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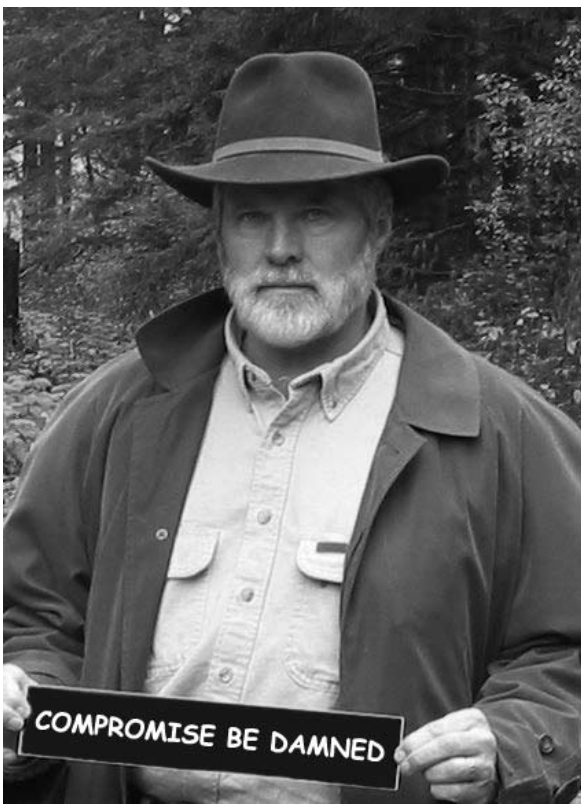
Defending Nature, Saving Life since 1988

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America: Home of the Brave or a Nation of Sheep?

Are we a nation of trusted allies or a nation of sheep? Our actions will determine the answer.

Relative to today, I'm reminded of three very different periods in history: First, Nazi Germany of the 30s — whereby a deliberately deceived populace of "Good Germans" supported the dissolution of their laws, liberty and justice and the waging of preemptive war on others.

The second is America of 1775 — when enough worthy independent Americans chose to rise up against tyranny and injustice. A third and perhaps even more hopeful sign for me is the popular uprising that brought down the Berlin Wall not so long ago.

Yes, there are many dark portents of doom in today's news, but our job is to find the positive actions like these to inspire us amidst the myopic fear and chaos of our declining American life.

Our country has risen against great adversity on numerous occasions: WWI, WWII, the Marshall Plan. We even shot a man into space, landed on the moon and brought our astronauts back alive! And if we could but rise above the deliberate and dishonest distractions of mainstream popular culture — we could do it again.

We need to step up again or we shall perish. As a nation of moral, thinking Americans and righteous citizens, we are fully capable of stopping the slide into corporate/governmental tyranny and restoring our democracy, with liberty and justice for all in an America that is of, for and by the people. A nation that's honest, fair and just.

For starters, we need to stop ignoring the hidden costs the corporations externalize and force on the public, both in losses of the commonwealth's resources and the many hidden subsidies the corporations are granted.

Unfortunately, it's not just the corporations — and their bought and paid for politicians — that are the problem. We have all too many social, economic and environmental justice organizations willing to compromise, cooperate and collaborate with the enemies of liberty and nature for a "seat at the table." Ones who agree to negotiate the terms and conditions of our continuing surrender rather than upset the corporate establishment by opposing it and demanding nothing less than what's right. Life must take precedence over money and corporations. Liberty and Justice must be for all people, not just for corporate ventures.

For example, The Wilderness Society is planning timber sales. NRDC and Environmental Defense are approving huge new dirty coal-fired power plants. The Nature Conservancy is selling off land for logging and oil exploration. Collaborative green groups are okaying industry's increased logging, dishonest and destructive forest "thinning" and so-called "green" energy extraction projects.

All the things we truly value — life, family, love, health, security, happiness, clean air, soil and water, and a livable climate — none of them can be measured with any degree of precision in monetary terms. The default in our fundamentally dishonest economic system is that they are all counted as having a value of zero; the one value we all know they're

not. As a consequence, the worst of the money worshipping, corporate parasites are burning the planet for profit, waging a war on nature and life itself.

However, we can stop it. We must get involved, demand a change, and take all action necessary to make that change happen.

We must get involved in politics, attend meetings and express our dismay and outrage at this misguided, corrupt and destructive stupidity. Throw tomatoes if necessary, figuratively or otherwise. We must help good honest people get elected at the local and state level, and we can run ourselves. Currently the corporate sector dominates this arena, and we see the all-too predictable result of law after law that enrich these corporations at the expense of the rest of us.

We can and must find the many smaller and usually underfunded, local, regional and national organizations that continue to inspire us — by speaking truth to power, by standing up for what's right, and by accepting nothing less. We need to support them both financially and by volunteering our valuable time.

Above all, we must remember that in each and every one of us lies the power to create change in the world. Let us all bring forth bold new visions and ideas.

A quick note on fear

It is natural to be afraid. It is also natural to have doubts. The thing we value most about history's heroes is not that they were without fear. What we admire in our heroes is that when they were afraid, they confronted their fear head on, pushed through it, and finished the task at hand without giving in to the fear. That is the definition of bravery.

No matter our skill sets or abilities, level of experience or paths in life, we can all be heroes in what is perhaps the most important challenge that has ever faced humanity. Indeed, our "quest" is greater than all the epic battles, adventures and quests humanity has faced in its entire history. I'm talking about saving nature and preventing our own extinction!

An even greater obstacle to overcome than fear is apathy. Why should I care? What does it matter to me, as long as I've got my basic needs taken care of, and a few luxuries thrown in?

It is this chronic self-absorption — collectively hiding our heads in the sand — that we must overcome above all else. It is up to us to remind ourselves and the world that we still have a chance to make meaningful change. With big dreams, bold visions and actions, by demanding drastic change, by challenging those in power, we can rouse the American public out of its current slumber and the American people can reclaim their future.

Our strongest instinct is to survive. Yet we seem to be suppressing this instinct and allowing our planet to be liquidated and slaughtered. Were we to truly heed our instincts, we would do all that is humanly possible to steer ourselves off our current collision course with annihilation.

Take a stand. Defend nature and save life. Act now, while you still can.

Blessings,



Tim



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No Thanks

All those who feel it's OK to cut deals that leave us with less native forests, soil, air, and clean water.

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 or send an e-mail to tim@forestcouncil.org.

Inspired? Incensed? Impressed?

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Native Forest Council

The Native Forest Council is a nonprofit, tax-deductible organization founded by business and professional people alarmed by the wanton destruction of our national forests. We believe a sound economy and a sound environment must not be incompatible and that current public-land management practices are probably catastrophic to both.

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

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News and Views

Logging Company Donates to "Biomass" Cause

California timber company Sierra Pacific Industries recently donated \$1 million to further the cause of biomass production.

Forest biomass production is the process of taking woody debris and other organic materials from the forest to create energy. Calling it a "renewable energy resource," the timber industry is using this as a means of convincing the public to give them permission to log forests they have previously been denied access to.

Including Environmental Education Raises Students' Overall Scores

Studies have shown that environmental education improves all learning — especially that of math and science. A report titled "Closing the Achievement Gap," recently found that in 42 schools that used the outdoors as the classroom for one year, more than 90 percent of educators reported that students showed better mastery of math and science skills.

Research in Washington and several other states shows that schools using environmental education programs consistently score higher on standardized tests than schools without environmental education programs.

Common Chemicals Linked to Breast Cancer

More than 200 chemicals — many found in urban air and everyday consumer products — cause breast cancer in animal tests, according to a compilation of scientific reports.

Writing in a publication of the American Cancer Society, researchers concluded that reducing exposure to the compounds could prevent many women from developing the disease.

The research team from five institutions analyzed a growing body of evidence linking environmental contaminants to breast cancer, the leading killer of U.S. women in their late 30s to early 50s.

Timber Sale Accounting Problems at USFS Costing Taxpayers

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) study shows that the Forest Service's current accounting system is not

providing its field managers the data needed to properly manage timber sales. Senators Tom Harkin, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Jeff Bingaman, who chairs the Senate Energy Committee jointly requested the report.

"This study shows clear mismanagement at the Forest Service," Harkin said. "The inefficient accounting methods currently being used give us no way to track and audit individual timber sales. This puts forest managers in a tough situation when trying to figure out where they need to allocate resources."

EPA Criticizes Recovery Plans

Draft plans by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the U. S. Bureau of Land Management that could increase logging in federal forests in Western Oregon have drawn criticism from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which says the harvesting could harm rivers and imperil fish.

Two letters the EPA sent to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service say the proposals could roll back water quality improvements that Oregon watersheds have seen since the implementation of the federal Northwest Forest Plan 13 years ago.

In related news, more than 100 scientists called on the U.S. Department of the Interior to scrap its draft recovery plan for the northern spotted owl, suggesting political pressure produced a plan that would open more federal forest land to logging.

At the same time, 23 members of Congress sent their own letter to Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, asking him to dismiss the draft plan and assemble a team of independent scientists to redo it.

The Native Forest Council has also submitted comments on the draft plan. NFC's comments can be viewed on the web at www.forestcouncil.org/pdf/Native.Forest.Council.STOC.Comments.8-24-07.pdf

30 Percent of Diseases in Children Result From Environment

The World Health Organization (WHO) said that over 30 percent of diseases in children can be attributed to environmental factors and that 13 million deaths could be prevented annually by improving the environment. In addition, WHO said 4 million children die annually because of the bad quality of the air, water and exposure to chemicals and other factors.

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in 5 languages



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Fighting for Our Forests

By Josh Schlossberg
Native Forest Council

Quick Quiz: What do the following recent proposals to “manage” our public forests have in common?

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) “Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan”
- The Bureau of Land Management’s “Western Oregon Plan Revision” (W.O.P.R.)
- Removal of “Survey and Manage” (look before you log) protections from the Northwest Forest Plan

(A) They would gut currently existing, already too-weak protections for public land native forests in order to “get out the cut.”

(B) They will keep the environmental movement “playing defense,” expending all its time, resources and energy to merely maintain the (unacceptable) status quo.

(C) They are proposed by industry and government with the very intention that they will fail. When these outrageous proposals are inevitably scaled back or scrapped, industry can once again play the martyr, gaining sympathy and support among politicians, media and an uninformed public for future forest destruction.

(D) All of the above

If you answered (D), you are a hopeless cynic with no faith whatsoever in our elected officials, government agencies or timber industry. You are also 100% correct.

If the environmental movement were to do nothing but fight these proposals, we would fall right into industry’s trap: purely defensive maneuvers

We at Native Forest Council realize proposals such as the “Spotted Owl Recovery Plan,” the “Western Oregon Plan Revision” and the removal of “Survey and Manage” from the Northwest Forest Plan are industry and government’s latest ploy to keep us on the defensive while they continue their current assaults on our living life-support system — our forests.

If the environmental movement were to do nothing but fight these proposals, we would fall right into industry’s trap: our purely defensive maneuvers actually *preventing* us from taking any genuine steps forward to protect our forests *before* they are placed on the chopping block.

However, we *can* hold these ghoulish proposals up to the light to expose the lies of industry and government, while demonstrating to the public that similar assaults will continue unless we go on the offensive to achieve proactive and lasting protections for our forests.

On the other hand (or branch), it is also true that if we offer no resistance these awful schemes *will* go through, taking priceless and irreplaceable forests with them. And although we must never lose sight of the bigger picture of forest protection, we cannot bear the responsibility of doing nothing in the face of such dire threats to our living planet.

