren't your typical 'environmentalists': Something belongs to you, they are taking it and your tax dollars are paying for it. That's a direct message that makes sense to everyone, no matter where they stand on other issues."

Brittsan still enjoys hiking in Oregon's wilderness and sailing on the Columbia River, but she hasn't cured herself of "the travel bug," she says. "I love Oregon: the mountains, the beaches and the forest. But I do get sick of the rain." Her long-term ambition is to travel the world as a freelance writer. "Everything on your back, walking down the gangplank onto a train. That's the best feeling in the world."

In the meantime, she's helping the Council get out the *Forest Voice*. Brittsan's extensive background, diverse experiences and indefatigable sense of humor make her a welcome addition to the Forest Council staff. ■

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Public Lands

THREATENED

Across the country, your public lands are being logged, mined and grazed at your expense. Here are a few highlights of events happening across the country. For more information on these and other hot spots, see www.forestcouncil.org.

Umpqua Land Exchange

The BLM and a private organization created by timber corporations formed a partnership to facilitate a swap of public and private lands in western Oregon's Umpqua Basin. The exchange will consolidate a current checkerboard ownership pattern of 675,000 acres. The swap has been negotiated in secret and \$6 million of taxpayer dollars have already been spent. The public stands to lose valuable forestlands, including old growth timber and salmon habitat.

Bridger-Teton National Forest

The Forest Service proposes development of the Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming for oil and gas extraction. The proposal includes building new roads and increasing timber sales in the forest, which is an important part of the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem. The majority of the area is currently roadless. Within this undeveloped wilderness lie old growth forests and tremendous wildlife habitat. Much of the proposed leasing area is within the grizzly bear recovery zone.

Sheep Flats Timber Sale

Known collectively as Sheep Flats, the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests in Colorado approved a timber sale of nearly 12 million board feet. Eleven million board feet of the sale will be logged from roadless areas, and 15 of the 19 miles of new road will be built within the Priest Mountain and Salt Creek roadless areas. This sale will cut more timber within roadless areas than was cut all across the Forest in 1997 (nine million board feet) and will result in the destruction of 768 acres of old growth spruce-fir and aspen.

Tongass National Forest

In one of southeast Alaska's most spectacular sections of wild country, the Forest Service plans to build 80 miles of new logging roads. The venture will cost taxpayers more than \$13 million to log 120 million board feet. The temperate zone rainforest of old growth spruce and hemlock constitutes one of the largest unprotected roadless areas in the Forest. The area provides habitat for many species, making it valuable to southeast Alaska's tourism, hunting and fishing industries.

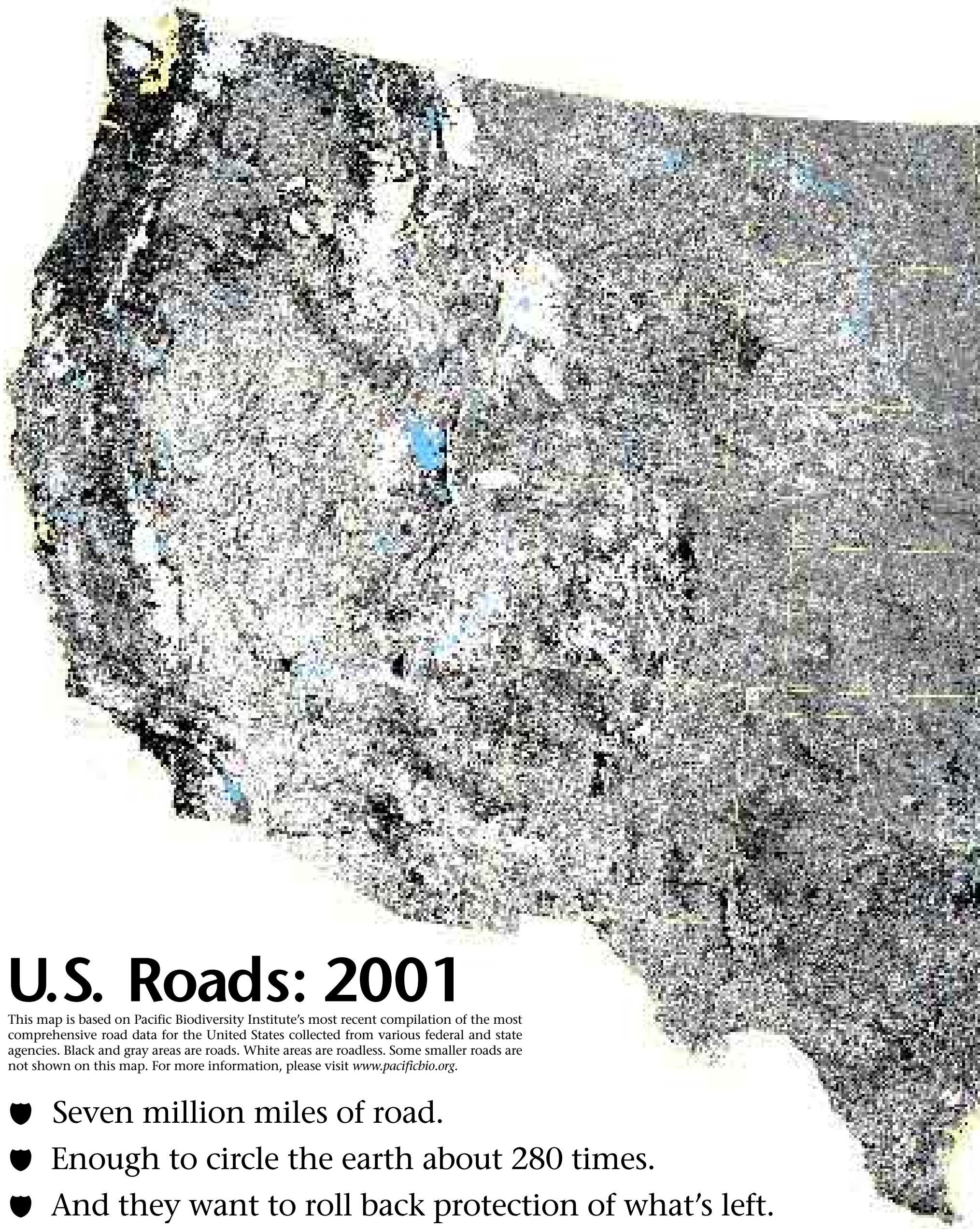
Talladega National Forest

The Alabama Department of Transportation and the Forest Service plan to extend the 27-mile Talladega Scenic Drive in the Talladega National Forest. The plan proposes extending the road 20 miles into the surrounding scenic area. The project will cost more than \$5 million. The extension will cause a major disruption to wildlife, and will lie near scenic hiking trails. The road will disturb the rural nature of the area and will be visible from many trails and vistas.

Other Hot Spots

- Wyoming's Red Desert—The Jack Morrow Hills Area, the largest unfenced area outside Alaska, is at risk of increased oil and gas drilling. This would degrade vital habitat and disrupt the historic and wild nature of the area.
- The Great Lakes—On September 13, the Michigan Natural Resource Department approved a plan to allow drilling for oil and gas beneath the Great Lakes. Despite strong opposition from local governmental officials, drilling will be allowed through the installation of slant wells on the shore of the lakes.
- ANWR—Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the most controversial portions of the Bush energy plan. Amendments to open the area to drilling are being tacked onto streamlined defense spending bills in an attempt to avoid debate.

