



OFCO News

April 2005

The Newsletter of the Olympic Forest Coalition

Protecting and restoring Olympic forests

Upping the Cut on the Olympic National Forest: The Jackson Timber Sale

by Bonnie Phillips

For the last year or so the Olympic National Forest Service staff has talked about increasing the amount of timber they cut each year, all in the name of “what’s good for the forest.” Commercial thinning sales since the Northwest Forest Plan went into effect in 1994 have averaged 10 million board feet per year. The FS asserts that a logging level of 30 million board in the ONF feet will actually be beneficial for the forest ecosystem. The scoping notice (first clue to the public) on a new timber sale called the Jackson Thin is a solid indication of this new direction.

This timber sale would cover up to 3,200 acres and build up to 9 miles of road. It would log naturally fire-regenerated stands of up to 110 years of age in the Mts. Walker and Turner area. It proposes thinning to prevent fires though there is no scientific evidence that Olympic Peninsula forests are aided by this “method” of fire prevention.

Throughout the NF system, the terms “forest health” and “restoration” and “thinning to increase structural diversity” have been bandied about so much that they’ve become meaningless. The agency offers no standards and no scientific backing for its statements. Arguably thinning in young managed stands (30-50 years of age) can be helpful. But the ONF adds so many new and reconstructed roads that watershed health is damaged.

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Welcome Spring -- Forest Monitoring Season. It's ROMP* Time in the Olympics

by Rick Darnell (* Research Objective & Monitoring Program)

As the rain returned last month, so did the spring and summer monitoring season. Dale Hom (Forest Supervisor) has just signed off on the Flat Timber Sale and due to the hard work of OFCO board members and support from allies, we were able to get the lower portion of Unit 1 removed. The area is about 15 acres in size and located within a Late Successional Reserve. Signs of understory reinitiation are present, and with the proposed temporary road threatening riparian and fish habitat, omitting the area makes sense.

The Flat Timber Sale and Jackson Thin, as well as other environmental documents, are available on the Olympic National Forest Service's website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/olympic/projects-nu/index.shtml>

With the NEPA process completed, we are now faced with the task of monitoring the Flat Timber Sale. A monitoring proposal is currently being developed with the help of the Olympic Forest Coalition, Olympic National Forest, The Evergreen State College, and Washington Native Plant Society. This spring, groups of volunteers and college students will be needed to measure ground cover, tree diameter, light availability and road impacts. This monitoring project will not only determine the success and failure of management within the Flat Sale but is a big step forward in developing an effectiveness monitoring program for all timber sales on the Olympic National Forest.

Meanwhile, the newly proposed "Jackson Thin" has raised the blood pressure of many forest activists. This sale is three times larger than Flat and could threaten water quality and fish habitat from a variety of road impacts. Volunteers are needed for the road assessment process. Each road needs to be identified and assessed to verify road densities and impacts. The result of our assessment can go a long ways towards reducing road mileage and identifying needed decommissioning and restoration within the project area.

On a more sunny note, ROMP volunteers have indicated interest in getting together for a social and intellectual

gathering. A retreat at the Jackson Thin would provide a great opportunity to view the sale area, meet each other, and allow for various professionals to give talks and tours.

For more information on the Research Objective & Monitoring Program or to get involved on on of our projects mentioned above, contact Rick Darnell (ROMP Coordinator) at rick@olympicforest.org or at 360-956-1544.

**Forest monitoring info:
rick@olympicforest.org**

(Upping the Cut, *continued from p. 1*)

As the Bush administration pushes all the national forests to increase cut levels, we will see larger and more devastating timber sales. What is so egregious in our minds is that the FS uses terms like "healthy forests" to promote projects that actually undermine the health of these ecosystems. The general media, and therefore the public, may be taken in, but the damage that these sales inflict -- especially those with significant new and reconstructed roads -- is all too real.

OFCO has been trying for several years to have the ONF plan timber sales adjacent to existing road systems. Obviously our concerns have fallen on deaf ears.

This issue of our newsletter emphasizes some of the major concerns we have with the road systems on the Olympic National Forest and well as some applause for excellent road decommissioning decisions. Our next issue will focus on negative changes to environmental laws that will affect our local national forests.