Below is a brief description of these three latest assaults on our forests and what Native Forest

Council is doing to fight them. Rest assured we will continue to expose the lies, speak truth to power and educate the American people that fully protecting public lands is still the only sane option available to us to preserve our birthright of wild forests, mountains, rivers and streams.

The USFWS’s “Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan”

What is it?

The “Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan” recommends removing currently insufficient designated habitat for the northern spotted owl — the owl being an “indicator” species for the health of a forest ecosystem. Despite plummeting owl populations due to past and present logging of native forest habitat, the USFWS’s backward plan is actually to *remove* habitat, dooming the spotted owl to extinction.

What is NFC doing about it?

In order to compel the USFWS to rewrite their fatally flawed “Spotted Owl Recovery Plan,” Native Forest Council intends to initiate a take-no-prisoners lawsuit, having already begun the process by submitting detailed comments to USFWS this summer. NFC has also solicited and submitted hundreds of citizen comments for the public record, as well as forwarding these comments to several of our elected officials to urge them to pressure the USFWS to write an honest and legitimate recovery plan.

The B.L.M.’s “Western Oregon Plan Revision” (W.O.P.R.)

What is it?

The W.O.P.R. is the result of a backroom sweetheart deal with the logging industry, whereby the Bush gang invited an industry lawsuit only to take a dive on it, with the settlement being — you guessed it — more logging! W.O.P.R. would strip the already too-weak protections of the Northwest Forest Plan from 2.6 million acres of western Oregon forests, and could triple the currently appalling level of native forest logging.

What is NFC doing about it?

NFC has been working with filmmaker Tim Lewis and ZeroCut Coalition member group Cascadia’s Ecosystem Advocates (www.wildernessdefenders.net/cea.html) to produce and distribute “*Boom, Bust and the B.L.M.*,” a four-part, interactive DVD project created to expose the W.O.P.R. Thousands of copies have been distributed and dozens of public screenings have been arranged throughout the Northwest.

The DVD also contains an interactive “Activist Toolkit,” which can be used in your computer to show you everything you need to know to become a vital part of the grassroots campaign to stop W.O.P.R.

The B.L.M. has apparently found this DVD to be enough of a threat to illegally pirate a copy from a sneak-preview showing we held in Eugene this spring, as well as to send logging industry peons to disrupt several of our screenings.

“*Boom, Bust and the B.L.M.*” is available for a small donation by emailing tsuga@efn.org.

Aside from the successful DVD project, NFC continues to expose the W.O.P.R. with a blitzkrieg of public and media education, grassroots organizing,



and unrelenting pressure on our elected officials.

Submit your own comments to the B.L.M. on the W.O.P.R., demanding our public forests be protected as Forever Wild, at www.daylightdecisions.com/wopro.

Survey and Manage

What is it?

The “Survey and Manage” provision of the Northwest Forest Plan, while offering only limited protections, has still saved thousands of acres of forest from the chainsaw by compelling the Forest Service and B.L.M. to survey for endangered or sensitive plant and animal species before logging. “Survey and Manage” is often referred to as “look before you log.”

Since its implementation in 1994, the forest protections resulting from “Survey and Manage” have predictably led industry to lobby non-stop for its removal. This summer, the Forest Service obediently removed “Survey and Manage,” to no one’s surprise. This is not the first time agencies have done away with “Survey and Manage,” nor is it likely to be the last. Following the next round of lawsuits, we fully expect to see “Survey and Manage” reinstated into the Northwest Forest Plan.

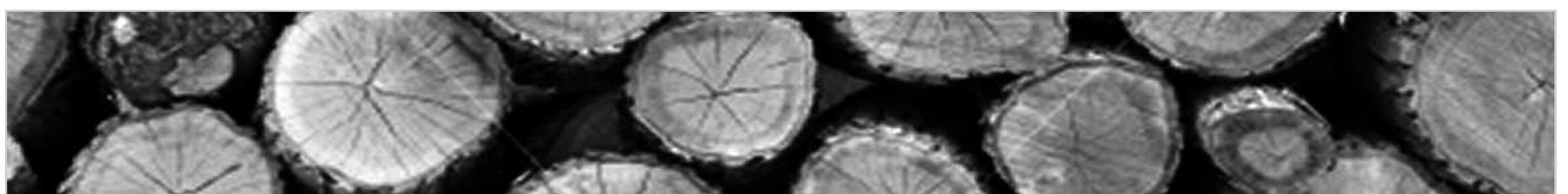
The passing of our Forever Wild bill remains the only solution that would put an end to the ceaseless defensive battles we have been fighting for decades

What is NFC doing about it?

Because agency staff has an uncanny knack for finding very few sensitive species during their surveys, the Northwest Ecosystem Survey Team, or N.E.S.T., was founded. The intrepid, professionally trained volunteers of N.E.S.T. have been climbing ancient trees with rope and harness in search of the nests of red tree voles — a small rodent that spends almost all of its life in the forest canopy and is a main food source of the spotted owl.

On finding a vole nest, a 10-acre buffer of forest is supposed to be placed off-limits to logging. Time and time again, the surveys and research of N.E.S.T. have been the silver bullet in many lawsuits protecting thousands of acres of native forests across the Northwest.

For the past two years, NFC has provided communications and logistical support for N.E.S.T. and



will continue to support N.E.S.T. into the future. To volunteer for or donate to N.E.S.T., email josh@forestcouncil.org

On the Offensive

While we have little choice whether or not to fight these current assaults on our forests, we at Native Forest Council know the desecration will continue unabated until we go on the offensive to protect our forests *before* they are on the chopping block.

The best form of offense that currently exists in our system of government is legislation. Only by enacting genuine and lasting protections for our forests through carefully crafted legal language of federal legislation can we provide adequate protections for the clean air, pure drinking water, carbon storage and countless other life-sustaining benefits that our forests provide (free of charge!).

With the tides shifting in Congress, many forms of legislation are being proposed, some of which are promising, such as the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (www.wildrockiesalliance.org) and Save America's Forests Act (www.saveamericasforests.org), and some of which would prevent future gains by settling for too little too soon.

In 1998, NFC proposed our Native Forest Protection Act (NFPA), which would've ended all "commercial" logging in our national forests. In the coming years, we will be reviving our bill by taking the next step: ending *all* forms of logging in our public forests and watersheds (as more and more we see destructive logging under the guise of "forest

health"). The passing of our Forever Wild bill remains the only solution that would put an end to the ceaseless defensive battles we have been fighting for decades to preserve the very source of our life on this planet: our forests, 60% of which are already gone.

The model for our Forever Wild bill comes from Article XIV, Section I of the New York State Constitution, which contains the strongest protections for any forest on the planet. The forested, steadily re-wilding Adirondack mountains are afforded greater protection than even our federal system of wilderness designation with the following historic language:

The lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed, or destroyed.

Native Forest Council will only be able to reintroduce Forever Wild into Congress with your help. Let your neighborhood, ward, district, city, county, state, and federal elected officials know that there has been no better time than now to take a stand — to draw a line in the sand — by placing our



life-giving forests, mountains, rivers and streams under the supreme protection they deserve by demanding ZeroCut on Public Lands.

To join forces with Forever Wild, please contact us at info@forestcouncil.org.

“When buying and selling are controlled by legislation, the first things to be bought and sold are legislators.”
— P. J. O'Rourke



A Green Revolution

By Heather Zissler

Al Gore may be worthy enough to don the revolutionary beret, but will he?

In an *“Inconvenient Truth,”* Al Gore paints a grim future for mankind's existence on Earth. Increasing carbon emissions melt away polar icecaps, causing entire countries to sink into the ocean as sea levels rise. Those places lucky enough to avoid flooding are plagued by drought and disease, if they weren't already. Preaching to the choir of likeminded environmentally conscious liberals, Mr. Gore soberly declares, “We are fighting for our ability to live on this planet.”

Really Mr. Gore? Are we fighting?

It's hard to imagine that our raging environmental war will come to an end unless we really start to fight, especially after President Bush's stalemate at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in October. The world hoped that the United States would take lead once again. (Like we did to eliminate CFCs and other ozone depleting chemicals in the Montreal Protocol.) Rather than demonstrate leadership, Mr. Bush reaffirmed his dedication to stop global warming by advocating “voluntary measures and non-binding targets” to reduce emissions. Tactically he obfuscated his sordid relationship with big business, repeatedly refusing to reduce emissions until other countries, mainly China and Brazil, do first. Bush's game of “who goes first” is a façade to buy him more time and perhaps more stock options in energy companies. Pointing his finger at China, while the U.S. continues to be the world's worst polluter, has paralyzed U.S. environmental politics.

Until Americans pay the real costs of our consumption prices, we won't see a reduction in waste and inefficiency, effectively trapping us in an un-winnable resource war. The results of our abusive environmental relationship are loud and clear in Gore's film. Perched on the edges of our chairs, my environmental policy class was

positioned to follow our “green leader” and start an environmental revolution.

The ending, however, was anticlimactic. Contradicting his earlier cry of urgency, Gore surreally tricks us to think we can save ourselves (but not necessarily our livelihoods) by changing our light bulbs, driving a hybrid, or writing our congressman. Ironically, he remarks that in America “political will is a renewable resource.” For one so badly scorned by the political system's injustices, Gore should take a new approach to change the status quo.

I suggest Gore take a lesson from the infamous social revolutionary Che Guevara. Gore is not so different from the once idealistic Argentinean doctor. Similar to Gore, the young revolutionary grew weary of corruption and social injustices, however instead of making a documentary, Guevara led a rebellion.

Now, before my name is flagged in some surreptitious database, I am not advocating that Gore begin guerrilla warfare. Rather I suggest his tactics match his messages' gravity. Propagating “think globally, act locally” rings the same as Bush's “voluntary reductions” — more people will continue to shop at Walmart than farmer's markets, just as businesses will continue to use cheap dirty energy. We need a new approach.

Drastic measures are needed for drastic times. Climatologists tell us that the Earth is heating faster than ever, prematurely causing the sixth mass extinction. We are indeed “fighting for our life on this planet,” so let's act like it! We need a rebellious leader, we need a revolutionary change, we need Comandante Gore!

Heather Zissler is a graduate student in Eugene, Oregon, and was formerly in the Peace Corp in Paraguay.

“For the great majority of mankind are satisfied with appearances, as though they were realities, and are often more influenced by the things that seem than by those that are.”
—Niccolo Machiavelli

“Some at least of the forest reserves should afford perpetual protection to the native flora and fauna... and free camping grounds for the ever increasing numbers of men and women... [they] should be set apart forever for the use and benefit of our people as a whole and not sacrificed to the shortsighted greed of a few.”

—Theodore Roosevelt, 1901 address to Congress



Saving The Rain Forests To Fight Warming

By Jane Goodall

Recently, the International Panel on Climate Change issued a report predicting an alarming array of impacts of climate change around the globe, including drought, floods, lower crop yields, threatened food security, wildfire and ocean acidification. It seems that no living thing in this web of life we are a part of will be unaffected by climate change.

As a primatologist, I am particularly concerned by the prediction that 20 to 30 percent of species will face increased risk of extinction.

Saving these forests would not only prevent the release of carbon currently stored in them, but it also would allow them to continue absorbing carbon in the future.