NOT ENOUGH



U.S. Roads: 2001

This map is based on Pacific Biodiversity Institute's most recent compilation of the most comprehensive road data for the United States collected from various federal and state agencies. Black and gray areas are roads. White areas are roadless. Some smaller roads are not shown on this map. For more information, please visit www.pacificbio.org.

- ♥ Seven million miles of road.
- ♥ Enough to circle the earth about 280 times.
- ♥ And they want to roll back protection of what's left.



GH ACCESS?



Save What's Left.

Native Forest Council
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They're Still Trading Away the West



Three years ago, the *Seattle Times* ran a six part series on public land exchanges. Among other things, the report exposed a federal land exchange program that has traded away more than 1.5 million acres of public land, at a net loss to taxpayers. *Forest Voice* reprinted essential parts of the series (Winter 1999). In this issue, we continue coverage of the swaps, with two more segments from the series: one about an Arkansas land trade and another on how federal funding affects land exchanges. Also, we're reporting on a proposed land exchange that's just down the road from our home office in Oregon (see story, page 13). -Ed.

How the Public is Losing Trees, Land and Money

By Deborah Nelson, Jim Simon, Eric Nalder, and Danny Westneat of the *Seattle Times*

Nearly half of America's West is owned collectively by its citizens. The public land is rich with trees, ore and recreational wonder, and plenty of people—housing developers, resort builders, investors, timber and mining moguls, conservationists—pine for it.

These days, they're getting it—through trades. And although federal law requires that the taxpayers get full value in return, a *Seattle Times* investigation has found that often isn't the case. *Times* reporters found trade after trade where the public gave up more than it received.

In this report from the *Times*, we'll take you to the sites of some of these trades. We'll explain how the system regulating land deals is failing. And we'll explore ways to fix it.

Editor's Note

Pages 10, 11 and 12 are segments of Part 5 of a story originally appearing in the *Seattle Times* September 27 through October 2, 1998. Text, maps and charts © 1998 *Seattle Times*. Text, maps and charts reprinted with permission. Accompanying photographs and captions did not run in the *Seattle Times*, and appear courtesy of the Umpqua Watersheds organization and Roy Keene.



A typical view of what the public gets from land swaps. These cutover lands were inherited from Weyco through the Huckleberry Land Exchange in Washington. Over the years, stumps and their roots will rot out completely, rain waters will percolate through the cavities and steep slopes like this will unravel into the Greenwater watershed. Photo by Roy Keene.

Arkansas Land Trade Sails Through With Senator's Help

By Deborah Nelson, Jim Simon, Eric Nalder, and Danny Westneat of the *Seattle Times*

HOT SPRINGS, Ark.—For Weyerhaeuser and other timber companies, life is a bit easier here in the rolling hills that surround Bill Clinton's hometown.

The trees are scrawnier than in the Northwest, but you're still allowed to cut them down. The West's environmental wars never quite arrived here.

The two largest landowners in central Arkansas, the U.S. Forest Service and Weyerhaeuser, take pride in how well they get along: "Maybe it's a Southern thing," said Nick Finzer, a Forest Service supervisor here. "We don't fight like hell like they do out West."

And so when the company, the agency and a U.S. senator hatched a plan for the largest land trade in Forest Service history, they worked out the details in as relaxed a fashion as if they had just emerged from one of the steamy, mineral water baths for which this town gets its name.

They did no in-depth environmental study, even though more than 350 square miles of forest in Arkansas and Oklahoma were to change hands. They didn't do a formal appraisal to figure out how much the land was worth.

At one point, both sides realized the trade was skewed heavily in favor of Weyerhaeuser.

"I think you guys owe me two townships," the Forest Service negotiator said. Came the reply from Weyerhaeuser: "We don't owe you quite that much—maybe more like one township." A township is 23,040 acres—an area almost as big as the city of Tacoma.

The easygoing atmosphere carried over into Congress. When the Senate gave final approval to the trade of 229,000 acres in 1996, the language was buried in a broader parks measure and nobody commented on it one way or the other. The idea of the trade was never voted on in either the full House or Senate (it did pass one Senate committee unanimously), and was a mystery even to some politicians and staff members on Congress' key land-management committees.

"We have no idea what we did on that deal," said Alien Freemyer, staff director for the House subcommittee that oversees most land exchanges.

From the moment in early 1994 that Arkansas Sen. Dale Bumpers, Weyerhaeuser and the chief of the Forest Service agreed on the broad outlines of a trade, citizens around the Ouachita National Forest were excluded from learning much specific information about the value of the land.

Democrat Bumpers ordered the Forest Service not to do an appraisal of the lands, as is normally required by law. He was worried it would take too long and Weyerhaeuser would back out. His legislation canceled the requirement for an environmental study, as well as the right of citizens to appeal the deal or challenge it in court.

The two sides did assess the volume of the timber on the lands. But then they refused to release that survey to the public, saying the report was owned by Weyerhaeuser. The Forest Service was to see the timber survey for only a few hours in order to judge the value of the trees on Weyerhaeuser land. The timber company still won't release it today, though the trade was finalized nearly two years ago.



"Isn't it amazing that this is the way the government trades land with private companies?" said Bruce McMath, a lawyer in Little Rock and chairman of the Arkansas Sierra Club. "It's negotiated in secret. Then Congress cancels the environmental laws. Then everyone says, 'Trust us, it's a great deal.' Well, maybe it is and maybe it isn't, but how do you really know?"

Questioning the deal

Paul Fuller is no environmentalist, at least in the modern sense of the word. Retired and living in the small town of Idabel, Okla., the former Forest Service ranger regards the woods more as a crop than as something to be preserved.

"I think the good Lord put the forest there to be used," he said. So, when the Forest Service announced it wanted to trade away one of the South's finest tree plantations, Fuller became concerned. After reviewing the procedures used to value the timber, as well as the general laxity of the transaction, he could only shake his head.

"From the taxpayers' side, we got taken to the cleaners," said Fuller, who was head ranger in one of the prime timber producing forests the government traded away.

"The public got some nice lands, especially from a recreation perspective, but there's no question in my mind this was a better deal financially for Weyerhaeuser."

Backers of the deal say Fuller is mistaken. They say the deal was fair, if not tilted in favor of the public.

Weyerhaeuser did get an extraordinarily productive plantation, a coup for a company that needs to assure a steady supply of wood for its mills. But, in return, the public got four acres for every one it traded away. Included was prime waterfront around two of the most important lakes in Arkansas and Oklahoma, as well as 25,000 acres of dramatic cypress swamp that since has become a national wildlife refuge.

In 1995, a panel of three professors of forestry from Southern universities was asked to examine the trade. They concluded it was a fair deal economically and "hugely in favor of the American public" if noneconomic factors such as preservation of the environment were considered.

"If you're in the timber business, like we are, this was a good deal," said Dave Elkin, Weyerhaeuser's lands manager in the South. "If you're in the recreation and environmental-protection business, like they are, then it was also a good deal. It just made good sense all the way around, for everyone."

But in a typical trade, the government is forbidden from considering ecological benefits when assessing the economic value of the land. The trade is supposed to be treated as a business transaction, the lands assessed for their worth on the commercial market to make sure the taxpayers are not losing money.

