

OFCO News

September 2004

The Newsletter of the Olympic Forest Coalition

Protecting and restoring Olympic forests

Time to Defend Wild Forests

Comments Needed on Roadless Rule Repeal Proposal -- Deadline Extended Until After November Election

by Bonnie Phillips and Peggy Bruton

In a move widely seen as avoidance of politically damaging headlines on the eve of a close election, the Bush administration has extended the September 14 deadline for citizen comment on its proposal to effectively nullify the Roadless Rule for another two months, until November 15.

While the delay signals the administration's unwillingness to incur the wrath of the public on this high-profile environmental issue, it does not indicate a change of heart.

However the election turns out, we can anticipate that, post election, the present administration will seek to finalize repeal of the roadless rule.

To recap: In July, the Bush administration proposed effective repeal of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, putting 58.5 million acres of our national forests at risk to destructive road-building, logging and drilling. Over 600 public meetings were held and nearly two million citizen comments received, nearly all in favor of protecting all roadless areas.

Well, the Bush Administration didn't listen to the resounding voice of the people. They have decided to eliminate Roadless Area protection and have sent out their plan for public comment. They want to leave it up to the governor

of each state (like Washington) to petition the federal government could refuse.

Concerned citizens are working feverishly to stop this shortsighted proposal, but we need your help! We need to generate as many comments as possible by the November deadline in order to let the administration know that the public wants our national forests protected and not given away to corporate special interests. OFCO apologizes that summer employment and vacations have delayed this alert. But it isn't too late!

Collectively, we have set an ambitious goal of 1 million comments to send a clear and powerful message that we will not tolerate the administration giving our national forests away. Please forward this action alert to your members, friends, family and coworkers and encourage them to participate in the protection of our last wild forests by submitting comments.

Here's how you can help us reach this goal:

1. You can write a comment letter to the Forest Service. Handwritten, substantive comment letters are always the best. For a sample letter and where to send it, see below.

*(Continued on next page, **Roadless**)*

(**Roadless**, *continued from previous page*)

2. You can send an email comment from the Herritage Forest Campaign Website at: http://actionnetwork.org/campaign/bush_giveaway/

Sample Letter

Use this letter as a guideline but personalize it to your experience and concerns. Use email or snail mail, and please send a copy to OFCO, c/o gimleteye@comcast.net.

statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us

Content Analysis Team,
Attn: Roadless State Petitions
USDAForestService
P.O. Box221090,
Salt Lake City,UT84122

Dear Forest Service Chief Bosworth,

Please accept this letter as official public comment for the roadless area management state petition proposal [Docket Number: 04-16191].

I strongly oppose this proposal to repeal the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. The Roadless Rule is a balanced policy that was finalized after years of scientific study, 600 public hearings and a record number of public comments, the majority of which overwhelmingly support protecting roadless areas through the rule.

The Roadless Rule is a vital tool for protecting our national forests from harmful and costly road-building and commercial logging. Our national forests need real protections because of the important role they play in providing fish and wildlife habitat, clean drinking water for millions of Americans, and endless recreational opportunities.

I believe that national public lands that belong to all citizens should not be left in the hands of state governors.

I urge you to abandon this misguided proposal and keep the Roadless Area Conservation Rule intact in the Lower 48 states and Alaska's Chugach National Forest and reinstate the rule in the Tongass National Forest.

Thank you for consideration of my comments on this crucial national forest conservation issue.

BNR Sets High Cut, Against Advice of OFCO and Allies

OFCO was well represented at the September 7 meeting of the Board of Natural Resources (BNR). After hearing from about 40 citizens -- most of whom opposed the preferred alternative and pleaded for postponement of a decision pending resolution of the question of FSC certification -- the BNR set the Sustainable Harvest Calculation figure for Western Washington's state lands at 597 bbf, rejecting the higher figure of 636 bbf on the basis that they would not be able to escalate that rapidly from the present level of 475. The few timber and county representatives decried the failure of the public to understand that the accelerated cut level would improve forest ecosystems. They said they wanted more but would support the 636 million board foot figure from the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Board members Earl Graves, Rick Darnell, Jim Davis, Peggy Bruton and Bonnie Phillips were present. Earl, Rick and Bonnie all spoke for OFCO. Peggy spoke for the Washington state League of Women Voters, and Jim injected a brief cautionary note to the Board at the close of the public comment period, suggesting that the SHC does not appear to square with the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

Bonnie's testimony emphasized that the preferred alternative would risk degraded forest health because 80 percent of the harvest would come from clearcutting as opposed to thinning. She also expressed concerns that the plan fails to protect old growth and habitat for spotted owls and salmon. Rick cited concerns about the Olympic Experimental State Forest (see p. 6, **OESF Tours** story), and Earl -- a senior citizen -- described himself as a companion piece to the old growth forests he cherishes.