We know that a majority of the world's species live in rain forests, from many flagship species such as elephants, tigers and chimpanzees to smaller species such as insects and algae. Some play a role in curing human diseases, or may in the future.

These forests are threatened both by large-scale commercial exploitation and by rapidly increasing numbers of poor people who are destroying the forests to make charcoal or to open the land for subsistence agriculture. Some of the other effects of climate change predicted by the IPCC, such as drought and food insecurity, will only exacerbate the plight of these people.

A relatively new danger to these forests is the growing enthusiasm for biofuels. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, forest blocks that were previously reserved for conservation or sustainable forestry are being converted to sugar cane and palm oil plantations, whose output will be used as fuel for ethanol or biodiesel plants. The irony of cutting down forests for biofuels is that forests store a significant fraction of the world's stocks of carbon. If these carbon-capturing trees are felled and burned — whether as firewood or to clear land — the oxidation of their carbon will release billions more tons of carbon dioxide.

The tropical rain forests of Africa, Latin America and South Asia are particularly important in this regard. Tropical deforestation contributes two billion tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere annually, compared to approximately 6 billion tons from burning fossil fuels. Saving these forests would not only prevent the release of carbon currently stored in them, but it also would allow them to continue absorbing carbon in the future.

While population pressures cannot be quickly reversed, nor the businesses of logging and mining phased-out, there is much we can do to save these forests. The core of a successful strategy involves working not only with national leaders, but also, and most important, with local people to raise living standards, especially in the areas near the forest preserves. By providing technical assistance to farmers to raise their incomes, education to young people, health care to families and economic investments in ecotourism, these rural communities can become the custodians of the forests, not their destroyers.

These strategies have other benefits as well: they promote local stability and security. Rural prosperity, education and effective public health systems serve as natural defenses against outbreaks of pandemic disease, war, terrorism and political instability. By working with local people to save forests, we help to create stable communities that will surely improve global security.

By working with local people to save forests, we help to create stable communities that will surely improve global security.

The governments of the United States and other developed nations bear a special responsibility to promote these programs. Not only are western nations the greatest consumers of oil, timber and other carbon-generating industries, they have the wealth to bring about change in poor developing countries. Relatively small increases in aid directed toward rural community development, especially through micro-credit programs, can have an extraordinary impact on saving wilderness areas, including forests, and the array of life forms they sustain.

Only a few centuries ago, each of the developed nations on the continents of Europe, Asia and North America destroyed their own forests and many of the species inhabiting them in an unsustainable scramble toward wealth. Now only remnant forests remain on those continents.

The developed nations have an opportunity to enable developing nations to avoid making the same mistakes. By investing more in environmentally sustainable development, we can save valuable species, help prevent the escalation of global warming and increase global security. Helping to preserve the forests of developing nations is in our interests, as well as theirs.

Jane Goodall is an English UN Messenger of Peace, primatologist, ethologist, and anthropologist. She is best-known for her study of chimpanzee social and family life in Gombe Stream National Park for 45 years, and for founding the Jane Goodall Institute

“The greatest country, the richest country, is not that which has the most capitalists, monopolists, immense grabbings, vast fortunes, with its sad, sad soil of extreme, degrading, damning poverty, but the land in which there are the most homesteads, freeholds — where wealth does not show such contrasts high and low, where all men have enough — a modest living — and no man is made possessor beyond the sane and beautiful necessities.”
—Walt Whitman

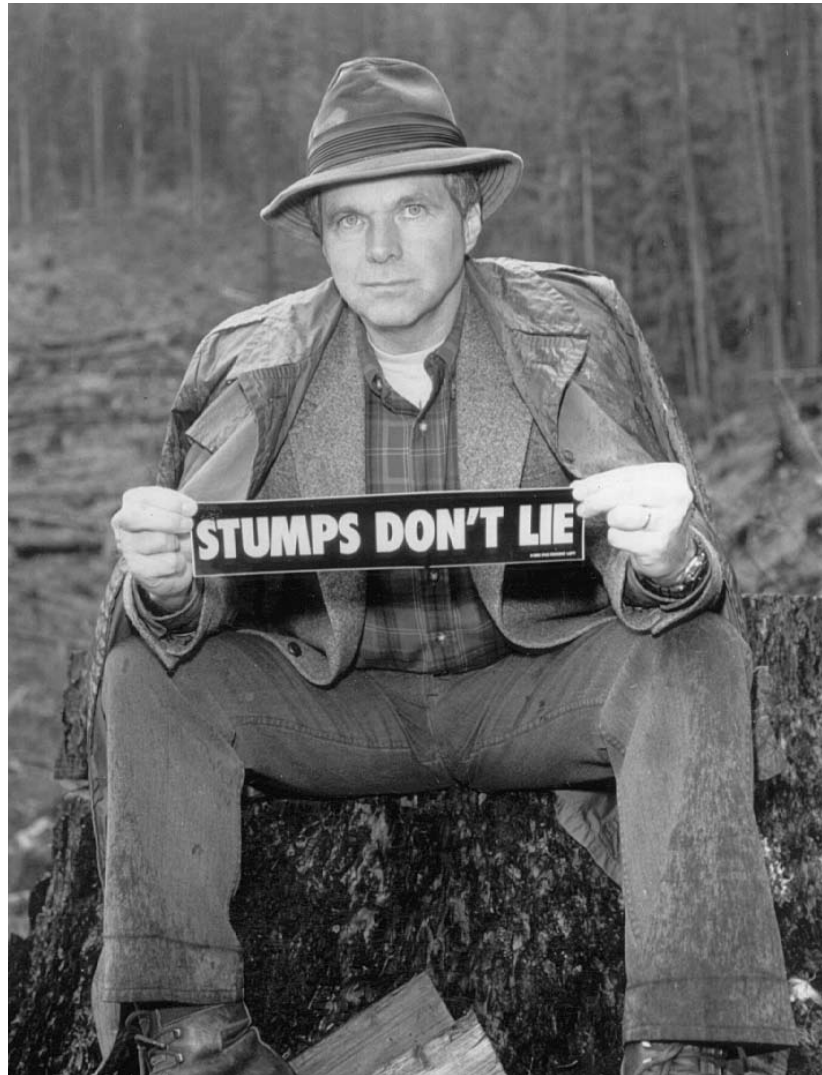


[This special pull-out insert originally appeared in Portland's Willamette Week in 1992. We're presenting it to you here because the issues in it are just as pressing and important today as they were 15 years ago.]

ZERO CUT

**Oregon economist Timothy Hermach proposes a modest solution to the timber wars:
Ban logging of federal trees — now**

*“The frog
does not drink
up the pond
in which he
lives.”*
— Native
American
Proverb



*“I would
rather lose in
a cause that
will some day
win, than win
in a cause that
will some day
lose.”*
— Woodrow
Wilson

“I fight for that which is right, nothing less.”
— Tim Hermach

When Bill Clinton promised to fix the Northwest timber crisis with a timber summit early in his administration, even staunch Northwest Democrats had to wince. Congressional players have already tried the summit thing. They've tried consensus-building. They've tried compromise timber bills — more than a dozen of them over the past five years — and they're no closer to a timber fix than they were when they started.

Suppose the solution isn't more compromise, more rationing of the federal forest pie among loggers and tree-huggers. Suppose the timber blues need much stronger medicine. That, at least, is the thesis pushed by some forestry freethinkers outside the D.C. Beltway. In their view, owls vs. loggers is just the symptom. The real crisis is a federal timber program all but indistinguishable from Soviet-style collectivism. Outdated, centralized and appallingly uneconomical, it is our national forest policy, these radical critics argue, that not only created the current forest fiasco but, unless totally overhauled, perhaps abandoned, guarantees to spawn new disasters well into the next century.

Among the most intriguing of these clean-sweep reforms comes from a brash, 47-year-old economist named Timothy Hermach. Since 1988, Hermach and his Eugene-based Native Forest Council have argued that the one sure way to end the crisis, save the environment and preserve the economy is to ban the harvest of all federal trees. Not a reduced harvest, as some in Congress advocate. And not a kinder, gentler harvest of the type promoted by the U.S. Forest Service and certain image-conscious timber companies. Hermach is talking Zero Cut, starting tomorrow. “A lot of folks go ballistic when they hear that,” conceded Hermach, a tall, square-jawed man with intense, wide-set eyes and a take-no-prisoners speaking style. “But then, a lot of folks labor under the misconception that the current system is in their best interest.”

Hermach's plan is shock therapy. He wants to stop logging on more than 191 million acres of federal real estate, a vast parcel of

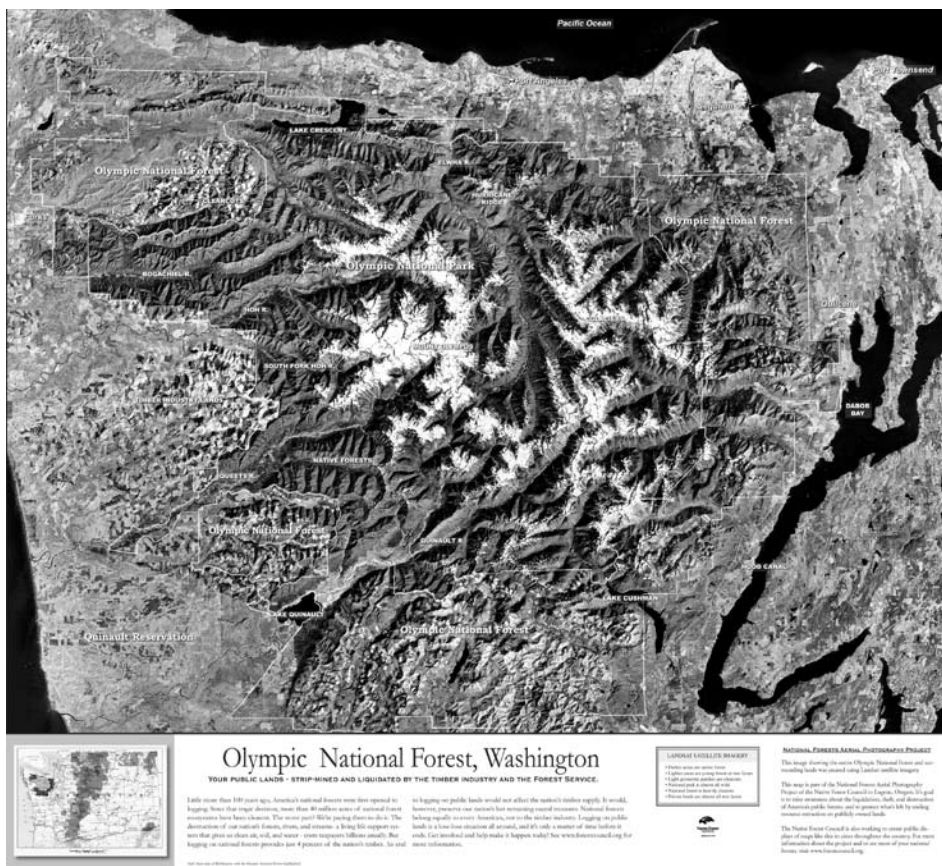
property larger than Texas. In Washington and Oregon alone, the 19 national forests comprise a fifth of the land area. Revenues from these and other federal lands, in the form of timber receipts, taxes and wages, play a massive role in local economies.