There was little typical about this trade, however. Shortly after the filing of the deeds that made the trade official, aides in the regional Forest Service office in Atlanta gathered up all the papers relating to the trade and shredded them.

Gone was whatever information had been used to assess the value of the deal—prices of neighboring parcels, timber prices and volumes, notes from a visit to the property by Forest Service appraisers.

The records were shredded, Forest Service officials say, because they don't want the public second-guessing complicated land deals.

"Our view is that information relating to the assessment of land values is only pertinent to a specific time and place and can be distorted if it's looked at years down the road," said Bill Kane, the Forest Service's chief appraiser for the Southern region. "Several times we've been made to look poorly in the newspapers, so now we have a policy to destroy all the information."

Sen. Bumpers was catalyst

As the man in charge of buying, selling and trading land for Weyerhaeuser in the South, John Buenau knows that many people say the company pushes these land trades because it's easy to get a good deal from the government.

But this case, he says, was different. The government, in the form of Sen. Bumpers, came to them. The company had decided years before that it had to reduce its land holdings in

Arkansas by 600,000 acres, and Weyerhaeuser was happy to sell the land on the private market.

The government already had bought 40,000 acres from Weyerhaeuser for \$21 million as part of a drive to protect Lake Ouachita from development. But Bumpers predicted in 1994 that the federal budget crisis would mean no more money for these purchases.

"Senator Bumpers was hellbent to protect that lake from development," Buenau said. "He was the one really pushing for a trade. I know you probably won't believe this, but the corporate heads at Weyerhaeuser really didn't think this was a big deal to the company. We knew we needed to get rid of this land and, given a choice, we'd much rather see it protected than sold to private developers."

Still, Weyerhaeuser pushed aggressively for the trade—with the Forest Service's help. Government memos show that the agency and the company, while theoretically on opposite sides of a business deal worth at least \$200 million, formed a joint committee to sell their land deal to the public.

Weyerhaeuser executives taught Forest Service employees marketing and public-speaking techniques designed to win over skeptics. The two sides discussed how to stack a public hearing with Weyerhaeuser employees and other backers of the trade. Together, they wrote letters to newspapers. They discussed how to lobby Congress.

A Weyerhaeuser executive at the corporate headquarters in Washington state drafted the legislation for the Senate to consider. And the Forest Service, while ostensibly overseeing the exchange, functioned instead as if it were a public-relations firm for Weyerhaeuser. One internal memo directed employees never to say

"Something is seriously wrong if the public can't be involved in federal land management, especially a land deal as big as this."

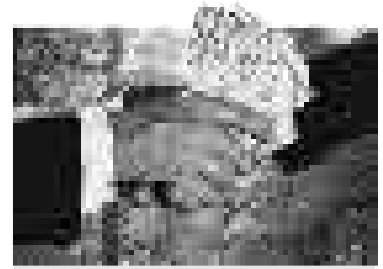
anything negative about the proposal because it is "supported by the Forest Service from the Chief all the way down the line."

In their defense, Forest Service officials say they never had much to do with this trade. Because it crossed state lines, the exchange had to be approved by Congress, and the agency was merely responding to a directive from Washington, D.C.

"From the outside, I can see how it looked like we were in collusion with Weyerhaeuser and were short-circuiting the process," said Mike Curran, the now-retired supervisor of the Ouachita National Forest. "But the trade wouldn't have happened if we'd been forced to do an appraisal and an EIS (environmental impact statement). It would have collapsed, and it was too good a deal for the public to pass up."

The secrecy has left some people in Arkansas with a strong distrust of the federal agencies that manage public land and a Congress that seems so willing to override environmental laws when it sees fit.

"Something is seriously wrong if the public can't be involved in federal land management, especially a land deal as big as this," said Vernon Bates, a botanist and chairman of a group fighting the deal. "I think the public can live with this exchange, but it's a bitter pill," he said. "The worst deal of all is for politicians and a federal agency to work behind the backs of the public." ■

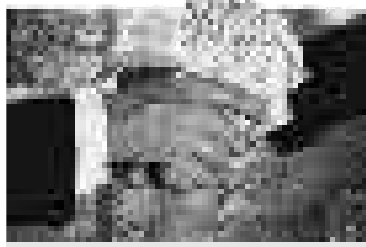


"It's negotiated in secret. Then Congress cancels the environmental laws. Then everyone says, 'Trust us, it's a great deal.' Well, maybe it is and maybe it isn't, but how do you really know?"

A trail of questionable trades

Across the West, the federal government is engaged in large land trades with private parties. The process is easy to manipulate, and the public often comes out on the short end of the deal. Here are some examples that have questioned:

- Arizona:**
 - Flagstaff: Phelps Dodge sold a few acres of Bureau of Land Management land to a mining company in exchange for copper mines.
 - Tucson: A large tract of land was traded from the Forest Service to a private company in exchange for a large tract of land.
 - Phoenix: An acre of land was traded for a parcel of land after the city said that a trade would be a fair deal.
- California:**
 - Headwaters: A forest tract of 1,000-year-old redwoods. The Forest Service traded the land to a private company in exchange for a large tract of land.
- Colorado:**
 - Talladale: A large tract of land was traded from the Forest Service to a private company in exchange for a large tract of land.
- Idaho:**
 - Upper Snake Lake: A large tract of land was traded from the Forest Service to a private company in exchange for a large tract of land.
- Montana:**
 - Bozeman: Congress spurred by timber company's threat to close its mill in exchange for a large tract of land.
- Nevada:**
 - Las Vegas: A large tract of land was traded from the Forest Service to a private company in exchange for a large tract of land.
- New Mexico:**
 - Silver City: A large tract of land was traded from the Forest Service to a private company in exchange for a large tract of land.
- Oregon:**
 - Reed: A large tract of land was traded from the Forest Service to a private company in exchange for a large tract of land.
- Utah:**
 - Salt Lake City: A large tract of land was traded from the Forest Service to a private company in exchange for a large tract of land.
- Washington:**
 - Everett: A large tract of land was traded from the Forest Service to a private company in exchange for a large tract of land.
- Wyoming:**
 - Ten Sleep: A large tract of land was traded from the Forest Service to a private company in exchange for a large tract of land.
- Elsewhere:**
 - Arkansas: A large tract of land was traded from the Forest Service to a private company in exchange for a large tract of land.



Low on Money, Feds Rely on Barter System

By Deborah Nelson, Jim Simon, Eric Nalder, and Danny Westneat of the *Seattle Times*

“Land exchanges are more and more of how we do business, since Congress hasn’t seen fit to give us money for purchases of sensitive land.”

When buffalo wander out of Yellowstone National Park some enter a ranch owned by a sect called the Church Universal and Triumphant.

Often, they are shot.

In an effort to curb the killing, the federal government is considering buying 7,500 acres from the church for \$13 million. The proposal has attracted attention, but what most don’t know is that in 1981, the feds passed up a chance to buy the entire 13,000-acre ranch for \$6.5 million.

Such missed opportunities are emblematic of the federal land-buying program.

Set up in 1964 by Sen. Henry Jackson of Washington, the program has been so underfinanced and ignored for the past two decades that the government has been able to buy only a fraction of what it purchased in the 1960s and ‘70s.