We will be hosting at least one field trip this summer to the Jackson Timber Sale. If you are interested, send an email to: JimScarborough@olympicforest.org.

State's HCP for "Forests and Fish" Puts Politics Over Science

By Josey Paul

Just when you thought things couldn't get worse in our forests, the state's Department of Natural Resources is vetting a new plan that is pure delight to the timber industry – and pure fright to environmentalists, especially those concerned about salmon.

At issue is the agency's Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which will set forestry regulations on more than 9 million acres of forests and 60,000 stream miles in Washington.

In exchange for a skimpy set of forestry regulations that many independent scientists call a joke, timber companies will get a free pass to kill and harm endangered and non-endangered salmon for the next 50 years, even if these timber practices lead to the extinction of whole races of salmon.

Supporters of the HCP make two boasts: 1) This HCP gives Washington the most protected forests in the nation; and 2) if the plan doesn't work, "adaptive management" will "ensure" that adjustments are made.

Wrong and wrong.

The Forests and Fish Plan (F&F), which the HCP essentially codifies, endangers our rivers and streams with no-cut buffers of a measly 50 feet – much less than the distance from the pitcher's mound to home plate. Loopholes can cut those buffers in half and leave streams at the mercy of salmon-killing sediment washing down clear-cut slopes.

"Non-fish habitat" streams get much less protection. And as we citizens and biologists from western Clallam County have learned, what timber-company consultants are paid to call non-fish streams are typically rich salmon habitat, at least until they are clear-cut.

Forested wetlands, steep slopes and other sensitive areas get little meaningful protection. Under F&F, many of our streams and rivers have declined so far in biological health that they can no longer sustain salmon runs.

F&F was ridiculed by independent scientists after the Legislature enacted it in 1999. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) scientists said politicians disregarded their grave misgivings about the plan. Many federal and private

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Bank of the Pysht River shows erosion caused by forest practices and skimpy riparian protections.

SUMMERTIME

OFCO's Olympic Wild Offers Variety of Family-Friendly Hikes

Here's the Olympic Wild spring and summer hike schedule. We meet at the Port Townsend Park and Ride at 8 am and car-pool from there. Bring appropriate clothing and a lunch. Children are always welcome. Back before 6pm. Call **John Edwards at 385-6840** for more detail. See you on the trail!

May 8 Mothers Day Hike. Sink Lake-Quilcene Watershed.. Easy to moderate, great for children and adults alike. This 1.5-mile hike traverses forest slope and lakeside ecosystems; there are bound to be flowers.

June 26 Lena Lake-Hamma Hamma Watershed. Easy to moderate 3.6 mile hike through old growth forest to a tranquil lake. Enjoy the soothing sounds of the streams as they cascade in the ravine along the trail.

July 10 Dirty Face Ridge-Quilcene Watershed. A moderate, up and down 4-mile hike. This trail is best known for its here-to-forever views of Olympic Rain Shadow peaks and Straits of Juan de Fuca to the north.

July 24 Pine Lake-Skokomish Watershed Easy hike, long drive. This 3-mile hike takes us from a recently cleared area through into a fantastic old growth forest to arrive at Pine Lake. Densely forested Chapel Peak towers over this nearly perfect swimming hole. Bring swim suit if you chose.

August 7 Gray Wolf River-Dungeness Watershed. A local Olympic favorite. This **easy to moderate 4-mile** trail traverses a notably diverse hillside, then descends and follows the Gray Wolf River into the Buckhorn Wilderness. Lunch by the river and cool your feet.

August 21 Jupiter Ridge trail. This **strenuous** hike follows the crest of the Dosewallips/Duckabush divide for 7 miles to the summit of mount Jupiter. Views and rocky outcrops reward the diligent.

September 25 Lower Dungeness River-Dungeness Watershed. Moderate 6-mile hike. This trail explores a densely forested canyon in the middle reaches of the celebrated Dungeness River. Watch for the occasional view of surrounding high peaks.

(Politics Over Science, Continued from p. 3)

conservation plans provide much better forest and stream protection. And even the DNR acknowledges that its HCP has never proven effective at saving salmon and that there's "some uncertainty associated with the effectiveness of the many protection measures."