But it is not a beneficial role, Hermach argued. The heart of the problem, he said, is this: The federal government sells its trees too cheaply. By Hermach's reckoning, revenues from the sale of most federal timber come nowhere near the true costs of managing those trees, replacing them or fixing the damage caused by their harvest. Rather, these so-called “external” costs get passed along to the taxpayers, to the tune of several hundred million dollars annually.

It gets worse. By selling below-cost timber, Hermach said, the federal government encourages the harvest of federal forests, which contain most of the last intact forest ecosystems. Further, by flooding the market with cheap federal trees, the government depresses all timber prices. Lower prices mean lower profit margins for private timber firms, which discourages them from managing their own forests — and those, in Hermach's view, are far better suited for intensive forestry.

For Hermach, federal timber policy is subsidized socialism at its least efficient. No other enterprise wastes habitat, resources or money so effectively. The more we cut, the more we lose. “If you believe in capitalism, and if you are a fiscal conservative,” Hermach said, adopting the tones of an irate accounting professor, “then you don't believe in the liquidation of capital assets at below their replacement costs or their benefit value to the public. Right now, we do both.”

Tim Hermach isn't the first to raise the cost-benefit argument. For years, resource economists such as Barney Dowdle of the University of Washington School of Forestry and Randal O'Toole of Cascade Holistic Economic Consultants in Portland have harshly criticized federal timber policy's indifference to market signals. Yet while all of these



free-thinkers urge massive reform, there is considerable disagreement — often vigorously expressed — to the “true” nature of the crisis or the best way to resolve it. O’Toole, who thinks Zero Cut far too toxic a cure, would simply outlaw below-cost timber sales and auction the rest of the trees to the highest bidder, whether timber beasts or bird watchers. Dowdle rejects the below-cost argument as an environmentalist red herring. Federal trees are sold too cheaply, he said, because the government spends too much growing them in the first place.

Hermach adds an interesting green twist to this new economic environmentalism: He wants to reverse deforestation. Beyond banning federal logging, his proposed Native Forest Protection Act also mandates the total restoration of federal woodlands to their “native” state. This is the soothing side to Hermach’s economics: People who now log federal lands would go to work repairing them, a sort of green New Deal. “I submit,” he said, “that there are thousands of times more profits to be made, wages to be earned, taxes to be paid — not to mention jobs that actually create something, enhance and establish capital wealth and infrastructure — in rebuilding our forests and restoring them to their natural native condition.”

Too good to be true? Foresters who share Hermach’s distaste for below-cost timber sales recoil at the call for a total harvest ban, particularly in the Pacific Northwest, where logging national forests actually seems profitable. Hermach’s environmental peers are also dubious. While many grassroots environmentalists seem to like Zero Cut — roughly four million people in dozens of local organizations endorse the plan — the more pragmatic national environmental groups say Zero Cut is politically infeasible. Nor do national greens appreciate Hermach’s personal effect on the delicate political alliances they’ve worked for years to build. Outspoken, insistent, critical of those who doubt his ideas, Hermach has managed to affront many of the timber debate’s major players, from Northwest congressional members, whom he has called “prostitutes to timber,” to the national environmental groups, which he often accuses of selling out.

Personal style aside, can the Zero Cut gospel actually solve the timber crisis? At first blush, banning the federal harvest to solve the timber crisis seems analogous to treating a head wound by amputating at the neck. But keep in mind that the current negotiated standoff is hurting everyone. More to the point, as analyses by Hermach and others show, virtually everything you’ve ever heard about federal timber is not true.

Hermach calls conventional timber wisdom the Big Lie. Perri Knize, writing in the October 1991 issue of *The Atlantic*, calls it “The Great Federal Timber Mythology.” The first myth, Knize says, is that federal timber must be cut to meet insatiable and increasing public demand for wood. The second is that federal timber sales actually make money. And, third, even if federal timber sales lose money, the harvest is still needed to support tens of thousands of workers in the nation’s timber towns.

First, consider the notion that America’s ever-increasing population means an ever-growing demand for wood. According to the Congressional Research Service, an independent arm of the Library of Congress, domestic wood demand has actually declined since the 1920s, when electricity and heating oils began replacing wood heat. “We used more trees for firewood than anything else,” said Robert Wolf, a former CRS staffer who spent nine years analyzing federal timber programs. “We also used a hell of a lot of wood for split-rail fences. We don’t do those things anymore.”

We do, however, grow lots of trees. Timber companies and U.S. timber agencies now have more trees on more acres than at any time since the Great Depression. Agricultural lands have reverted to forest; commercial tree farms are flourishing. In 1990, amid claims that environmental laws were causing a timber shortage, domestic producers somehow managed to export nearly five billion board feet of logs and lumber. Of course, these flourishing “fiber farms,” as Hermach calls them, contain only second- and even third- growth trees, not the towering old growth specimens that yield the most-prized lumber. Most private old growth is gone; most of what remains is on federal land, the main reason industry gets so excited by spotted owls and Zero Cut.

So while there is an oldgrowth shortage, the overall domestic timber supply is actually glutted. One clear sign is the current price of timber, which, when compared with the Consumer Price Index, is at a historic low. Ross Gorte, another CRS analyst, says the inflation-adjusted price of softwood (evergreen) timber has dropped roughly 10 percent since 1983 and about 34 percent since its peak in 1978. Prices are so low, and supply so high, that many timber companies are delaying the harvest of federal trees that they’ve already bid on — about 4.2 billion board feet in Washington and Oregon alone — and have asked federal timber agencies to stretch out payment deadlines for those trees. And all this, Gorte wryly observed, “when the spotted owl was supposed to be threatening production.”

To be sure, the recession, a moribund housing market and the availability of foreign timber, particularly from Canada, have helped push prices down. But federal timber sales, some 20 percent of all U.S. timber sales, clearly exacerbate the glut.

“Their maps show forests where there are actually clearcuts. They’ve got claims that they can regrow trees 59 percent faster than nature — claims, mind you, not proof. What kind of bank would lend money on a project like that?”

And here’s the kicker: subtract all this cheap federal timber, Hermach argues, and America’s private forests could still supply all of this nation’s wood needs.



Hermach is promoting his Zero Cut like any other product or concept. “We’re not professional environmentalists,” he said of his small, four-member staff. “Our backgrounds are business,” Hermach, who has a finance-management degree from the University of Oregon, has sold cars and women’s apparel, worked for a phone company and managed a helicopter parts warehouse in Vietnam. When Hermach reviewed his first Forest Service timber plan — for the Willamette National Forest in 1986 — he reacted to discrepancies not so much with an environmentalist’s anger as with the outrage of a duped loan officer. “They’ve never done an accurate inventory,” he said. “Their maps show forests where there are actually clearcuts. They’ve got claims that they can regrow trees 59 percent faster than nature — claims, mind you, not proof. What kind of bank would lend money on a project like that?”

In fact, no bank would lend on the U.S. timber program because, contrary to Timber Myth No.2, the timber program does not make money. Timber quality on most national forests isn’t high enough for profitable commercial harvest. Nearly all the good tree-growing land — the moist, low-altitude, accessible forests — was granted to private interests a century ago. Much of what remains, being on higher, rockier ground, is low quality and very expensive to reach. And since the Forest Service began by cutting the best of its stands first, the least-valuable and least-accessible have been saved for last.

That’s not a recipe for profit. Indeed, if logging companies had to pay what it actually costs to arrange these sales — the surveying, the increasingly expensive roads to reach the ever-remoter sites — in other words, if the market were actually allowed to operate, most federal timber would be too costly to draw any bidders. But the market never enters the picture. Federal harvest levels are determined not by demand, but by Congress, who sets annual harvest quotas. The Forest Service is simply required to meet that quota, not turn a profit. Thus, the agency sells its trees for whatever loggers are willing to pay, which, because of the low-quality and inaccessibility of federal forests, is usually far below the costs of managing those trees or arranging those sales.

How could the Forest Service behave so irresponsibly? It gets paid to. Congress not only sets the harvest quota, but tips the Forest Service’s annual budget appropriation to its success in meeting that quota. Further, the Forest Service is allowed to keep almost all receipts from timber sales. In short, the more the agency cuts, the greater its budget. Under these perverse incentives, the Forest Service has maximized harvest rates regardless of market gluts or, until recently, ecological consequences.

“If my CPA undervalued assets like that in order to show a profit to shareholders, he’d not only lose his license, he’d go to jail.”

The Forest Service, by its own reckoning, claims the timber program makes money: \$630 million in 1990 alone. But that “profit,” according to numerous studies and former and current agency employees, is a product of the agency’s accounting system, which exaggerates revenues and diminishes costs. Road-building expenses, for example, are routinely amortized, or spread out, over huge periods — as long as 1,800 years in a few cases — to make annual expenses look small. Factor out such accounting gimmicks, said Robert Wolf, a former CRS analyst, and the 1990 federal timber program actually lost roughly \$150 million. Over the past decade, when harvest levels were considerably higher than today (and more below-cost timber was being cut), the program lost \$5.6 billion. In fact, Wolf, who was originally hired by CRS to demonstrate the timber program’s profitability, says that only 15 of the 156 national forests actually operate in the black.

As it happens, 14 of those profitable forests are in the Pacific Northwest. They supply nearly a third of the total federal timber production. Being relatively well situated geographically, they are far better suited for commercial harvest than are other national forests.

Hermach is undeterred. “The forests in the Pacific Northwest actually lose the most money,” he said, “because the trees here have the most value.” Trees, in his accountant’s view, are assets that must be valued as such. A 40-year-old tree-farm tree, for example, is an asset into which a company has poured a considerable investment. To profit, the company must sell the tree for enough to recover production costs. As important, the price must also make it worthwhile to replace that tree with a new one.

In short, Hermach argues that harvest of federal trees in the Pacific Northwest constitutes the ultimate below-cost sale. “We may disagree as to just how much a 1,000-year-old tree is worth,” Hermach said, “but it sure as hell isn’t zero. A 1,000-year-old tree is not ‘replaced’ by five or six seedlings. That’s like saying your grandmother is ‘replaced’ by six sperm cells. It’s bullshit. If my CPA undervalued assets like that in order to show a profit to shareholders, he’d not only lose his license, he’d go to jail.” Of course, this view doesn’t provide much comfort to the workers who now depend on these federal trees, particularly in the Northwest.