As a result, federal officials have turned to a barter system as their primary means of acquiring land.

“Land exchanges are more and more of how we do business, since Congress hasn’t seen fit to give us money for purchases of sensitive land,” said Jim Lyons, who oversees the Forest Service. “Unfortunately, Congress has taken away one of our tools.”

Thirty years ago, Jackson argued that this tool should be expanded dramatically. The government was spending nearly twice as much on park land as it is now, adjusted for inflation. But Jackson declared it was not enough to meet the public’s demand for parks.

He proposed a novel solution: Taxes levied on what he described as a “resource-depleting activity” — oil drilling off America’s shores — would be “reinvested in outdoor recreation areas and developments, which will become a part of the permanent estate of the nation.”

Today, nearly \$1 billion a year from oil drilling flows into what’s called the Land and Water Conservation Fund, to be used to buy forest land, lakes, parks, trails and historic sites in all 50 states.

The fund has purchased nearly seven million acres of land for preservation, including parts of the North Cascades National Park in Washington.

But if Jackson were alive today, he might wonder what happened to his program. Most of the oil money flowing into the parks fund is no longer spent on parks. In the decade of the 1990s, for instance, the fund has produced \$900 million each year. Only about \$200 million of that is used to buy small park projects; the rest is sent back to the general treasury, where it is used for other programs and to reduce the deficit.

Adjusted for inflation, the nation invested three times as much money on park-land purchases in the 1970s as it has in the 1990s.

“There is a strong sentiment among many Republicans in Congress that the federal government is too big and

simply should not expand its land holdings, for any purpose,” said Kevin Collins, a lobbyist for the National Parks and Conservation Association, which tries to bolster the national park system.

Earlier this year, the House’s chief budget writer, Rep. John Kasich, R-Ohio, proposed doing away with the program completely. His proposal has not survived, in part because record tax revenues have given the government a balanced budget much earlier than anticipated.

But the budget situation is not translating into more money for park and forest land. This year, the House has proposed spending \$131 million on all land acquisitions, which would be a record low in the 35 years of the program. The Senate has proposed \$240 million, still far less than the early 1980s.

Buying land for conservation, while simpler than trading, can be fraught with many of the same problems, such as rigged appraisals or political deal-making. The public may still get a bad deal.

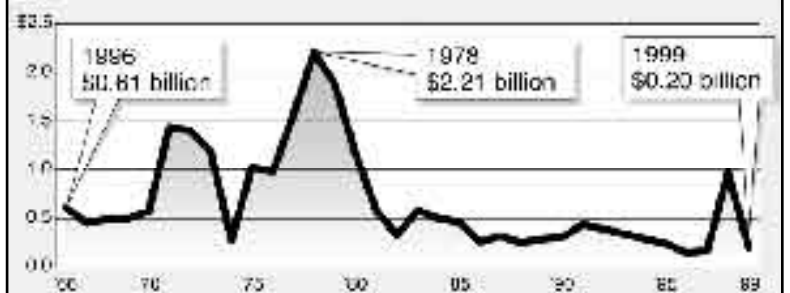
But the price of missed deals can be even higher. In 1992, Plum Creek Timber offered 170,000 acres of land near Yellowstone for what was then a bargain price, \$25 million. But there was no hope of the Forest Service getting the money, so Plum Creek sold to a company that planned to log and develop the wilderness.

The political fallout led to legislation ordering the Forest Service to acquire the land through a complex series of exchanges, timber sales and cash transactions. After five years of community hand-wringing over which public land to sacrifice, Congress is expected to approve the final phase of the deal this session.

The final tab: about \$75 million in land, timber and tax dollars for 100,000 acres — five times the cost per acre of the original deal. ■

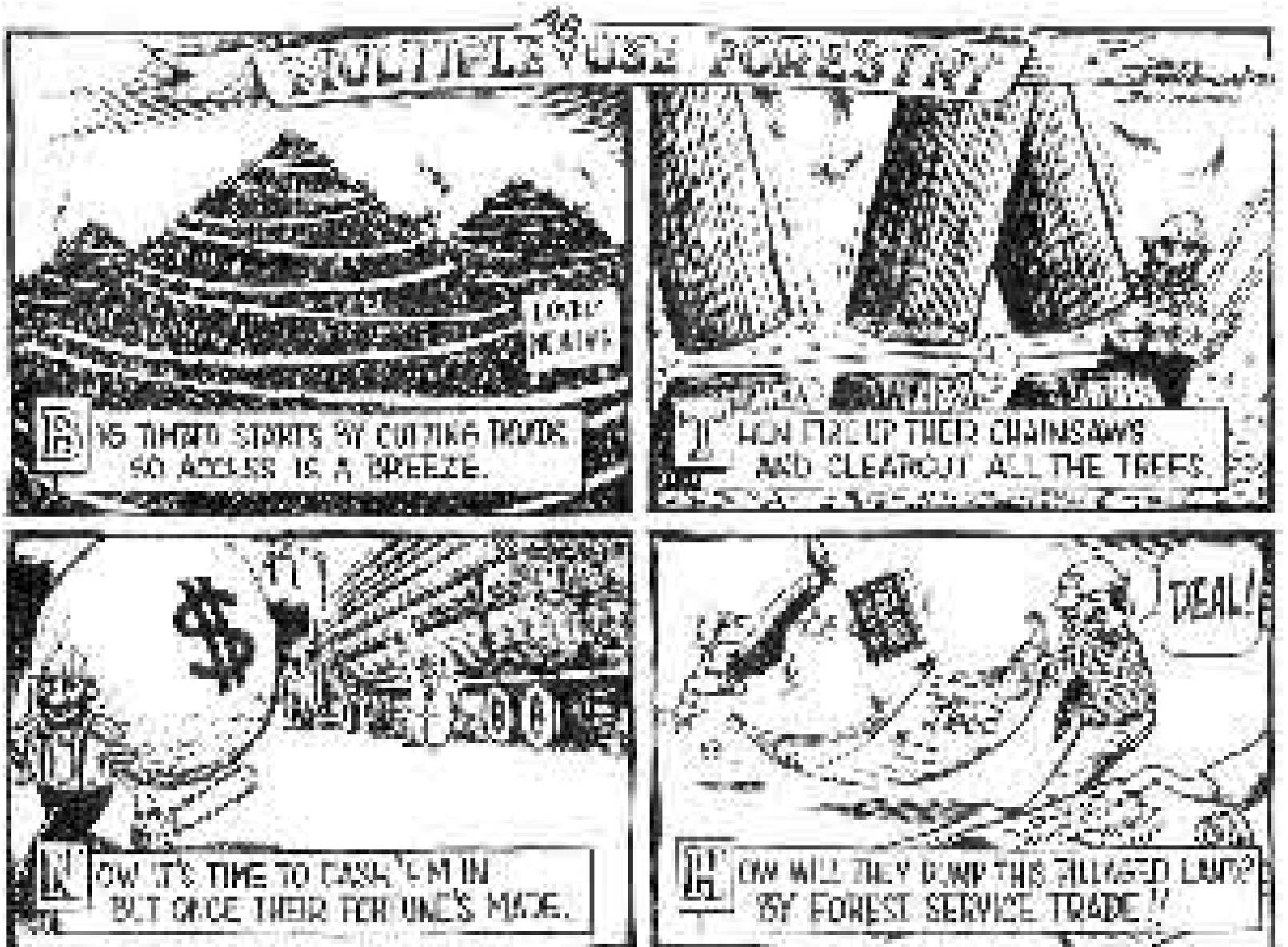
What the U.S. spends on land purchases

Money spent on land acquisitions (adjusted to 1998 dollars, in billions).