For copies of the full testimony presented by OFCO members, check our website or email Peggy Bruton, gimleteye@comcast.net.

Our next big step will be when they start developing the Olympic Regional Implementation, where the rubber (that is the details) hits the road. In the meantime we'll have to watch out for landscape management plans. Stay tuned.

-- PB

Roads in the Olympic -- Reprieve for the Dose, Kudos to the FS for Decom Plans

By Jim Scarborough

Over the past decade, arguably the single largest factor standing in the way of effective aquatic and terrestrial restoration on Olympic National Forest has been its portly network of unnecessary roads. OFCO has devoted the bulk of its energies in this arena to encouraging the Forest Service to aggressively decommission the worst of these roads, while simultaneously discouraging the agency from constructing new ones (often termed "temporary") that largely cancel out the benefits of good removal work done elsewhere. The Forest Service's Access and Travel Management plan of 2003, which OFCO supports, targets roughly one-third of Olympic's overall road mileage for eventual decommissioning and/or trail conversion. Current funding levels, however, may delay completion of this much-needed work for up to 40 years.

Since summer began, two big newsworthy items on the Olympic road front have arisen. One entails developments surrounding the perennial headache of the Dosewallips road, which was dealt a massive washout in January, 2002. Previous issues of our newsletter describe this topic's history in detail. As many are aware, OFCO and several partners appealed the Forest Service's decision in March to re-route the Dose road upslope of the washout, which would have sliced through at least four acres of centuries-old forest and critical habitat for threatened species. For the near-term at least, our appeal was successful, as Forest Supervisor Dale Hom on June 22 withdrew his decision to implement the reconstruction. Instead, further study on slope stability will be conducted, with a third environmental assessment expected later in autumn.

OFCO has argued, and will continue to argue, that the Forest Service's plans thus far for the Dose road amount to a major federal action, thereby requiring a full environmental impact statement. To date, the agency has resisted that assertion. We would hope that additional study might include detailed analysis of the most appropriate means of relocating the Dosewallips River trailhead and car-camping opportunities downstream of the washout site. In the meantime, a recent decision by the 9th Circuit Court on a separate matter casts serious doubt on the Forest Service's latitude for destroying any amount of designated critical habitat (as would occur in reconstruction of the road). OFCO will continue to monitor this situation closely, provide comments for the record, and utilize the

legal options available for the ecological benefit of the Dosewallips watershed.

And yet, in great contrast to the hard feelings and disagreement over the Dose road, OFCO offers a hearty "three cheers!" to the Forest Service for its recent decision to decommission more than nine miles of road on Gold Creek and Sleepy Hollow. Six of these miles will be converted to non-motorized trail, which OFCO members await the pleasure of hiking. This action follows the agency's bold decision to decommission the 2860 road at East Crossing, and cumulatively portends the ever-increasing health and vitality of the Dungeness River's upper watershed. A happy side effect of the project will be the practical enlargement of the existing roadless area north of Mount Townsend. Readers are encouraged to personally thank the Forest Service for their foresight with regard to the Gold Creek Stream Crossing Removal Project.

Forest Service Starts Work on ORV Damage

by Bonnie Phillips

U.S. Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth has listed illegal use of Off Road Vehicles (ORVs, also known as Off Highway Vehicles or OHVs) as one of the four major threats to National Forest lands. In July, the U.S. Forest Service issued a draft rule.

OFCO joins with hundreds of other environmental and recreation groups in support of this proposed rule, which will prohibit cross-country travel by motor vehicles except under limited circumstances and to authorize ORV and dirt bike use only on roads and off-road vehicle routes specifically designed as open for such use.