Supporters argue that if HCP regulations prove disastrous, adaptive management will rescue the day with rule tweaks. Adaptive management is shorthand for a group of scientists and timber-company executives that oversees research to ensure that F&F is effective.

This is the part that Big Timber loves, because industry officials can bottle up any reforms recommended by scientific committees and prevent those reforms from becoming law.

In the six years since passage of F&F, no rule changes have come out of the adaptive management process, even though research projects have proven current rules protect neither salmon nor the forest. Politics trump science.

In theory, federal regulators could step in and force changes to the HCP, but the Bush administration is aggressively rolling back salmon protections and has put representatives of regulated industries in charge of the agencies that do the regulating.

Of the hundreds of HCPs nationwide, none has lost federal approval.

So powerful is the timber industry in Washington State that most politicians are backing the plan, including Gov. Christine Gregoire. The HCP must be approved by federal regulators, which is likely to happen. But there is still time to comment.

A recent study by the Union of Concerned Scientists and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility found that many scientists in the U.S. FWS say that they have been forced to alter or withhold findings that would have led to greater protections for listed species such as salmon.

And more than half of these agency scientists say that agency officials have reversed or withdrawn scientific conclusions under pressure from industry groups.

Industry has its voice, let yours be heard, as well.

Email comments to: ForestPracticesHCP.nwr@noaa.gov

Mail written comments to Sally Butts, U.S. FWS, 510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite 102, Lacey, WA 98503

Road Rage -- and Raves: Mixed Reviews for ONF Roadwork

By Jim Scarborough

These days, there's no bigger threat to the forest ecosystem in the Olympic National Forest than roads. Roads are to the forest what clogged arteries are to the human body. Whether forgotten and decaying or newly constructed for a timber sale, roads fragment terrestrial wildlife habitat, smother aquatic habitat and fisheries through chronic sedimentation, disrupt natural hydrologic processes, and offer entry routes to invasive species. Roads also invite garbage dumping, tree theft, meth manufacture, target shooting, and ATVs run amok.

OFCO will continue to press the Forest Service to act on the myriad problems arising from the official and unofficial road systems in the ONF. OFCO's approach is threefold:

- * To encourage the FS to meet road decommissioning targets of its 2003 Access and Travel Management (ATM) plan with all possible haste.
- * To promote decommissioning and/or trail conversion of roads that cannot be repaired without egregious impacts to natural systems, such as the Dosewallips road.
- * To permit new (and temporary) road construction only in the rarest of circumstances, while ending all new road construction in Late Successional Reserves (LSR).

To date, the FS's record on roads is mixed. On one hand, the agency has completed or is at work on several admirable road decommissioning projects on the ONF. OFCO has applauded each of these, and it's important that other enlightened members of the public do so as well, since road removal still has the potential to be controversial.

On the other hand, the FS persists in punching temporary roads into the forest for timber sales, despite over 2,000 system road miles presently on the books. An experimental thinning program, using only the existing road system (and adhering to the Northwest Forest Plan's strict volume limits) would seem reasonable, but we've yet to see anything of the sort.

What follows, then, is an update of some of ONF's most

prominent and pending road-related issues, with agency contact information provided for those wishing to delve further:

CAMP GRIDDALE ROAD (FSR 22 & 2294):

The northernmost four miles of this project would pave and straighten the Grisdale Road to the Wynoochee dam. In the process, 2.3 acres of classic, LSR old-growth and critical habitat for the marbled murrelet would be logged. OFCO is working to ensure that any paving of the road on ONF land be done within the existing road prism, without any loss of native forest stands.

Some of you have recently received an action alert on this topic. The lead agency is the Federal Highway Administration, in consultation with the FS and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. A draft environmental assessment was released in February. Contact: Kyle Noble, 360-877-5254.