*Estimate: Congress has not yet approved a specific amount.
Note: In 1998, Congress also added a one-time expenditure of \$699 million to base-level funding of \$271.4 million.
Sources: Department of the Interior, Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Seattle Times



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Oregon Land Exchange Engineered in Secret

By Ed Dorsch

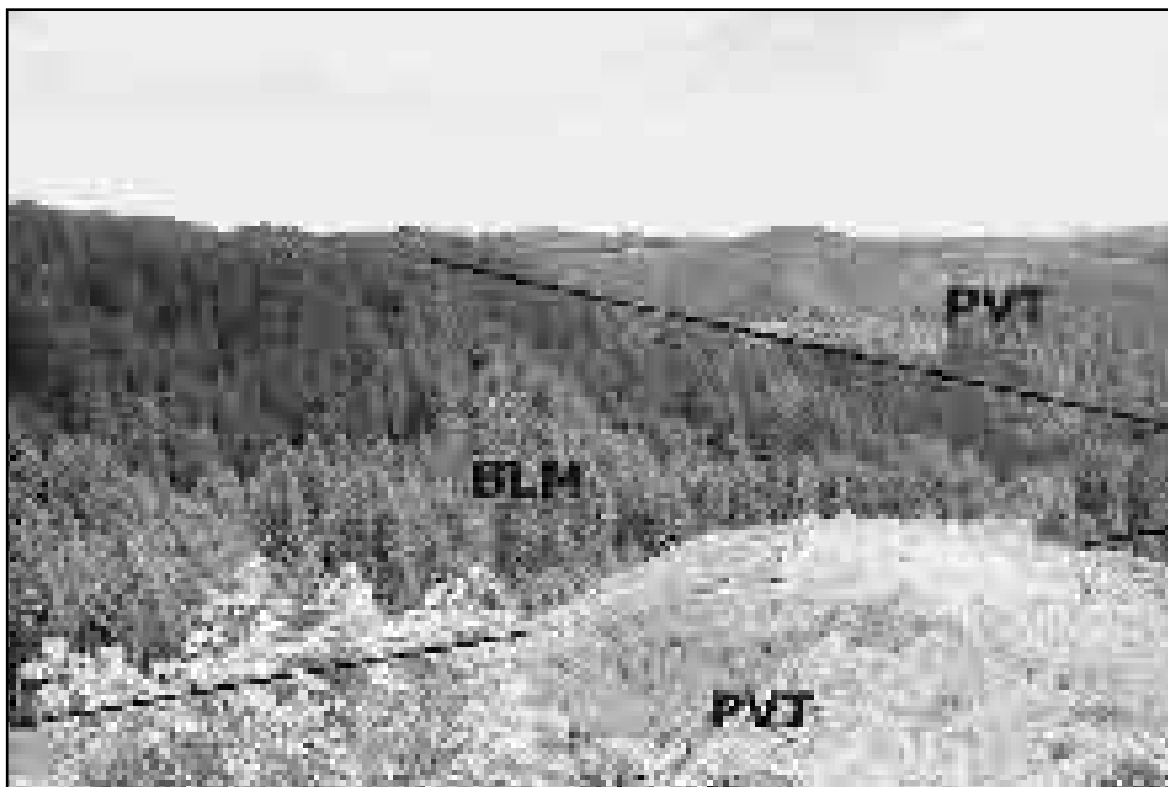
And the dirty deals continue today. Yet another dubious land exchange is being negotiated in our own backyard here in Oregon. About an hour south of Native Forest Council's main office in Eugene, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is negotiating with timber companies to give away more public forests, in exchange for industry leftovers.

This Umpqua Land Exchange Project (ULEP) would swap public forests for private lands in the Coast Range area of the Umpqua River Basin in western Oregon. Since 1995, talks between the government and a "nonprofit" group created by timber companies have continued in secret, with no public input. The agency accepted public comments on the land exchange for the first time this summer.

What, exactly, could we lose? Neither federal agencies nor timber companies promoting the deal will say. But we do know that the Umpqua Exchange would consolidate a 675,000-acre checkerboard of public and private land for "ease of management." Currently, 284,000 acres in the area are publicly owned and 384,000 are private.

The public stands to lose BLM lands and National Forest, including a vital watershed, crucial habitat for coho salmon and pockets of old growth forest. Public forests in the area represent some of the most productive growing sites for Douglas fir in the world — and about four billion dollars worth of timber. All the private timber in the proposed exchange area is valued at \$1.2 billion. These financial figures help illustrate what the public stands to lose, but living forests provide more than wood fiber. Include clean air, water and soil, tourism, opportunity costs and other benefits, and the cost grows. There's one clear loser in this proposed deal: the American taxpayer.

The process behind the deal started more than five years ago, when two southern Oregon timber barons decided the best way to log federal lands would be to make them private lands. Industry and government officials have met behind closed doors and have made no records of their meetings, which makes it impossible for conservation groups to find out what they're doing. With no records to obtain, suing under the Freedom of



Overview showing the checkerboard ownership typical of the lower Umpqua Basin. BLM land in center of picture bordered by private land clearcut in recent years. Photo courtesy of Umpqua Watersheds.

The public stands to lose BLM lands and National Forest, including a vital watershed, crucial habitat for coho salmon and pockets of old growth forest.

Information Act becomes meaningless. So far, the timber industry has spent more than \$6 million of taxpayer money to develop a computer model to prove the swap will help forests. After a negative scientific peer review of the model, they've kept the computer program under wraps.

The process behind the exchange has excluded the public, but the congressional impetus behind the exchange was even less democratic. Congress approved the exchange with a rider tacked onto a major spending bill before the exchange was even written.

Today, Native Forest Council and others are working to fight the land exchange with what little information they can dig up. Right now, the best we can do is fight the one-sided process behind planning the swaps, tell the public what they might lose and work to debunk the computer model created to "prove" the swap will benefit the forest. ■

Umpqua Land Exchange: What's Wrong

- Congress passed a stealth rider as part of a larger bill mandating the exchange before it was written or even appraised.

- While the exchange has been in the planning stage for six years, public comment was not allowed until this past summer.

- The Foundation for Voluntary Land Exchanges, the quasi nonprofit group formed to oversee the deal, was founded by Aaron Jones, owner of Seneca Timber Co., and Kenneth Ford of Roseburg Forest Products, both of whom own land within the exchange area.

- Because of the private partnership formed between the BLM and the Foundation, all records have been kept off of the public record.

- The Foundation spent \$6 million tax dollars developing a computer model to analyze the effects of the swap.

- The Foundation has requested \$4.3 million more for further development of the computer model.

- Scientists gave the computer model a negative review.

- Within the proposed swap area federal lands hold a timber value of \$4 billion and 85 percent of the area's trees that are 80 years and older. Private lands hold only \$1.2 billion in timber value and 15 percent or less of the area's old growth.