OFCO Board members Rick Darnell and Bonnie Phillips attended the May Olympic Provincial Advisory Committee, where the ONF staff gave an excellent presentation, including photos of ORV and dirt bike damage. We feel the

(Continued on next page, ORV)

ROMP in the Woods: Monitoring Program Needs You

Olympic ROMP is a group of volunteers drawn together by their concern for the health of Olympic Peninsula forests. The goal is to research and monitor forest practices as a means to provide valuable information to OFCO's board and membership, increasing their ability to actively protect and restore Olympic Peninsula forests. And our active monitoring provides a unique opportunity to communicate directly with the National Forest Service and DNR on issues such as road maintenance and decommissioning, erosion, trash dumping, illegal ATV use, tree poaching, and problems with invasive species.

The program is very new and there's a lot of work to do. One of our first objectives is to assess and document the negative side effects of road development on state and federal lands. In the National Forest, there's an incredibly large number of abandoned and temporary roads not mapped or maintained. ROMP volunteers have taken on the task of identifying and monitoring these roads. This will allow accurate mapping and consideration for maintenance. Volunteers have begun looking at DNR lands too, focusing on harvest methodology and enhancement of fish passage. By learning about the issues while monitoring what's happening on the ground, ROMP volunteers are creating an invaluable source of information.

There's a variety of projects that could use your help. The most popular and effective is Adopt a Watershed. You monitor a specific watershed or sub-watershed of your choosing. By reporting your observations in the woods, you'll help identify those abandoned roads, problems with trash dumping, and other types of habitat degradation. Forms are available to make this as easy and effective as possible. And ROMP retreats and field trips are a great way to meet other volunteers, OFCO board members, agency personnel, and leading scientists. You can help protect and restore the forest while enjoying your favorite watershed.

To get you started, feel free to request any of our watershed maps. A listing with their corresponding acreage is also available. If you're ready to help, the program, just contact Rick Darnell at rick@olympicforest.org and he'll give you the list of meetings, training sessions, field trips, and retreats to help you help the forest.

-- Richard E Darnell rick@olympicforest.org

Great Forest Meetup in OR Set for Early October

The National Forest Protection Alliance, based in Missoula, Montana, invites us all to its sixth annual National Convention, October 1-4 * at Sis-Q Meadows, Cave Junction in Southern Oregon. This Wild Weekend for the Wild Siskiyou offers a richly packed schedule of workshops, seminars and activities, topped off by a peaceful protest rally on Monday, October 4th to stop the Biscuit Logging Project.

The many sponsors include the American Lands Alliance and the Sierra Club Redwood Chapter. Join with grassroots forest activists from across the Northwest and nation for what promises to be a historic weekend at minimal cost!

For more information, contact Klamath Siskiyou, Wildlands Center at 541.821.3882, lesley@kswild.org or National Forest Protection Alliance at 406.542.7565, nfpa@forestadvocate.org; or www.forestadvocate.org.

(ORV, continued from preceding page)

ONF staff has a thorough grasp of the issue and is ready to make needed changes.

Unfortunately, the proposed rule does not make a firm commitment on when these changes will go into effect. OFCO thus supports:

- Setting a firm deadline that would designate roads and routes appropriate for ORV traffic. This includes having a full and appropriate public involvement process and a full analysis based on sound environmental science to give the public complete information on which to base input. We suggest this can be done within two years. Most National Forests already have a lot of information on this issue.
- Assuring sufficient enforcement and monitoring funds to eliminate the continuing problem of lack of enforcement, when establishing ORV use for every National Forest.
- Immediate banning of all unauthorized routes (cross country) at the time the final rule is signed.

While the public comment period on the proposed rule has now closed, it is important to urge management of the Olympic National Forest to finalize its ORV policy changes sooner rather than later, through a comprehensive public process. Write to or email Olympic National Forest Supervisor, Dale Hom, dlhom@fs.fed.us 1835 Black Lake Blvd SW, Suite A, Oly 98512

For more information, to go the U.S. Forest Service web site at: www.fs.fed.us/recreaton/programs/ohv/index.

Forest activists, like others seeking social justice in difficult times, need inspiration to continue with their work. In that spirit, we present the following excerpts from a recent article by Howard Zinn, 82-year-old historian, writer, professor and activist. His best known work is A People's History of the United States.

The full text of this article can be found at <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20040920&s=zinn>. Ed.