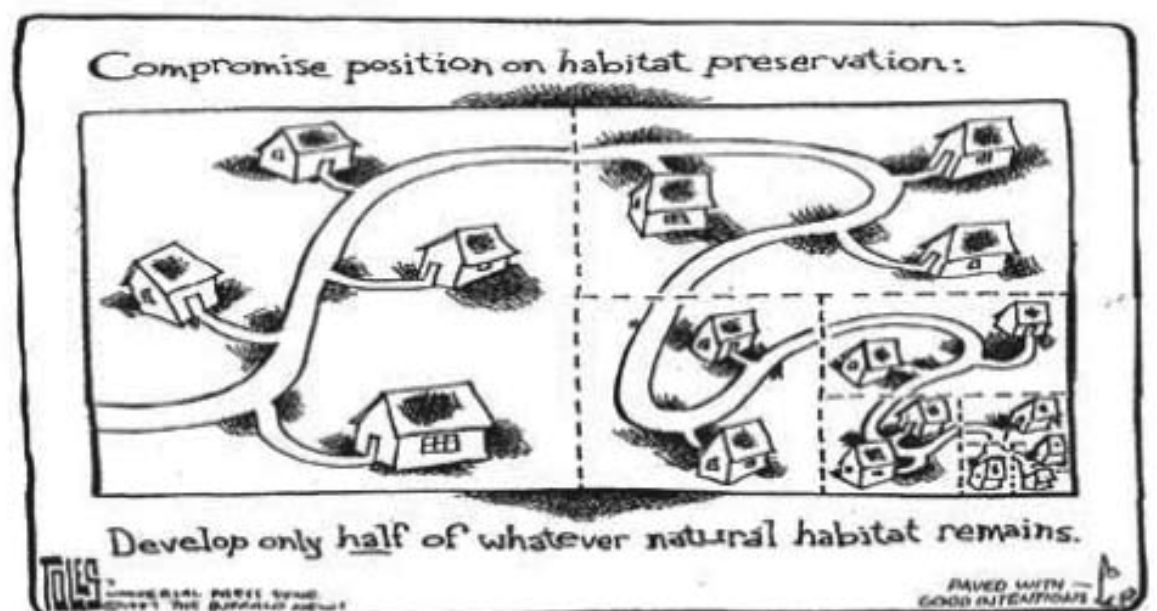


Or so conventional wisdom holds. Here again, however, Hermach reaches for the statistics. The current owl restrictions have essentially rendered a regional version of the Zero Cut on Northwest federal lands. And yet industry employment was in decline long before owl protections showed up. Between 1961 and 1987, according to Forest Service data, timber production in Oregon and Washington climbed 29 percent, from 11.9 billion feet to 15.26 billion feet. But during that same period, timber employment in the two states actually fell by nearly three percent, from 108,700 to 105,700.

The reasons are varied. Improved technology significantly reduced manpower needs. Further, the Northwest has been busily exporting thousands of timber jobs, in the form of raw logs that could have been processed at home. Between 1961 and 1987, log exports from Washington and Oregon increased twice as fast as exports of lumber and “value-added,” or job-intensive, finished products. For that reason, Hermach’s plan calls for an “inverse excise tax” on the export and import of all wood products. The tax starts at a whopping 200 percent for raw logs, which create the fewest jobs for the exporting nation, then drops to zero as the product’s added value is maximized. The idea, Hermach said, is to discourage trade in raw logs, here or elsewhere, and encourage all timber-producing nations to keep their timber jobs at home. Even with an excise tax, Hermach conceded, Zero Cut will cause mammoth dislocations. Nonetheless, his contention remains unchanged: It’s better to stop the federal harvest and shift the workers to private production, which is bound to increase as soon as federal timber leaves the market. Those who can’t find work on the private side will have plenty of public work repairing the federal forests.

Hermach envisions the reforestation task as rivaling the public-works projects of the Great Depression. There are hundreds of thousands of trees to be planted. There are federal tree farms to be “helped” — via thinning, burning or selective logging — back to a more natural composition.

There are also thousands of miles of streams to fix and some 360,000 miles of logging roads to unbuild. The money for all this, in case you’re wondering, would come from those mega-millions now spent



The inevitable result of compromise

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in subsidizing below-cost federal timber sales. "It's going to take a lot of heavy equipment an awful long time to get rid of those roads," Hermach said. "However you look at it, there are a lot more jobs in restoring forests than there ever were in tearing them down." Hermach's fix-the-forest scenario is, of course, plagued with a great many question marks. How does one organize such a massive restoration program?

Or convince Congress that the money saved from below-cost sales should be spent on fixing the forests, instead of, say, reducing the national debt? Hermach acknowledges that his

proposals lack specifics; the entire text of the five Native Forest Protection Acts fills just two pages.

One can, however, address the biggest question: How would the overnight disappearance of federal timber affect timber employment and timber supply? Because of the spotted owl, industry analysts and others have anticipated a reduced federal cut and, for the past few years, have been speculating in some detail on its short- and long-term effects. Asked to plug in Zero Cut instead of "reduced cut," several forecasters spun the following scenario:

For starters, we'd see massive swings in timber prices, as buyers competed for remaining supplies. Gorte, with CRS, thinks prices might double; Tom Power, a University of Montana resource economist, sees a more moderate spike, perhaps even lower than what occurs during routine housing cycles, though more immediate. In any case, Gorte said, Zero Cut "would be a speculators' dream."

Beneficiaries would include any forest-owning companies (Weyerhaeuser, for example, saw 1992 first-quarter earnings jump \$86 million because of owl-related restrictions) as well as non-federal agencies that sell timber, such as Washington State's Department of Natural Resources. Likewise for owners of the vast commercial pine forests in the South and for export nations, especially Canada and countries in South and Central America.

Losers would be plentiful. Some logging outfits without their own timber supply would fail immediately; others would drastically cut back employees. Local governments would also suffer. The Forest Service pays 25 percent of its timber receipts to those counties with national forests inside their borders. Regionwide, based on 1989 figures, Zero Cut could cost 31 counties in Oregon and 27 counties in Washington some \$201 million each year. However, Zero Cut supporters say their proposed legislation calls for federal replacement revenues.

For consumers, the longer-term effects may be subtler. Housing prices would probably rise only few percentage points, largely because lumber accounts for a small fraction of the price of a new home.

Focused so intently on economics, it's easy to forget the original goal of Zero Cut — saving the environment. Throughout Hermach's argument is the assumption that, since federal lands hold most of the remaining intact "native" forest ecosystems, fully protecting and restoring federal forests will yield a net increase in ecological benefits. But what of the environmental trade-offs for private lands,

on Canadian forests, or on the other forests called upon to cover the absence of federal timber? Randal O'Toole, Oregon's competing radical green economist, says Zero Cut simply "shifts ecological costs" to new places.

Not so, Hermach said. A proportionate shift in ecological costs from public to private lands assumes a comparable shift in production from public to private.

That, in turn, assumes an "inelasticity of demand," namely, that consumer demand for any commodity will remain steady regardless of price. "This never happens," Hermach said. "Look what just a 1 percent hike in interest rates does to construction. If wood prices rise — double, triple, quadruple — in other words, if the price more accurately reflected the true costs of the trees, consumers would use less. Look at paper. The only reason we make paper from wood, the only reason we have quadruple-wrapped packaging, is that wood is so damn cheap. We consume wastefully not because we need to, but because we are encouraged to do so. It's as if landfill operators were the ones who designed timber policy."

In the political marketplace, however, Hermach's idea will likely be outbid. Commercial interests that buy public trees are already quite effective in derailing even more modest timber proposals that have come up in Congress. What successes national environmental groups have achieved have come slowly, with litigation followed by carefully negotiated compromises. Thus, even if Zero Cut makes economic and ecological sense — and many top green officials concede that it does — they also say the concept won't fly in D.C.

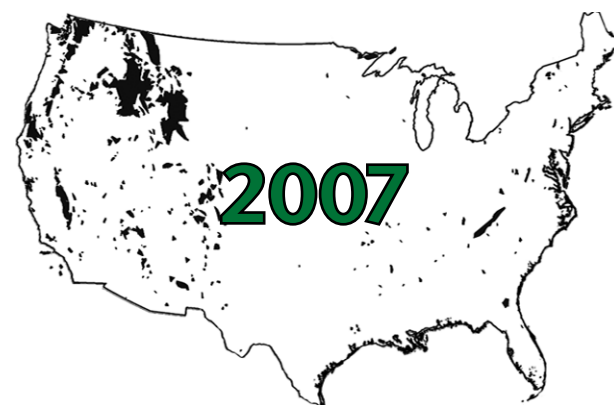
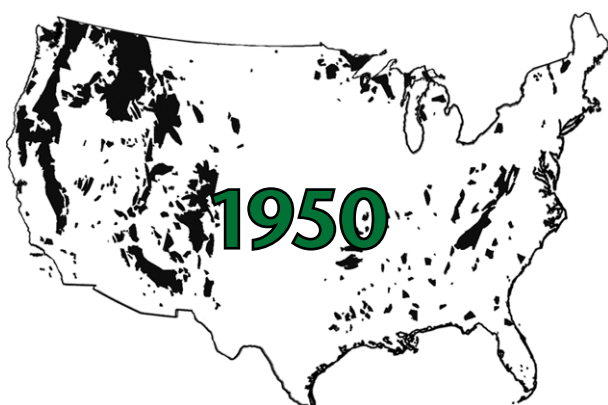
Commercial interests that buy public trees are already quite effective in derailing even more modest timber proposals that have come up in Congress

Hermach replies that it won't fly only because the national groups won't give it wings. His relations with them are far from cordial. "Tim tends toward a confrontational approach with those [environmental groups that] he sees as insufficiently supportive of his vision, blaming them for his own lack of progress," said the National Wildlife Federation's Rick Brown.

Still, even among mainstream environmentalists, there is a growing weariness over the current crisis-compromise approach. Some fear that the big environmental groups, through efforts to win political allies for future battles, are giving up too much. Even officials at the big groups recognize the danger, as Brown puts it, of working amid "the day-to-day machinations of Congress." The tendency, he said, "is to accept the current political reality as the limiting force, rather than figuring out how to change the political reality."

Pete Emerson, a former Wilderness Society vice president now with the Environmental Defense Fund, is more blunt: "When you hear people say that Tim Hermach isn't as politically astute as they are, you have to remember that you're hearing it from people in the "system," people who like to talk to each other, who like to go to each other's meetings, who don't like to irritate each other. Hermach irritates. They should be thankful to Hermach for offering a solution, because, basically, you're never going to hear solutions when you're inside the Beltway."

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Is Sustainable Forestry Sustainable?

By George Wuerthner

We hear praise for sustainable forestry from the timber industry, politicians, and even among many environmental groups. While sustainability is an admirable goal, most of what I have seen touted as sustainable practices are far from ecologically sustainable, especially when compared to wild landscapes. In nearly all instances that I have observed, the so called “sustainable” logging, grazing, farming — fill in the blank — is only sustainable by externalizing most of the real costs (ecological impacts) of production. That doesn't prevent people from trying to claim that they have achieved the Holy Grail and found a way to exploit nature and protect it too. Everyone wants to think they can take from nature and somehow not have to pay the full cost. It's the free lunch syndrome.

Most of what I have seen touted as sustainable practices are far from ecologically sustainable, especially when compared to wild landscapes.

Sustainable forestry as practiced today is usually more of an economic definition than an ecological one. By sustainable, timber companies and their supporters in the “sustainable forestry” movement engage in practices that ensure a continual long term timber supply, not a sustainable forest.

A couple of weeks ago I toured a highly ballyhooed sustainable forestry site in California. The company whose property we viewed was certified by the Forest Stewardship Council as a sustainable forestry wood producer. Certification by FSC permits a company to sell its wood for a premium and supposedly gives consumers reassurance that the wood they are buying is environmentally benign or may even enhance ecosystem function.

The company land was, by the standards of the industry, well managed. They did no clearcutting. They left buffers along streams. They didn't cut any remaining patches of old growth. In short, they were a model timber operation. Their land still had trees, but did it still have a forest? For many the mere presence of trees is taken as proof that logging on the site was sustainable. But a continuous supply of trees for the mill doesn't necessarily mean you are preserving or sustaining a forest ecosystem.