- The swap proposes to exchange valuable timberlands, sensitive watershed areas and coho salmon habitat for over logged private lands.

What you can do:
Contact the Umpqua Watershed, an organization working to stop the swap.
www.umpqua_watersheds.org/landexchange.html

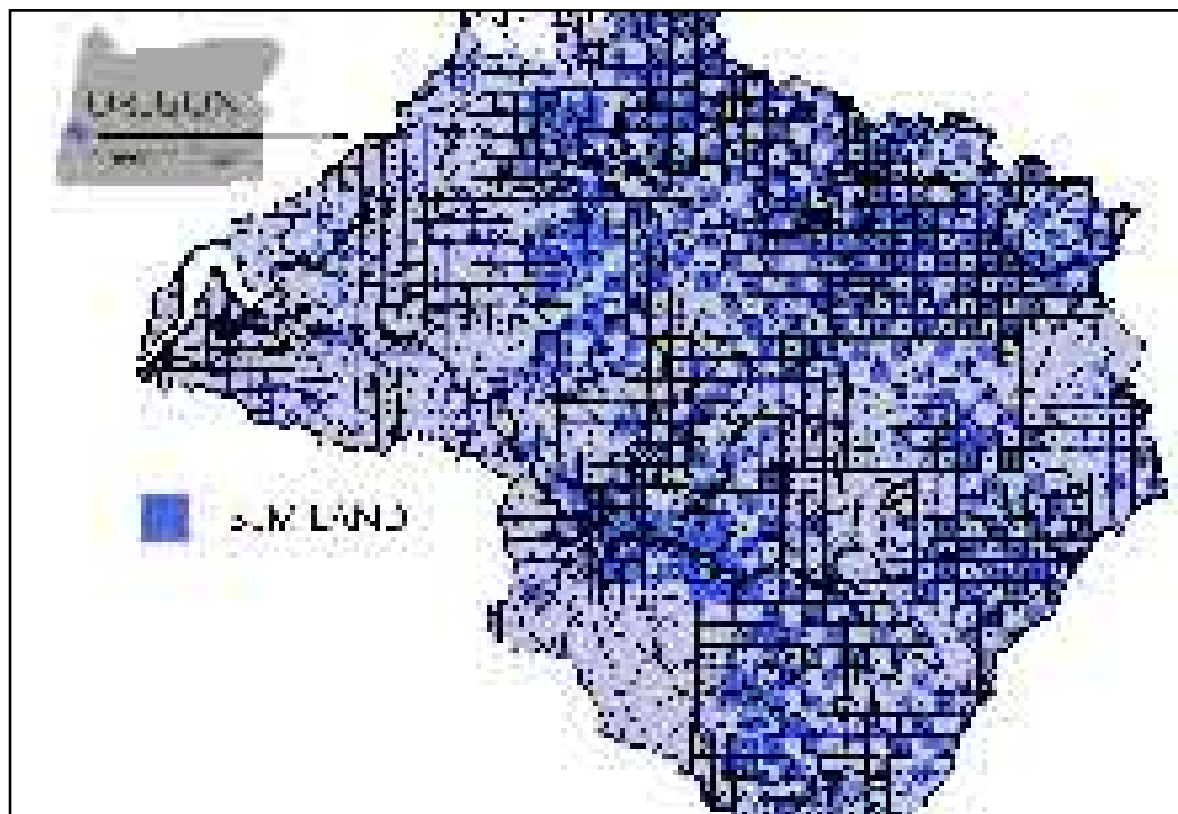
Send Comments to:
ULEP c/o BLM
PO Box 2965
Portland OR, 97208
ULEP@or.blm.gov

Look for updates and action alerts on www.forestcouncil.org

The process behind the exchange has excluded the public, but the congressional impetus behind the exchange was even less democratic.



The Checkerboard: 675,000 acres to be "consolidated"





Third Planet Operating Instructions

By David Brower



This planet has been delivered wholly assembled and in perfect working condition, and is intended for fully automatic and trouble-free operation in orbit around its star, the sun. However, to assure proper functioning, all passengers are requested to familiarize themselves fully with the following instructions. Loss or even temporary misplacement of these instructions may result in calamity. Passengers who must proceed without the benefit of these rules are likely to cause considerable damage before they can learn the proper operating procedures for themselves.



A. Components

It is recommended that passengers become completely familiar with the following planetary components:



1. Air

The air accompanying this planet is not replaceable. Enough has been supplied to cover the land and the water, but not very deeply. In fact, if the atmosphere were reduced to the density of water, it would be a mere 33 feet deep. In normal use, the air is self-cleaning. It may be cleaned, in part, if excessively soiled. The passengers' lungs will be of help—up to a point. They will discover, however, that anything they throw, spew or dump into the air will return to them in due course. Since passengers will need to use the air, on average, every five seconds, they should treat it accordingly.



2. Water

The water supplied with the planet isn't replaceable, either. The operating water supply is very limited: if the earth were the size of an egg, all the water on it would fit into a single drop. The water contains many creatures, almost all of which eat and may be eaten; these creatures may be eaten by human passengers. If disagreeable things are dispersed in the planet's water, however, caution should be observed, since the water creatures concentrate the disagreeable things in their tissues. If human passengers then eat the water creatures, they will add disagreeable things to their diet. In general, passengers are advised not to disdain water, because that is what they mostly are.



3. Land

Although the surface of this planet is varied and seems abundant, only a small amount of land is suited to growing things, and that essential part should not be misused. It is also recommended that no attempt be made to disassemble the surface too deeply in as much as the land is supported by a molten underlayer that will grow little but volcanoes.



4. Life

The above components help make life possible. There is only one life per passenger, and it should be treated with dignity. Instructions covering the birth, operation and maintenance, and disposal for each living entity have been thoughtfully provided. These instructions are contained in a complex language, called the DNA code, that is not easily understood. However, this does not matter, as the instructions are fully automatic. Passengers are cautioned, though, that radiation and many dangerous chemicals can damage the instructions severely. If, in this way, living species are destroyed or rendered unable to reproduce, the filling of reorders is subject to long delays.



5. Fire

This planet has been designed and fully tested at the factory for totally safe operation with fuel constantly transmitted from a remote source, the sun, provided at absolutely no charge. Nevertheless, the following must be observed with greatest care: The planet comes with a limited reserve fuel supply, contained in fossil deposits, which should be used only in emergencies. Use of this reserve fuel supply entails hazards, including the release of certain toxic metals, which must be kept out of the air and the food supply of living things. The risk will not be appreciable if the use of the emergency fuel is extended over the operating life of the planet. Rapid use, even if sustained only for a brief period, may produce unfortunate results.



B. Maintenance

The kinds of maintenance necessary will depend upon the number and constituency of the passengers. If only a few million human passengers wish to travel at a given time, no maintenance will be required, and no reservations will be necessary. The planet is self-maintaining, and the external fuel source will provide exactly as much energy as is needed or can be safely used. If, however, a very large number of people insist on boarding at one time, serious problems will result, requiring costly solutions.



C. Operation

Barring extraordinary circumstances, it is necessary only to observe the mechanism periodically and to report any irregularities to the Smithsonian Institution. However, if, owing to misuse of the planet's mechanism, observations detect a substantial change in the predictable patterns of sunrise and sunset, passengers should prepare to leave the vehicle.