DOSEWALLIPS ROAD (FSR 2610):

Most folks are familiar with this perennial debacle. Following a major washout over three years ago, the FS made two attempts to reconstruct the road through salmon habitat and old-growth forest. Their latest iteration would have logged at least four acres of outstanding LSR old-growth and critical habitat for the northern spotted owl. An administrative appeal by OFCO and several partners put a stop to this, at least in the interim. A third environmental assessment, expected from the FS last fall, may not be completed until later this year. The agency continues to signal intent to reconstruct the road, despite growing public consensus against it. OFCO and partners will advocate unequivocally to make this road into a scenic, non-motorized trail. Contact: Tim Davis, 360-956-2375.

FSR 2610-012 (DOSEWALLIPS RIVER):

On the opposite side of the Dosewallips, beyond the focus of the commercial interests that keep the FS running

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(Road Rage and Raves, continued from p. 5)

scared on FSR 2610, this little frequented spur of 1.8 mile in length is slated to become a non-motorized trail. In the process, a sizeable chunk of the beloved Dosewallips Valley's south hillslope hydrology will be restored, to the benefit of steelhead, Chinook, coho, chum. Sometimes, progress is actually what it purports to be. Contact: Scott Hagerty, 360-765-2249.

HAMMA HAMMA ROAD (FSR 25):

A few miles past the Lena Lake trailhead, 1.5 miles from its end, FSR 25 is being undermined where a meander in the Hamma Hamma River directs the current squarely into the road. Each new flood carries more of the bluff downstream. The FS was originally considering moving the road 20 feet inland via "categorical exclusion," with little public input. Now, to the agency's credit (following dialogue with OFCO and Olympic Park Associates), an environmental assessment (EA) is expected, which will entail a public comment period. OFCO and OPA have also urged that the EA include an alternative to convert the final 1.5 mile of the road to non-motorized trail. Contact: Yewah Lau, 360-956-2405.

FSR 3040, 3067, 3068, AND SPURS (TWIN RIVER/ CRESCENT RIDGE):

Prompted by a Lower Elwha S'Klallam Tribe lawsuit following the grotesque collapse of an FS logging road into a valuable fishery, this project will obliterate an impressive 24 miles of system roads, along with another 3 miles of ghost roads. And the 7.5 miles of FSR 3068 destined for decommissioning will be converted to a trail with great views over the foothills and Strait of Juan de Fuca, ending at Pyramid Mountain above Lake Crescent. By anyone's definition, this is an exemplary project. **Contact: Phil DeCillis, 360-374-1237.**

FSR 2740 (TUNNEL CREEK) :

Though minuscule in scale by comparison, the decommissioning of the final 2 miles of Tunnel Creek road is nearly as important. Tunnel Creek's subwatershed is part of the larger Big Quilcene. The watershed gets little attention despite harboring some of the biggest rainshadow trees to be found anywhere. The project will free the North Fork and South Fork of Tunnel Creek from a constraining road bridge and culvert, setting the stage for re-wilding of the upper valley. The Tunnel Creek trail will now offer the hiker 2 new miles of tranquility. The FS deserves our warm thanks. **Contact Scott Hagerty, 360-765-2249.**

FSR 2900-200 (SITKUM RIVER):

Across the mountains to the West End, in the Calawah watershed above Forks, we find another one to praise. This decommissioning project will eliminate all of the 200 spur on the hogback between the Main Fork and North Fork of the Sitkum, restoring natural drainage, removing unstable side cast and culverts, and preventing mass wasting events. **Contact: Phil DeCillis, 360-374-1237.**

SNOW SALMON TIMBER SALE:

Many will recall OFCO's appeal of this thinning sale northwest of Quilcene – a challenge that succeeded in part by reducing the sale's size by one-third. See this ugly mess for a graphic education in the consequences of so-called temporary roads. To get there, drive Highway 101 south of Discovery Bay, then turn right on Lords Lake Road. Keep right; once inside the forest boundary, make your second left (FSR 2851), and go a couple miles before turning left on the 080 spur for another country mile. Where 080 now forks was its former end. Walk either of the fresh temp roads from this point. For contrast, a short diversion into the woods adjacent to the roads will give a flavor of what these now-wrecked soils looked like before the dozer came a few months ago. Take a deep breath, realize these are *your* public lands, then start hyperventilating again. For safety reasons, visit on a weekend or holiday when there's no machinery operating. **Contact: Kathy O'Halloran, 360-956-2402.**