From "The Optimism of Uncertainty"

by Howard Zinn

In this awful world where the efforts of caring people often pale in comparison to what is done by those who have power, how do I manage to stay involved and seemingly happy?

I am totally confident not that the world will get better, but that we should not give up the game before all the cards have been played. The metaphor is deliberate; life is a gamble. Not to play is to foreclose any chance of winning. To play, to act, is to create at least a possibility of changing the world.

There is a tendency to think that what we see in the present moment will continue. We forget how often we have been astonished by the sudden crumbling of institutions, by extraordinary changes in people's thoughts, by unexpected eruptions of rebellion against tyrannies, by the quick collapse of systems of power that seemed invincible.

What leaps out from the history of the past hundred years is its utter unpredictability. A revolution to overthrow the czar of Russia, in that most sluggish of semi-feudal empires, not only startled the most advanced imperial powers but took Lenin himself by surprise and sent him rushing by train to Petrograd. Who would have predicted the bizarre shifts of World War II--the Nazi-Soviet pact (those embarrassing photos of von Ribbentrop and Molotov shaking hands), and the German Army rolling through Russia, apparently invincible, causing colossal casualties, being turned back at the gates of Leningrad, on the western edge of Moscow, in the streets of Stalingrad, followed by the defeat of the German army, with Hitler huddled in his Berlin bunker, waiting to die?

*

The end of World War II left two superpowers with their respective spheres of influence and control, vying for military and political power. Yet they were unable to control events, even in those parts of the world considered to be their respective spheres of influ-

ence. The failure of the Soviet Union to have its way in Afghanistan, its decision to withdraw after almost a decade of ugly intervention, was the most striking evidence that even the possession of thermonuclear weapons does not guarantee domination over a determined population. . . In the headlines every day we see other instances of the failure of the presumably powerful over the presumably powerless, as in Brazil, where a grassroots movement of workers and the poor elected a new president pledged to fight destructive corporate power.

Looking at this catalogue of huge surprises, it's clear that the struggle for justice should never be abandoned because of the apparent overwhelming power of those who have the guns and the money and who seem invincible in their determination to hold on to it. That apparent power has, again and again, proved vulnerable to human qualities less measurable than bombs and dollars: moral fervor, determination, unity, organization, sacrifice, wit, ingenuity, courage, patience--whether by blacks in Alabama and South Africa, peasants in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Vietnam, or workers and intellectuals in Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union itself. No cold calculation of the balance of power need deter people who are persuaded that their cause is just.

*

Revolutionary change does not come as one cataclysmic moment (beware of such moments!) but as an endless succession of surprises, moving zigzag toward a more decent society. We don't have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world. Even when we don't "win," there is fun and fulfillment in the fact that we have been involved, with other good people, in something worthwhile. We need hope.

The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.

DNR Chief for Olympic Region Hosts Tours of OESF and Region for OFCO and Allies

Last February and again in August, OFCO members and other activists were privileged to attend educational tours of the State's Olympic Region and the Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF) near Forks, hosted by Charlie Cortelyou, Olympic Peninsula Regional Manager for DNR and members of his staff.

At the February tour, we were first briefed with a Power Point presentation about the work of the Olympic Region, which wraps around the northern end of the Olympic peninsula and also includes the non-contiguous Humptulips section, southwest of the Olympic National Forest. We were also briefed on the OESF and on the status of Road Maintenance and Planning (RMAPS), especially regarding roads being decommissioned or abandoned. We learned that Olympic Region logging volumes were as high as 450 and 475 mmbf during the 1970's, compared to about 45 mmbf or less since 2000. Volumes have fluctuated widely, but the broad trend has been downward since the 1970's.

We visited the ONRC (Olympic Natural Resource Center) near Forks, whose facilities are made available to visiting or local groups engaged in forest studies.

FSC certification) that he did not see certification as a way to assure more revenues or more funding for his Region, he believes it is a good idea and should be pursued.

Of the August tour, Jim Davis writes, "It was a very informative tour and I learned a lot about the challenges and opportunities facing DNR's efforts to restore riparian areas in state forests. It is not an easy job and clearly there are always trade-offs.