The company owners and foresters who led the tour were proud of their efforts. I don't want to denigrate their practices, which, on the whole, were much better than those followed by other timber companies. But that doesn't mean their logging practices were perpetuating a forest ecosystem. For instance, the company owner showed the tour group growth rings of a tree that grew on the site before his company began to manage the area. Because of the competition with other trees, the tree had grown slowly and the rings were close and tight. Then he showed us a segment of a tree that had grown up after they had selectively cut some trees. The growth rings were wide and spaced far apart, demonstrating — in his mind — how thinning “improved” the forest. Now he was growing “more” wood on the land than when it was a “wild” forest. But my first thought when I saw the two tree segments was “what good are trees that grow under slow conditions?” Do trees with tight growth rings resist rot longer? If so would they remain as a biological legacy on the site far longer than a tree grown under “sustainable forestry practices?” While a fast growing tree may be good from the lumber company's perspective, a fast growing tree is not necessarily good from a forest ecosystem perspective.

Company representatives believed they were “tidying up” the forest — much as a gardener weeds a flower bed — by selectively weeding out the “bad” or “damaged” trees, and leaving the fast growing “healthy” trees. This practice may seem like good forestry — especially from the perspective of creating more timber to cut — but it

may not be what is needed in the long run to preserve forest genetic diversity. No one, including myself, has any idea what genetic properties are valuable to the forest ecosystem. Fast growth or any other trait we may select to preserve in the trees is not necessarily what is needed to preserve the forest ecosystem. It may be the trees we cull — the deformed trees, the slower growing trees, or trees that have other “defects”— that may hold the secret to the future. They may be the very trees, for instance, that might be best adapted to survive a warming climate. Who knows — but certainly not the forester marking such trees for removal believing he is “improving” the forest.



SFI certified logging, Southern Oregon, 2003

www.credibleforestcertification.org

Everyone wants to think they can take from nature and somehow not have to pay the full cost. It's the free lunch syndrome.

The company's forest management plan called for the eventual cutting of all trees on its land — just not all trees at the same time as in a clearcut. You might call this a “rolling clearcut.” Because of this practice, no trees will ever again attain old growth dimensions or status before it is cut and hauled off to the mill. So how does this affect forest ecosystem sustainability? After the tour, I visited a nearby state park that had wild (unmanaged) forests. Though the differences might not be apparent to the casual visitor, I saw substantial physical differences between the managed company lands and the wild forest.

First, the wild forest had a much higher percentage of big, old trees. Furthermore, these disparities will grow ever greater the longer the company lands are managed for “sustainable” timber production. While on the wild forest, the percentage of old growth will vary over time depending on things like wildfire or insect attacks, but no matter what disturbs the forest — the wild forest will at least have the potential to grow significant amounts of old growth.

Given what we know about the value of older, bigger trees, this can't help but affect the forest ecosystem. For example, big trees take longer to rot. They remain longer on the ground, in streams, and provide structural diversity to the forest floor and stream channels. One of the noticeable things about the managed forest we visited was the absence of big woody debris (logs) on the forest floor compared to the nearby wild forest. And though the company foresters had a prescription that left a few snags per acre, the number of large snags on their managed lands was considerably less than what I observed in the wild forest.

Another contrast between the so called “sustainable” forestry site and the wild forest were differences in the amount of wood in the streams. In the wild forest there was an abundance of logs that had fallen into the creek. These logs help to create fish habitat, and armor the banks against erosion. On the managed landscape, there were far fewer logs in the streambed, despite the fact that the company did maintain some narrow buffers of unlogged land along all creeks.

In addition to these physical differences, there were other potentially important ecological losses. Among other things, the timber company did not permit wildfires to burn through its “sustainable” forest tracts. Yet in this particular part of California, wildfire was an important ecological factor that on

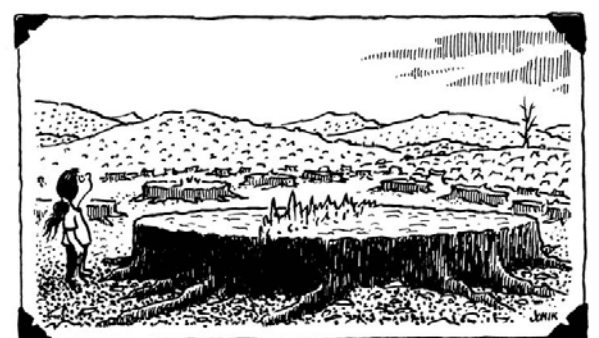
occasion would normally burn at least some of the forest stands. Typically such fires would create a mosaic of burned and unburned forests, release nutrients, kill smaller trees, create some snags of the larger trees as legacy logs, and cleanse the forest. In the managed forest, the company was doing everything it could to keep fire from burning up its profits. Without fire, it is doubtful this forest stand was really emulating a sustainable ecosystem.

In the “sustainable” forest, the company representatives admitted that the disturbed habitat created by logging roads and skid trails facilitated invasion by exotic weeds — but they handled it by spraying herbicides along roadways. In the nearby wild forest there were no roads and even few trails. Weeds were far less of a problem as a consequence. Soil erosion, particularly that from logging roads, was also an issue and one that never disappeared because once they constructed their main roads for timber management access, they did not remove them. Thus they remained as a long term source of sedimentation.

By sustainable, timber companies and their supporters in the “sustainable forestry” movement engage in practices that ensure a continual long term timber supply, not a sustainable forest.

Do all these differences compromise ecological sustainability? I don't know. But I am willing to assert it is premature to claim that such forestry practices are sustainable. While they may be an improvement over the kind of butchery that occurred in the past — and is still the dominant paradigm on many timber lands including public forests — I question whether such techniques are sustainable from a forest ecosystem perspective. And in the long run that is the only perspective that really counts. My guess is that far too many ecological costs are externalized and uncounted and the only thing we are sustaining are company profits.

George Wuerthner is a full-time freelance writer and photographer with 33 books to his credit. In addition to his photography and writing, George occasionally teaches field ecology classes, photo workshops, and guides natural history wilderness tours through his company Raventrails. Find out more at www.wuerthnerphotography.com.



Natural Capital and Economic Progress

By John Talberth, Ph.D.

As award-winning novelist, historian, and essayist Ronald Wright notes in his recent work, *A Short History Of Progress*, “if civilization is to survive, it must live on the interest, not the capital, of nature.” In this succinct observation, Wright captures the essence of a new paradigm slowly transforming the way we think about, plan for, and manage the global economy — ecological economics, or the economy of nature.

Neither the value of intact natural capital nor the externalities associated with its depletion are recognized in our systems of national accounting.

Nature’s interest is the flow of goods and services we receive from stocks of natural capital. These stocks include wild ecosystems, healthy soils, genetic diversity, and atmospheric, terrestrial, and aquatic sinks for the wastes we inherit from the last generation. Human built capital like mills, housing, power plants, and refrigerators yield useful goods and services — wood products, shelter, electricity, and food storage — on an ongoing basis as long as they are maintained in good working order. Similarly, natural capital yields goods such as foods, medicines, organic fertilizers, and raw materials for countless manufacturing processes and services such as flood control, recycling our wastes, building soils, and keeping atmospheric gases in balance — free of charge — as long as we have the common sense to maintain the ecosystems on which these goods and services depend. Less tangible, but no less valuable are the opportunities healthy ecosystems provide for recreation, scientific research, and fulfillment of that part of our human makeup that needs wildness, open spaces, and awe at the wondrous diversity of life. A recent study published in the journal *Science* estimated that remaining wild areas are 100 times more valuable if conserved for these ecosystem services rather than developed.

When natural capital is lost or degraded, the flow of goods and services is compromised or eliminated entirely just as when decimation of human capital stocks destroy a community’s ability to provide shelter, communications, water supply or energy. This generates real economic and social costs — know as negative externalities — to both current and future generations. If anyone doubts the magnitude of these externalities consider the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina.

In the decades before landfall, over 1,900 square miles of Louisiana’s Gulf Coast wetlands were sacrificed to make room for shipping canals. A key ecosystem service provided by wetlands is to protect coastal communities from damaging waves and storm surges. Scientists have found that roughly two to four linear miles of wetlands reduce storm surge height by one foot. As Louisiana’s wetlands disappeared, so too did the flood control services they provided. As Population Connection’s Abbie Kennedy laments, “the extreme suffering that we saw unfold on our television sets was the result of

canals and levees constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers that gave Hurricane Katrina a direct pass into the heart of New Orleans.” The toll: 1,836 preventable deaths, over 850,000 housing units damaged, destroyed, or left uninhabitable, disruption of 600,000 jobs, destruction of 1.3 million acres of productive forest and over \$200 billion and counting in clean up costs and insured losses — over \$164,000 for each acre of wetland lost prior to landfall. The monumental price tag of this disaster is a graphic illustration of just how essential nature’s capital is to our overall economic welfare.

Or take the unfolding crisis over global warming, caused by our failure to operate our economic system within the Earth’s carbon sequestration capacity and by depleting that capacity through deforestation and development. Without prompt action to reduce carbon emissions by at least 80%, the costs of lost agricultural productivity, damage from severe storms, water shortages, and human health are likely to exceed \$20 trillion per year according to a recent calculation made by economists at the Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University.

Neither the value of intact natural capital nor the externalities associated with its depletion are recognized in our systems of national accounting. Instead, economists have been exclusively focused on narrow set of economic indicators such as gross domestic product, inflation, stock market indices, corporate profits, disposable income, and purchasing power parity. As World Resources Institute’s Jonathan Lash correctly notes, “[t]he recent failure of businesses such as Enron should serve as a painful reminder of the potential consequences of keeping key assets and liabilities off the balance sheet. No one in the private sector, or the public sector for that matter, would keep his or her job with such a record of financial mismanagement and waste.”

How can we transform economic decision making at the global, national, local and business levels to acknowledge the critical role of natural capital? One approach may be to simply enforce laws and legal precedents that are already on the books. In the courts, most conservationist victories thus far have been based on enforcing provisions of federal, state, and local laws protecting imperiled species, water quality or other resources from a purely environmental perspective. Few, if any legal efforts thus far have focused on numerous provisions of common law or federal, state, and local statutes providing protection for economic assets. Destroying natural capital destroys livelihoods and in extreme cases, as in Katrina, takes lives. As such, common law principles related to negligence,



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trespass, nuisance, and tortious interference with business practices ought to apply.

Remaining wild areas are 100 times more valuable if conserved for these ecosystem services rather than developed.

Back in 1707, Justice Holt wrote, “where a violent and malicious act is done to a man’s occupation, profession, or livelihood, there an action lies in all cases.” Few would dispute the violent and malicious nature of factory trawling, clearcutting, mountaintop removal mining or similar environmental abuses that jeopardize the livelihoods of those who make their living fishing, farming, managing wilderness retreats, hunting, or gathering wild foods nearby. These abuses amount to a kind of tortious interference with business on a grand scale. The problem is that assignment of property rights is murky, and industries have often hard-wired the legal process to thwart those seeking just compensation for damages through language such as the following from Oregon’s Agricultural Protection Act: “no farming or forest practice on lands zoned for farm or forest use shall give rise to any private right of action or claim for relief based on nuisance or trespass.”

Another legal strategy is to enforce numerous provisions of federal, state, and local laws that require accounting for the costs of depleting natural capital and other negative externalities.