FSR 2875 (BEYOND & SOUTH OF SLAB CAMP):

Finally, here's one of the more ill-conceived roads ever constructed on the ONF. This foul cherry stem road is the lone motorized intrusion into the Gray Wolf Watershed upvalley of the lower trailhead off FSR 2870. Here may be found precursor symptoms of the off-road vehicle virus that's smothered other national forests and clearly threatens the Olympic. The racket of racing motors and gunshots intrudes well into the adjacent Buckhorn Wilderness and Trail #838. Thankfully, the FS included this stretch of road in the decommissioning category of its ATM plan. Our job, and yours, is to persuade the agency to bump this project up on its priority list. **Contact: Karl Denison, 360-765-2200**

Jon Rhodes

A Scientist Looks at Commercial Thinning

Note from the OFCO Board: *The US Forest Service has of late been promoting the notion that commercial thinning of second growth forests will be beneficial for the forest ecosystem. While OFCO agrees that experimenting in young managed forest stands is valuable, we continue to be concerned about the large number of road miles going into these timber sales.*

Jon Rhodes of Planeto Azul Hydrology is a conservation hydrologist with more than 2 decades of experience in watershed issues. Here he considers the rationale for commercial thinning in our region. -- BP

Small tree logging can seem an attractive option for forest management. But given its impacts on forest ecosystems, including embedded aquatic resources, some caveats are in order.

The removal of small trees causes the same sort of ecological damage as the removal of large trees. Most of the negative effects of logging (soil damage, erosion, noxious weed spread, and consequent damage to aquatic systems) are not a function of the size of trees removed.

Small tree logging involves the same suite of damaging activities (elevated use, reconstruction, and construction of landings and roads, groundbased yarding, etc.) as any other type of logging, with one difference: economic factors assure very damaging ground-based logging.

The ecologically odious practice of machine piling of slash often is used in tandem with small tree logging, as part of the current, often myopic, rush to reduce fuels in public forests. Machine piling wreaks severe havoc with soils and hydrologic processes, often affecting many more acres than are affected by roads and landings with impacts almost as severe. This practice should be eliminated.

Because the volume of timber per tree is inversely related to tree diameter in a cubic fashion, many more small trees must be logged per increment of timber volume, resulting in far more disturbance per increment of timber volume than with large trees.

There's no reliable field evidence that the mechanical removal of smaller trees has any ecological benefits and/or consistently reduces fire severity under a wide range of conditions. Even if it did, there's no good evidence that the effects of any potential fire severity reduction outweigh the ecological costs of such treatments (Rhodes and Odion, 2004; Schoennagel et al., 2004). The USFS (1997a) acknowledged that fire typically has less and more transient impacts on watershed resources than ground-based tree removal.

Fire doesn't pose a great threat to aquatic systems, as Gresswell (1999) documented in a review of fire impacts. In contrast, there is a significant body of research documenting the direct, indirect, and negative impacts of ground-based tree removal on soils, runoff, watershed processes and aquatic resources.

It is extremely unlikely that fuel reduction measures, such as small tree removal, can reduce fire severity, because the probability of fire is so low and treatments are transient. For instance, on the Deschutes NF (OR) the estimated annual probability of fire of any severity on any one acre is only about 0.1% (Finney, 2003); the probability of high severity fire is about one quarter of that, or about 0.025% per acre per year, making the reduction of fire severity via fuel reduction a proposition of minuscule proportions.

West-wide, there's probably no greater ecological restoration/protection need than reducing the effects of roads.

West-wide, there's probably no greater ecological restoration/protection needs than reducing the effects of roads and grazing. Small tree removal addresses neither of these crucial ecosystem protection measures, and, instead, exacerbates the impacts of roads via elevated road use.

Big trees and roadless areas are unquestionably important to protect (Rhodes et al., 1994; Henjum et al., 1994; Kessler et al., 2001; Beschta et al., 2004; Karr et al., 2004). But roadless and large tree protection are not enough to keep the widely degraded aquatic conditions static, much less restore native trout and water quality, in dire straits throughout the west. (Henjum et al., 1994; Kessler et al., 2001; Karr et al., 2004). Even with remaining roadless areas and big trees protected, wildland ecosystems are likely to continue to decline if small tree removal accelerates with

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little reduction of grazing and road impacts.