"I was stunned to learn that more than 50,000 acres of the OESF are in high density young forest (20-30 years old) where wildlife can hardly move between the trees. I was also dismayed to learn that an additional 120,000 acres of slightly older forests (40-50 years old) are still too dense for proper ecological functioning. The OESF is in much worse shape than I feared. It appears to me that restoration activities are critical for restoring riparian function in state forests, especially on the OESF. For the most part, I support the restoration strategies that we observed on the tour.

"We learned that heavy thinning and large patch cuts

"More than 50,000 acres of the OESF are in high density young forest (20-30 years old) where wildlife can hardly move between the trees."

Site visits in the afternoon included inspections of adjacent plots that have been thinned in the recent and more distant past, compared with an unthinned control plot; old growth stands where there has been theft of large red cedar. The thieves, in this case, were poor migrants, who were caught and either punished or deported. DNR personnel are working to have mills that purchase stolen timber held accountable.

Cortelyou and other staff all seemed dedicated to improving the biological quality of the forest lands they manage. Adequate funding and personnel are constant problems for them because their lands are so physically far-flung. They said their intent is to manage for ecologically healthy stands, and that this goal has precedence over logging targets. Cortelyou said (in response to a question about

are very susceptible to windthrow. This is an economic as well as ecological issue. Large patch cuts and heavy thinnings also increase forest and stream temperatures beyond levels acceptable for salmon and other aquatic species. These practices in riparian areas will also degrade other riparian functions (e.g., sediment control, downed woody debris accumulation)."

Jim continues to be concerned that the Sustainable Harvest Calculation will exert pressure against restoration, toward more profitable high volume harvests (high volume thinning and large patch clear cuts). Meanwhile, all those who attended applaud the good intentions and conscientious work of Charlie Cortelyou and his staff, and we are grateful to them for these greatly informative tours.

-- Peggy Bruton and Jim Davis

GET INVOLVED IN FOREST PLANNING AND PROTECTION--

Join OFCO!

www.olympicforest.org

The Olympic Forest Coalition (OFCO) works to protect and restore forests on the Olympic Peninsula but we can only do our work with physical help and financial support from caring people.

The major programs of OFCO include:

Forest Monitoring: Working to ensure logging and road miles do not increase on the Olympic National Forest.

Watershed Restoration: Working to ensure that all resource-damaging roads are decommissioned.

ROMP: Research Objective Monitoring Program. Our current field work involves finding and documenting the status of "temporary" roads

on the Olympic National Forest. Other research projects will be added through time.

State Forest Lands on the Olympic Peninsula: Working to protect old growth and for sustainable forest management.

Olympic Wild: Working to permanently protect National Forests through a future Wilderness Bill.

Education and Outreach: Working to build a network of organizations and citizens interested in the forests on the Olympic Peninsula.

OFCO is a volunteer grassroots organization. We accomplish a great deal with little money. Still, we need help from our members and friends of the forest to keep us going.

Help Protect Your Forest! PLEASE JOIN US AS AN OFCO VOLUNTEER--OR SEND A CHECK!

OFCO is a 501(c)(3) organization; all donations are fully tax-deductible.

I would like to donate to OFCO (all donations come with a membership):

_____ \$25 -- regular membership

_____ \$10 -- living lightly

_____ \$\$\$ -- other

_____ I would like to do volunteer work for OFCO. Please call or email me and let me know how to help!

_____ I would like to join OFCO's email action network

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No.: _____

Email: _____ New or renewing? _____

Return this form and/or your check to: Bonnie Phillips, Olympic Forest Coalition, 606 Lilly Road NE #115, Olympia, WA 98506. On the web: www.olympicforest.org

Journalist/Activist Josey Paul Joins OFCO Board

We are proud to welcome new member Josey Paul to the OFCO board. Josey is a Graduate of the University of Wisconsin, a Vietnam veteran and a journalist. He was founding editor and publisher of ClearWater Journal, a general-circulation environmental magazine based in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Josey has also worked as a newspaper journalist, most recently as a financial reporter for the Register-Guard in Eugene, Oregon.

Josey is now a free-lance writer living in a remote off-grid, solar-powered cabin at Twin. He is also a Board member of WRIA 19 (the watershed of north-strait streams west of the Elwha River) and of the North Olympic Salmon Coalition. He is active in salmon restoration and advocacy projects and is an anti-pesticide activist and a principal of Skyfire Unlimited, a non-commercial solar consulting firm.

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Your ideas and letters welcome!
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