For example, Center for Sustainable Economy (CSE) recently prepared an independent benefit-cost analysis of the proposed Delong Mountain Terminal Project (DMTP) along the far northwest arctic coast of Alaska. The DMTP is a \$200 million dollar port expansion scheme designed to stimulate oil imports from Singapore (shocking, in this age of “energy independence”) and assist Red Dog Mine — the largest lead/zinc



producer in the World — expand its operations. Tragically, Alaska native villagers depend on adjacent lands and waters for subsistence, and such uses have already been impacted by contamination from the mine and disruption of migration patterns for marine mammals, fish and shorebirds.

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The Corps regulatory guidance and federal environmental justice guidelines demand accounting for externalities such as subsistence use damage in the context of benefit-cost analyses, yet such externalities are routinely ignored and were so by the Corps in this case. By quantifying externalities associated with lost subsistence, carbon emissions, marine pollution, and degraded marine mammal habitat using standard non-market valuation techniques, CSE estimates that DMTP costs will likely exceed benefits by a factor of five. So far, the project has been successfully opposed on these economic grounds, and there are many more like it that may benefit from similar strategies.

Another approach is to develop new systems of economic performance that take into account costs of depleting natural capital. For example, the Gund Institute at the University of Vermont published “Earth Inc., A Shareholder’s Report” in a format similar to that of a major corporation’s annual report. Using economic values that Institute researchers assign to various environmental resources, the report presents an “income statement” and “balance sheet” analysis of global environmental issues. Importantly, the balance sheet and profit and loss statement will include the assets and flows of all four capital types (natural,

social, human, and built) to show overall gain or loss of assets as positive or negative.

Redefining Progress (RP) in Oakland publishes regular updates to the Genuine Progress Indicator, a national accounting system that takes into account the benefits associated with volunteering, higher education, housework, and public infrastructure as well as the costs associated with lost forests, farmland, and wetlands, pollution, disappearing family time, and capital exported abroad. The 2006 GPI update shows that the U.S. economy has actually stagnated since the late 1970s as income inequality, environmental degradation, and our flailing international position take their toll on real economic progress. Externalities associated with natural capital depletion, carbon emissions, and pollution cost the U.S. economy over \$3.8 trillion each year.

Another approach is to develop new systems of economic performance that take into account costs of depleting natural capital.

Yet another strategy is to demonstrate the economic benefits of both protecting and restoring natural areas. Often, protecting natural capital generates gains for the very industries that would resist such protection. Take fisheries as an example. It has been well established that designation of “no-take” marine protected areas (MPA) boost the productivity of fisheries outside the reserves — 20% on average according to a recent RP meta-analysis of MPA studies. Likewise, old growth forests enhance the productivity of managed forests nearby. A nationwide study by the Wilderness Society estimated that unprotected roadless areas generate \$600 million in recreation benefits, \$280 million

in passive use values, between \$490 and \$1 billion in carbon sequestration services, \$490 million in waste treatment services, and 24,000 jobs each year simply by existing as native ecosystems.

Step by step, sustainability advocates are transforming the global economy to one consistent with an ecological economics world view that recognizes natural capital as an asset critical to our economic welfare. Unfortunately, the pace of change is maddeningly slow. By focusing more attention on strategies that hold decision makers accountable and demonstrate why protecting and restoring natural capital makes good economic sense it may be possible to speed the transition.

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“Most Americans aren’t the sort of citizens the Founding Fathers expected; they are contented serfs. Far from being active critics of government, they assume that its might makes it right.”
—Joseph Sobran

Demand Access To Nation’s Wild Places

By Ron Judd
Seattle Times staff columnist

Q: Thanks for being yet another bleating voice complaining about the “high” cost of visiting national parks and monuments without offering any viable alternatives. Paying \$15 for a week-long pass to a national park is a pretty good deal compared to paying 10 bucks for two hours in a movie. Don’t you get that the choice is to pay a reasonable fee, or get crappy amenities in return?

A: No, I don’t.

A visit to Mount Rainier National Park is not a ring tone, a movie rental, or any other expendable entertainment commodity. For many people, it’s a birthright — one in keeping with the charge of the National Park Service and other agencies to conserve the country’s most special places for the enjoyment of the public.

The last time I checked, “public” still does not refer exclusively to members of the public well heeled enough to afford the admission fee.

The last time I checked, “public” still does not refer exclusively to members of the public well heeled enough to afford the admission fee.

As to your “viable alternatives”: I thought no one would ever ask. Many come to mind. But they all involve changes in spending priorities at the federal level — changes that usually come with strong political strings attached.

But if you insist on some examples of ways to make up for, and easily exceed, every cent of cash collected from user fees on federal lands, try these for starters: Divert a fraction of one percent of the recent tax cuts for the richest one percent of Americans. Divert an infinitesimal fraction of what the government gives away in farm subsidies, corporate welfare, outdated

and functionless weapons systems, Medicare cash grants to pharmaceutical companies, and those famous bridges-to-nowhere pork-barrel projects that stand as testaments to the soulless greed of myopic Alaskan congressmen (excuse all foregoing redundancies).

Don’t like any of those bloated-cow budget targets? Pick your own source of cash diversion: Welfare, student loans, Social Security, foreign aid. Whatever.

My point: Money collected through public-lands user fees is laughably insignificant in the scope of total federal spending. In 2003, the last year for which numbers are available, the government collected \$177 million in “fee-demo” charges for access to all public lands. This in a nation that expects federal expenditures of \$2.6 trillion — more than \$20,000 per U.S. household — in 2007.

Do your own math.

If the numbers are too boggling, chew on this perspective: The entire National Parks budget for 2006 — after being slashed another three percent by the Bush administration during times of rising visitor use — will be about \$2.3 billion. That’s almost exactly the cost of a single B-2 bomber in our current Cold War arsenal, according to the General Accounting Office.

Call me old-fashioned, a socialist, or just a dreamer, but I believe the richest nation in the history of the world has not only the ability, but the responsibility to provide essential services: schools, health care, defense, public safety and infrastructure. I’m simply urging Americans to reaffirm the time-honored notion that access to this nation’s wild places is one of those essential services — one that we demand.

I reject the premise that it comes down to a Hobson’s choice of paying high user fees or facing restricted access. So should you. But the fact that you frame the question in those terms is further evidence that the government/recreation industry brainwashing is working. They want you to

forget that you already gave at the office for your wilderness user fee — and a lot of other things you hold dear.

As long as you march happily to that tune, you’ll live with your own self-fulfilling prophecy: high fees or bad services — or worse, restricted access.

Again, I think that’s a sad comment on our society. And yes, I realize that public-lands access, for legitimate reasons, is not exactly a hot-button issue for a nation with citizens living under tarps in the wake of hurricanes, for a country with tens of millions without health care, and for a people losing thousands of sons and daughters on a battlefield.

But I also believe it’s vital during times of national stress to reach out to our touchstones. It takes a collective wisdom to cling, especially during roller-coaster times of societal ups and downs, to the things that define us as a nation.

For Americans, the rejuvenating effect of visiting wilderness areas has always been one of those things. Tumult doesn’t wipe that need away; if anything, it should deepen it.



Still Losing After All These Years

By Victor Rozek

At a time when all living systems are known to be in decline, how did environmentalism become irrelevant? Forests, fisheries, water quality, air pollution, species decline, chemical contamination of the food supply, population growth; there is nary a whisper about any of it. Granted, Al Gore brought much-needed attention to the global warming crisis, but in spite of the overwhelming evidence that warming is accelerating, there is a notable absence of leadership and meaningful action. All of which is curious, because polls consistently show that a majority of Americans care about the environment and are willing to make sacrifices in order to preserve it. Why, then, has it become acceptable to ignore environmental issues? In a time of unprecedented need, how has the movement — robust just two decades ago — become exiled beyond the margins of policy debate.

It is clear that the environmental movement has no answers; if it had, things would be different. Therefore, there is no point in querying the perpetually losing side about how to remedy its failings. A more useful option is to listen carefully to the victors, study their winning strategies, and learn from them before we — and the Earth — suffer the consequences of further defeats.

It is clear that the environmental movement has no answers; if it had, things would be different.

Look first to the arrogant ones; they will tip their hand. They will brag about what they plan to do and boast about having done it. Like the Neocons in their Project for the New American Century, they will outline their strategy, driven by the need to demonstrate cleverness and superiority.

If only someone had believed them.

In terms of setting strategy, the public relations (PR) industry is to the environmental movement what Neocons are to politics. PR firms are hired to advance unpopular agendas and/or allow clients to avoid accountability when their actions conflict with the public good. Examples abound from the profitable to the profane: PR firms champion trade agreements which benefit corporations at the expense of jobs and wages for working Americans; they rail against single-payer health care on behalf of insurance companies, and campaign against mileage standards for auto and oil interests. Unbound by the constraints of conscience, they shill for dictators and polluters, defend criminal

behavior, and recast perpetrators as victims. PR firms stood with China after the Tiananmen Square massacre, Exxon after the Exxon-Valdez oil spill, and Union Carbide after Bhopal.

Flying under the radar of public awareness, PR firms have become the true invisible hand of the market, and they know what it takes to win.

Combining lobbying and advertising with political and media access, PR firms have ascended to uncommon positions of power, exercising influence over domestic policy, and manipulating public opinion in support of unpopular foreign interventions. As a measure of their influence, consider the following. During the runup to the Kuwaiti war, the notorious firm of Hill and Knowlton was paid \$8 million by the Kuwaiti government to ensure that a skeptical America would come to its rescue. The money purchased two carefully orchestrated acts of fiction: Citizens for a Free Kuwait, a phony “grassroots” lobbying group which gave the impression of widespread support; and fabricated testimony before Congress. The testimony was given by an “unidentified” young woman who was supposedly from Kuwait and feared for her family. She was, in fact, the Kuwaiti ambassador’s daughter who lived in the U.S. and said exactly what Hill and Knowlton told her to say. With practiced emotion she testified that Kuwaiti babies were being bayoneted in their incubators by Iraqi soldiers. It never happened, as an independent United Nations investigation later attested, but Hill and Knowlton had researched Americans’ reactions to the prospect of going to war and found that stories of murdered babies provided the best emotional hook. It was no accident that the first President Bush quoted the woman’s testimony several times while selling the war to the American people.

Flying under the radar of public awareness, PR firms have become the true invisible hand of the market, and they know what it takes to win. When pitted against public interest activists, they systematically crush their opposition and, like the Neocons, feel assured enough to boast of their strategic prowess.

A number of years ago, Ronald A. Duchin, then senior vice-president of Mongoven, Biscoe & Duchin Inc., gave a speech before the National Cattlemen’s Association. It was candid, revealing, and arrogantly contemptuous of activists who Duchin divides into four distinct and manageable categories: radicals, opportunists, idealists and realists.



Who does Duchin define as an activist? Anyone who “wants to change the way your industry does business,” Duchin told the cattlemen. Regardless, one assumes, of whether the business practices are legal, ethical, or safe. The people Duchin considers problematic are precisely the ones who dare advocate for legal, ethical and safe business practices: “environmentalists, churches, public interest research groups, civic groups, teachers’ unions, and Nader-ites.” And how can these pesky activists be neutralized? “Corporations must utilize a three-step, divide-and-conquer strategy,” said Duchin. “The goal is to isolate the radicals, cultivate the idealists and educate them into becoming realists, then co-opt the realists into agreeing with industry.”

The reason Duchin wants to “isolate the radicals,” is to keep them out of the policy-making process thus setting the bar so low that meaningful change is impossible.