Acknowledgement: The foregoing is based, in part, on the findings in a forthcoming report (available by summer 2005) by the **Pacific Rivers Council** (<http://www.pacrivers.org/>) on the collateral aquatic impacts of fuel treatments on western public lands.

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Walkin' the Dose Trail ...

Excerpts from John Woolley's Diary

2/27/05 Drove to the Dose today. Weaving through the tree debris on the Dose road is only a small challenge. There were 23 vehicles at the washout trailhead. The river side route is even more impassable now. The "Up and Over" trail has picked up some definition from use and a little trail work. The erosion is remarkable along the top of the slope, as the trail is nearing the edge.

It's Earth First! workshop weekend. Passed two pairs of tree climbers, practicing getting up into the limbs of big Douglas firs. As I walked the old road to Elkhorn Campground, I met 4 others heading up for tree practice. At Elkhorn, about a dozen tents were still up along the river, at 1:30 pm. Saw at least a dozen more Evergreen students; all friendly. Not all of the 23 vehicles were the Evergreen group, but most were, and I was told folks kept showing up all weekend.

Hiking beyond the campground, I followed an old single lane road, now a faint trail. Nice old growth, especially one fir over 6 feet in diameter. Saw a forest phantom, the Hermit Thrush. The bottom cliffed out, and as I climbed up to the old road, I met a couple of Evergreen students. They were visiting a friend down the road, who told them of a scheme to re-build the Dose road, and extend it through the Park to the Coast.

The Maple bottoms are freshly defined with a carpet of winter-flattened leaves. The Dose corridor is very scenic. On a blank Forest Service signpost is now written: "Wilderness is an escape from industry, greed, and injustice." A flower sign was penciled in on a latter sign.

3/20/05 Checked out the Dose again today, with Andi Niesen, Lots of water running down the slopes; melting snow. But the river is a bit low. The trees are even bigger than last time.

The survey route has been newly marked with orange ribbon and posts. The route was quite destroyed my last visit. It still is, except for new ribbons.

Funny thing, the road ribbons over the washout keep getting closer to the edge. They moved the ribbons down to get the proposed route out of the Wilderness. Now, the cliff is twenty feet closer than last year. Much of the Up and Over Trail has an open view.

The Tree Climbers left some lead rope on their practice trees. . . Interesting to watch a bike rider stare at the washout, wondering how to get to the old road on the
(Continued on p. 12, Dose Diary)

SPECIAL FEATURE: *This Earthday, OFCO joins environmental activists across the nation in reflecting on our mission, our strategies and our effectiveness in these dark times. Some maintain that environmentalism as we know it is dead* and suggest abandoning traditional goals.*

Writer and activist Dave Foreman considers these ideas in the following recent essay, reprinted here with permission. Foreman is now Executive Director of The Rewilding Institute, www.rewilding.org.

2005: Nature's Crisis by Dave Foreman

In my 35 years as a conservationist, I have never beheld such a bleak and depressing situation as I see today. The evidence for my despair falls into three categories: the state of Nature, the power of anticonservationists, and appeasement and weakness within the conservation and environmental movements. I fear that on some level we must recognize that this state of affairs may be inevitable and impossible to turn around. That is the coward's way out, though. The bleakness we face is all the more reason to stand tall for our values and to not flinch in the good fight. It is important for us to understand the parts and pieces of our predicament, so we might find ways to do better.

The State of Nature

I've just authored a book, *Rewilding North America*, which goes into considerable detail describing and trying to understand the Seven Ecological Wounds that drive the Sixth Great Extinction, which is the fundamental fact and problem in the world today. Around the world, direct killing of wildlife, habitat destruction, habitat fragmentation, loss of ecological processes, invasion by exotic species and diseases, ecosystem pollution, and catastrophic climate change are worsening. We six-and-a-half-billion too-clever apes are solely to blame. Despite impressive successes here and there, the overall state of Nature continues to decline. This is simple reality, despite the scolding we hear not to be doom-and-gloomers.