D. Emergency Repairs

Through no responsibility of the current passengers, damage to the planet's operating mechanism has been caused by ignorant or careless action of the previous travelers, it is advisable to request the Manufacturer's assistance (best obtained through prayer).

Upon close examination, this planet will be found to consist of complex and fascinating detail in design and structure. Some passengers, upon discovering these details in the past, have attempted to replicate or improve the design and structure, or have even claimed to have invented them. The Manufacturer, having, among other things, invented the opposable thumb, may be amused by this. It is reliably reported that at this point, however, it appears to the Manufacturer that the full panoply of consequences of this thumb idea of his will not be without an element of unwelcome surprise. ■



David Brower, 1912-2000, shown here walking with his wife, has been called the greatest conservationist of the 20th Century. Brower helped establish the national wilderness preservation system, kept dams out of Dinosaur National Monument, the Yukon and the Grand Canyon and led the fight to pass the Wilderness Act of 1964. He was nominated for three Nobel Peace Prizes, served as executive director of the Sierra Club from 1952-69 and made more than 70 first ascents of mountain peaks worldwide. He also inspired the creation of the Native Forest Council, served on the original board of directors and continued working with the Council as an advisory board member until last year, when he passed away in Berkeley, California.

This planet has been designed and fully tested at the factory for totally safe operation with fuel constantly transmitted from a remote source, the sun, provided at absolutely no charge.

Solutions: Reduce, REUSE, Recycle

By Gordon Kelley

The Second "R" Comes of Age

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. It's a familiar phrase. And today most of us—even if we don't do it as much as we should—are at least familiar with recycling. Thankfully, the often-ignored second "R" is getting more attention, particularly for home construction.

More and more, builders are finding that reusable materials can help them save money, add an antique character to homes and provide high quality materials that simply aren't produced anymore. And reusing building materials could mean fewer clearcuts.

"The word is growing [about reclaimed wood]," says Rich Dooley, environmental analyst in the green building program at the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). Reclaimed wood can be used for everything from beams and framing to floors and molding. According to Bill Turley of the Construction Materials Recycling Association, there are no nationwide statistics for reused building materials, but deconstruction companies and used building material resale yards are becoming increasingly common. He explains that the NAHB products lab is working on guidelines for structural use of reclaimed wood which, when finished, "will help a lot to open the door for more."

Almost half of the building industry in this country has begun using some reclaimed wood for specialty projects, says John Cannon, president of Trestlewood, a wood salvaging company. One practical reason to use reclaimed wood is that most old buildings were made with much higher quality wood than the lumber sold today. Cost is also motivating factor. Those who are willing to reclaim the wood themselves will most certainly save money, but wood reclaimed, cleaned and remilled by professionals can actually be more expensive than new lumber.

Ironically, salvaged wood is often popular for upscale building projects. "Resort type communities with a rustic theme are pretty hot for reclaimed wood," says Cannon. One of the benefits of using antique wood is that it has visual character: Nail marks, seasoning checks and weather give each piece a unique look. While the number of people building homes using some reclaimed wood is still small, says Cannon, a growing interest in environmentally friendly products has helped his company sell its products all over the country. To give readers a sense of how salvaged materials can really be used, we investigated two projects here in the Northwest, including one home owned by Native Forest Council members.

Forest Council Members Reuse to Remodel

For the most part, professionals are the ones building with reclaimed wood. But do-it-yourselfers are catching on. Council members Randy Hamme and T.R. Kelley remodeled their home last year using as much reused building materials as they could.

"We tore half of our house apart and rebuilt it," Kelley says, describing their kitchen and bath remodel. By simply asking at remodel or disassembly sites or by visiting resale yards, they found high quality reusable materials, available at a fraction of their retail price, including wood, tiles, beams, doors and fixtures. Their Swisshome, Oregon home, built in 1951 from once-plentiful old growth cedars is now supported by used pier blocks, old railroad ties and 4x6 beams salvaged from a plywood mill. Tiles in both the bathroom and kitchen have been reused. Their kitchen cabinets, low-flush toilet and sliding glass doors were all bought at a building materials resale yard at a low cost.

Finding Salvaged Building Materials

www.trestlewood.com

Trestlewood got its start marketing reclaimed Douglas fir poles and redwood decking from a train trestle crossing the Salt Lake. They also market reclaimed wood from a Chicago warehouse, a British Columbia plywood plant and California pickle vats.

www.heartpine.com

Specialists in flooring, stair parts, furniture and architectural molding. Their products are made from antique wood left submerged in southern rivers after being used to raft logs to nearby sawmills in the 1800s.

www.loadingdock.org

The first successful, self-sufficient and nonprofit distributor of reclaimed building materials in the country.

www.vintagelumber.com

Reuses old wood obtained from dismantled derelict barns and other agricultural buildings in central Maryland.

www.pioneermillworks.com

Pioneer Millworks is a New York company that purchases old buildings across North America and mills the salvaged wood from them into lumber, trim, flooring, molding, stairs and more.

www.mountainlumber.com

Reclaims wood from old barns, factories and other old buildings and mills it into wide-plank flooring, beams, rails, stairs, pickets, molding and cabinets.



A framer cuts the first floor joists (made with reused lumber) for a Portland, Oregon duplex made almost entirely of reused wood. Much of the lumber for the 1,730-square-foot house came from an old grain mill. Photo courtesy SCNW.

Duplex Uses Salvaged Lumber From Grain Mill

Melissa Medeiros is a green building expert in Portland, Oregon. Her organization, Sustainable Communities Northwest (SCNW), recently started construction of the second floor of their latest project: a modern, 1,730-square foot duplex using almost entirely recycled wood and wood alternatives.

The house was framed using 20% less wood by placing studs further apart, a technique that provides as much stability and structural integrity and also provides room for more insulation. Much of the lumber used was salvaged from an old grain mill. SCNW used salvaged counters and tile in the kitchen, salvaged fir for most floors and the kitchen and bathroom sinks were reclaimed from other buildings. Medeiros estimates fewer than five trees were used for the entire project, compared to an average of 16 trees for a new 2,000-square-foot house.

Medeiros uses salvage lumber in a variety of projects ranging from framing new homes to building raised garden beds, a pavilion, a woodshed and the back deck of her own home. She says that, like here, average homeowners can "save a ton of money" by using reused building materials for most home projects. SCNW plans to complete the duplex this December.