Duchin characterizes “radicals” as those who “want to change the system; have underlying socio/political motives; [and are] anti-corporate.” Grassroots organizations are especially problematic because of “their commitment to radical change in the way America governs itself... These organizations,” according to Duchin, “do not trust the federal, state and local governments to protect them and safeguard the environment.”



Indeed, it is hard to trust an administration that wants to rule but hates to govern; a cabal invested in making government fail so that it may, in Grover Norquist's words, be "drowned in a bathtub." When cabinet-level departments are run by people whose goal is to undermine the mission of the agency they govern; to minimize oversight, obstruct enforcement of regulations, and privatize rather than protect, it is difficult to find cause for confidence. The reason Duchin wants to "isolate the radicals," is to keep them out of the policy-making process, thus setting the bar so low that meaningful change is impossible.

The willingness to compromise allows radicals to be ignored, because industry knows it can secure the endorsement of mainstream environmental groups at minimal cost.

Opportunists, Duchin said, enter the public policy process because it offers "visibility, power, followers and perhaps even employment. The key to dealing with opportunists is to provide them with at least the perception of partial victory." In other words, they can be bought off. Duchin believes that opportunists "exploit issues for their own personal agenda, and are only involved in an issue if personal gain is available."

To a distressing degree, that describes the mainstream environmental movement: large organizations with noble-sounding goals which cannot survive financially without "at least the perception of partial victory." Which is why idealists morph into pragmatists who make compromises — they need a "victory" to advertise in the next round of fund-raisers. The willingness to compromise allows radicals to be ignored, because industry knows it can secure the endorsement of mainstream environmental groups at minimal cost.

"Because of their altruism," Duchin, continued, "idealists are hard to deal with." They want a perfect world and because "they have nothing perceptible to be gained by holding their position, they are easily believed by both the media and the public, and sometimes even politicians." Their vulnerability is their conscience. "As long as their motivation remains pure," asserts Duchin, "their credibility for the positions they support will be viable." Therefore, "they must be educated." Duchin's strategy is to turn them into realists. "If they can be shown that their positions in opposition to an industry or its products causes harm to others and cannot be ethically justified, they are forced to change their position."

Educated idealists are the people who allow hard science to be trumped by the claim that stopping logging, strip mining, or over-fishing will produce financial hardship. Valid opposition crumbles in the face of the ridiculous argument that because exploitation has been profitable, it should continue.

Remaining idealistic in a corrupt and corrupting world, however, is not easy and should not be undervalued. True idealists have always been the greatest threats to the status quo — the Kings, the Kennedys, the Ken Sara Wiwas, the union organizers — and they have often paid the ultimate price. In the movie *Shooter*, a politician says: "There's always a confused soul who thinks one man can make a difference and you have to kill him to convince him otherwise. That's the hassle of democracy." In a nation of free speech zones and private armies, the irony of that statement should not be lost on anyone.

"Without the support of the realists and the idealists," Duchin continued, "the positions of the radicals and opportunists are seen to be shallow and self-serving." Indeed, Duchin's strategy is to work primarily with the realists who are desirable because they can "look beyond the issue at hand; understand the consequences; can live with the trade-offs; [are] willing to work within the system; [are] not interested in radical change; [and are] pragmatic." In a word, realists are malleable.

"Realists should always receive the highest priority in any strategy dealing with a public policy issue," Duchin said. "It is very important to work with and cooperate with the realists." Why? Because realists are prepared to lose or to settle for a fraction of what they want. Environmentalists involved in policy negotiations can attest to how many times they've been admonished to "be realistic." Often by their own side. "In most issues," contends Duchin, "it is the solution agreed upon by the realists which becomes the accepted solution, especially when business participates in the decision-making process." Which is why moderate environmental organizations are rewarded with political access: the less threatening their position, the more credible it becomes.

To summarize the Duchin strategy: isolate the radicals; educate the idealists to temper their idealism; get concessions from the realists; and expect the opportunists to jump on board because that's what opportunists do. Then try to avoid smirking while the movement scratches its collective head and wonders how things got so bad. Well, there is little point in complaining about being a doormat if you prostrate yourself on the stoop. As Jay Letto noted nearly a decade ago, "Zealous, uncompromising amateurs have been replaced by pragmatic, accommodating professionals." And, however well intended, their rejection of principle in favor of appearing reasonable has condemned both the movement and the Earth to an incremental death by a thousand compromises.

However well-intended, their rejection of principle in favor of appearing reasonable has condemned both the movement and the Earth to an incremental death by a thousand compromises.

If there is one thing we should have learned long ago, it is that industry always comes back for more. As the size of the available pie gets smaller and smaller, industry demands its "fair share" at every cut. And while environmental groups lose momentum, industry's focus is unwavering.

"My thesis," said David Brower to the beloved organization that broke his heart, "is that compromise is often necessary, but that it ought not originate with the Sierra Club." Indeed, the role of the environmental community is not to forge the compromises, but to set the bar high enough so that if compromise is necessary, more good than ill will result.

Duchin's strategy should be a clarion call for environmentalists to re-radicalize, which means nothing more than holding tight to our ideals without wavering or compromising. It means standing for something, proudly and without apology. It means living our values by allowing them to inform our actions.

The problem is not the Republicans, or the corporations, or the media; nor is it a lack of money, or a disinterested public. The fault is ours. If we cannot garner support it is because the movement holds no position which cannot be compromised; no principle that cannot be negotiated. We have adopted two sets of values: professed values, which are evident in our brochures and fund-raising letters; and operational values, which allow us to consistently settle for less. Therefore, we cannot be trusted.

Ask yourself this: If you were the Earth, would you put yourself in the hands of the environmental movement?

Arnold Toynbee said: "Apathy can be overcome by enthusiasm, and enthusiasm can only be aroused by two things: first, an ideal which takes the imagination by storm, and second, a definite intelligible plan for carrying that ideal into practice."

From the founding fathers to the civil rights and women's movements, the voices of profound change have been the revolutionaries of their time.

We are a nation starved for a compelling ideal, hungry for inspiration, crying out for leadership that can provide us with a roadmap for living in integrity with our professed values. Inspiration and vision have always been the province of radicals who were maligned as extremists, and idealists who were dismissed as naive. From the founding fathers to the civil rights and women's movements, the voices of profound change have been the revolutionaries of their time. Thomas Payne's *Common Sense* was an eloquent but radical invitation to commit treason; Jefferson's notion that "all men are created equal," was the expression of ultimate idealism.

Environmentalism was born of radical visionaries. Giants like John Muir and David Brower verbalized an ideal, and their words ignited the imaginations of a generation, creating a movement. Now, that movement has been coopted by the realists and like the Earth itself, it has begun to wither. To reinvigorate it is our challenge, and much is at stake.

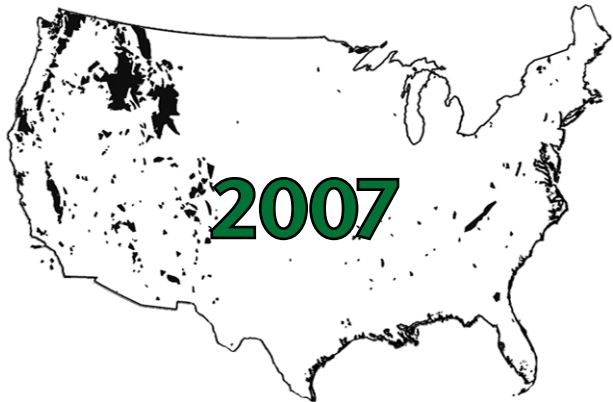
Let us commit to it.

Victor Rozek lives in Eugene, Oregon, and is a former editor of the Forest Voice.



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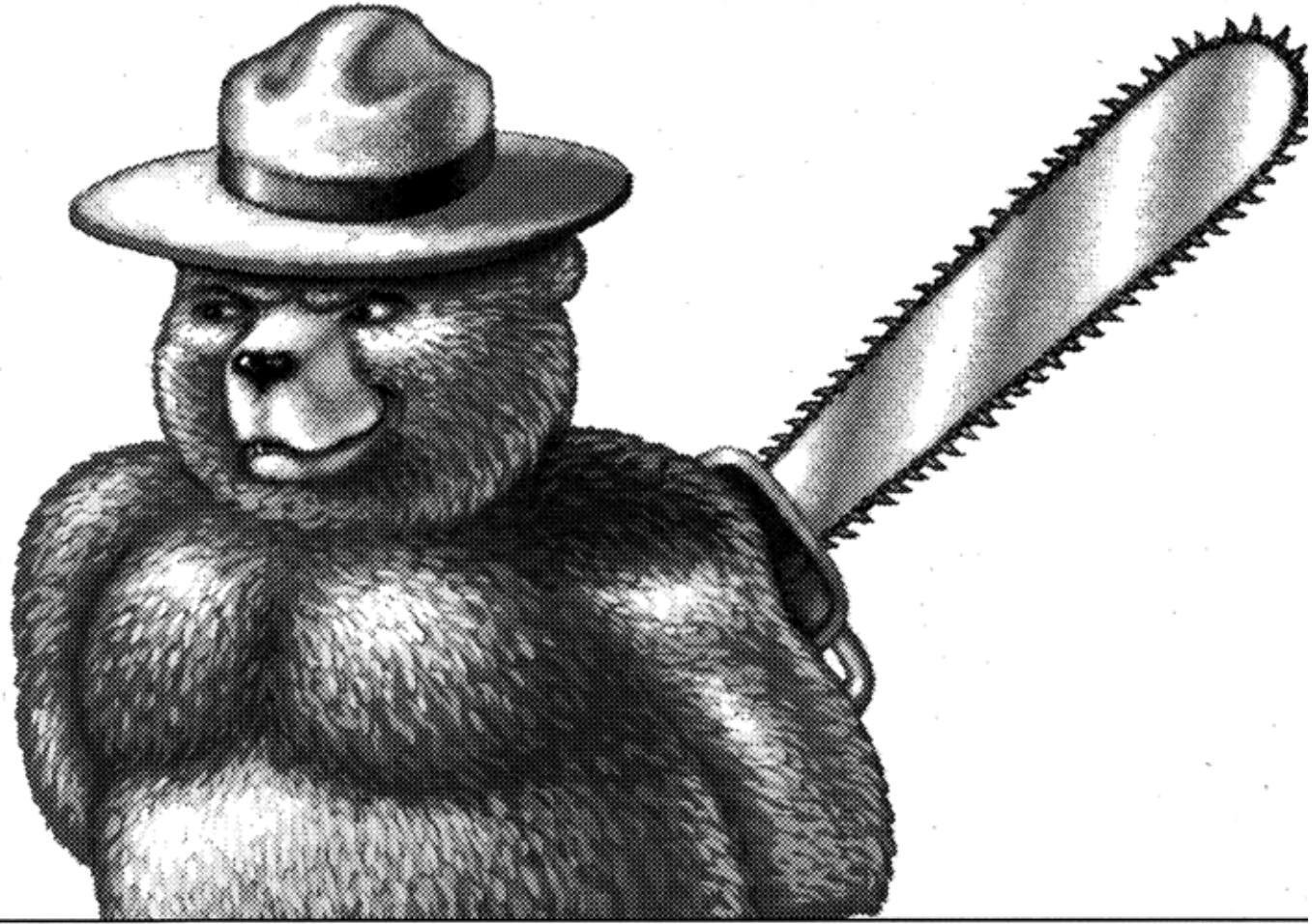
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