A Viable Alternative

The very notion of salvaging building materials may conjure images of junkyards or shoddy workmanship. But clean, sturdy and modern buildings are being built with reused materials, often at a cost savings, and always with the advantage of added character and quality. And, bottom line, remembering the second "R" saves trees. ■



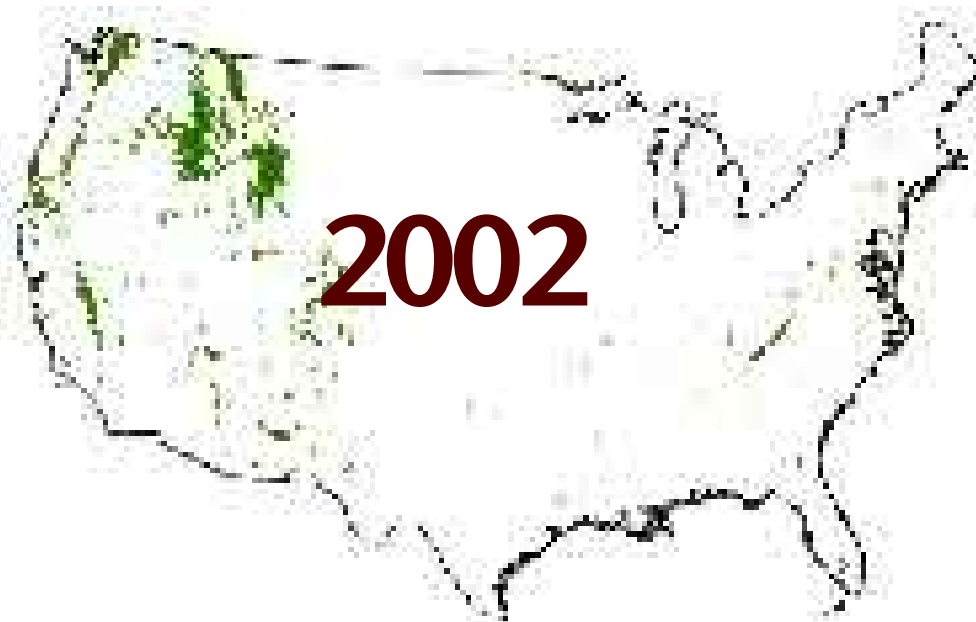
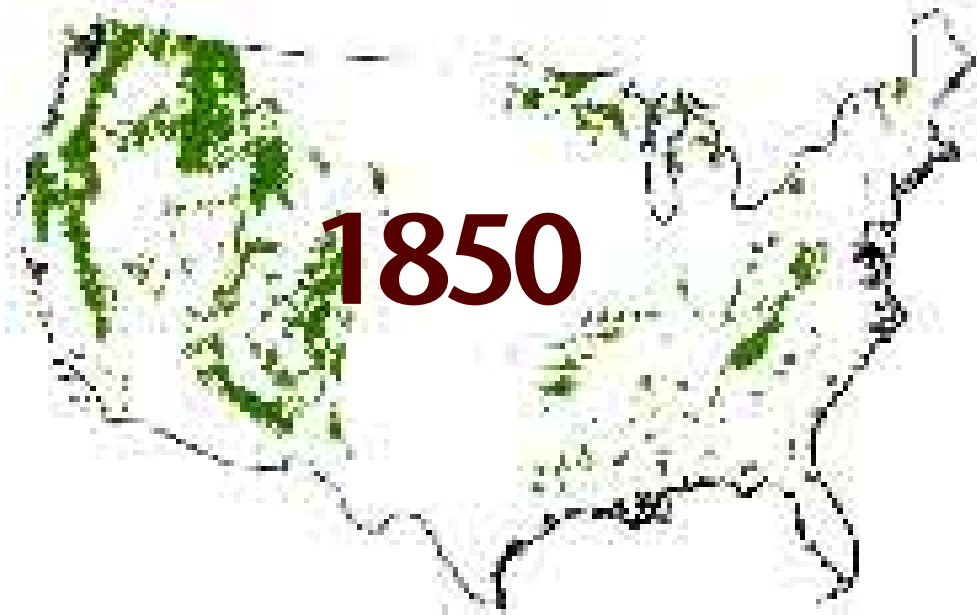
Most of the salvaged wood used to build SCNW's 1,730-square-foot duplex came from an old grain mill in Amity, Oregon. When dismantling old buildings, many companies find it's cheaper to salvage the lumber than to pay for it to be taken to a land fill. Photo courtesy of SCNW.

Gordon Kelley is a freelance writer and Forest Council member living in Eugene, Oregon. For more information about building with salvaged materials, visit our website: www.forestcouncil.org. To learn more about Sustainable Communities Northwest, go to their website: www.scnwportland.org.

What can be made from reclaimed wood?

- ✓ Doors (interior, exterior)
- ✓ Moldings
- ✓ Framing (about half of timber framed houses use reclaimed wood)
- ✓ Cabinets
- ✓ Trim
- ✓ Flooring (plank, tongue-in-groove)
- ✓ Lumber (2x4, 4x6, 6x8 and larger)
- ✓ Stairs (stair treads, hand rails, pickets, molding, nosing)
- ✓ Beams (ornamental, structural, mantel)
- ✓ Guitars (Martin uses reclaimed wood in one model)
- ✓ Decking
- ✓ Window Frames
- ✓ Furniture (chairs, tables, shelves, benches)
- ✓ Fences
- ✓ Ceilings

Our Disappearing Native Forests



Myth: Public Lands Are Protected

National forests, grasslands and parks. Wildlife refuges. Wilderness areas. You want them to be there for future generations to enjoy as much as you do. As our nation grew over the past century, visionary leaders set aside nearly 650 million acres of America's precious natural assets, so that our most pristine mountains, forests, rivers and streams could be preserved. But today, politicians and corrupt corporations are liquidating these assets—at a net loss to the American citizens. Your public lands are under siege: clearcut forests, oil drilling, mining and needless overgrazing. It's all happening right now on public lands.

Myth: Jobs vs. Environment

Public lands logging, mining, grazing and drilling are subsidized industries that operate at a net loss. The federal timber program costs taxpayers at least \$1.2 billion per year. Mining costs us \$3.5 billion per year. Grazing subsidies cost more than \$200 million per year. Through patents or land swaps, corporations can actually take our lands from us. But don't they create jobs? Very few. Recreation alone creates more jobs than all these extractive industries. Who benefits then? Washington bureaucrats and their corporate masters. They destroy our resources. We pay for it.

Myth: Industry Needs Public Lands

Destroying public lands for raw materials is like melting the Statue of Liberty for scrap iron. These assets are worth more living than dead. Less than four percent of the wood and paper we use comes from national forests. Public lands grazing produces just three percent of the nation's beef and uses 60 times as much acreage as private lands grazing. Drilling for oil on public lands would supply our nation's energy needs for only a few months. If preserved, America's public lands will continue providing clean air, water and soil—life itself. For our children and grandchildren. And all future generations.

Myth: There's Nothing You Can Do

People united under a clear goal can beat the odds. Thanks to conviction and refusing to compromise, Americans won the fight for civil rights and women's suffrage. We banned DDT and took on Big Tobacco. Today, Native Forest Council is fighting to make the "impossible" possible: protection for all public lands, without exception or compromise. We call it *Forever Wild*. The Council was the first to demand total protection for America's forests, and now, for all public lands. Join today, and you'll be joining thousands of others fighting for America's heritage: our public lands. Please take a moment to fill out the membership form below and send it in.

Join Now

- \$35 Standard Member
- \$50 Supporter
- \$60 International Member
- \$100 Contributor
- \$500 Conservator

- \$ _____ Benefactor
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 - Please deduct my monthly gift from my checking account. I'm sending a signed and voided check. I understand deductions may be stopped or adjusted at any time.

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- My check is enclosed.
 - Please bill my: VISA MasterCard Card number: _____
- Exp. date: _____ Signature: _____

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Native Forest Council offers a wide variety of planned giving opportunities. Gifts of stock, real estate and other assets may offer tremendous tax savings for you and provide the Council with a greater net gift. If you are interested in planned giving or planning, contact Native Forest Council at (541) 688-2600.

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