Power of the Anticonservationists

In the United States, the federal government has become the sworn enemy of conservation. Not only has the radical-right Presidency and Congress stopped any progress in the con-

servation and restoration of Nature, they are dedicated to overthrowing the twentieth century's legacy of conservation and environmental policy and programs. They are unabashedly trying to go back to the unfettered, uncaring era of the robber barons in the late nineteenth century. This revolution is both philosophical and practical. Bad as this is, the radical-right is also dedicated to shredding science, particularly biology, and time-traveling back to before the Enlightenment.

While the United States is an extraordinary political case, elsewhere some of the supposedly most civilized nations on the planet, such as Canada, Norway, and Japan, are again waging nineteenth-century crusades against wild Nature: frontier-forest mining, slaughter of troublesome animals (such as seals, wolves, bears), and commercial whaling, just for starters. Japanese, European, Chinese, and American businesses are looting the last wild places for timber, pulp, wildlife, minerals, and oil, opening up such places to further habitat destruction and bushmeat hunting by local people.

Although the radical-right control of the U.S. Presidency and Congress was gained by a very small margin in 2004 (no mandate), it is backed by powerful and popular forces and by a shocking descent into prescientific irrationality by large sections of the public.

Appeasement and Weakness in the Conservation and Environmental Movements

The efforts to protect wild Nature and to clean up pollution face internal subversion from the right and left that leads to deep compromises not only on issues but also on fundamental principles. We can stuff these calls to compromise into

(T)he radical-right Presidency and Congress...are dedicated to overthrowing the 20th century's legacy of conservation and environmental policy and programs.

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several boxes, including sustainable development, resourcism, Nature deconstruction, politically correct progressivism, and anthropocentric environmentalism.

First, some brief definitions: conservation is the movement to protect and restore wildlands and wildlife (Nature for its own sake); resourcism or resource conservation is the resource extraction ideology of the U.S. Forest Service and other agencies (multiple-use/sustained yield); environmentalism is the campaign to clean up pollution for human health and make cities livable.

The radical right has been disciplined about thinking and acting for the long term; we have failed in part because we do not have a long-term strategy to which we stick.

Internationally since the 1980s, conservation efforts to protect wildlands and habitat by means of national parks, game reserves, and other protected areas have been severely compromised as financial-aid agencies and even some top international conservation groups have shifted to promoting so in practice they have elbowed Nature into second place. This establishment undercutting of Nature conservation has been joined by the leftist passion of some anthropologists and other social engineers to reject protected areas in favor of indigenous extractive reserves. Shockingly, sustainable development is coming close to dominating the pages even of publications about conservation biology, and gains more and more adherents in resource management graduate schools and large “conservation” organizations. Some members of the academic left have become deconstructors of Nature, denying that it independently exists, proclaiming that we invent it; therefore there is no reason to protect it.

Pressed from the left and right during the last twenty-five years, conservation and environmental organizations worldwide have moved away from forthright calls for zero population growth, even though human overpopulation is the underlying cause of all conservation and environmental problems. We hear a growing drumbeat that there is a dearth of births and that developed nations face economic collapse because of fewer young people. We are essentially silent in response to this cornucopian madness. Similarly, the conservation and environmental movements in general shy away from acknowledging the reality of human-caused mass extinction. If we don’t even clearly state the problem, how can we do anything about it?

We can also see a shift in the U.S. from conservation to resourcism among several prominent and influential entities. Once the preeminent conserver of biological diversity, The Nature Conservancy has been steadily moving to a resourcist approach. They talk now of “working landscapes,” a fancy

euphemism for logging and livestock grazing, and demand that their employees talk about people instead of Nature. High County News, once a feisty voice for grassroots conservationists in the West, has steadily turned into a voice for resourcism: not the preservation of wilderness, but the preservation of happy little resource-extraction communities, and for negotiated settlements between conservationists and resource-extraction industries, which usually favor industry.

Some consultants, foundations, and political realists are urging grassroots wilderness groups to compromise in order to pass wilderness legislation that may or may not adequately protect existing wilderness. This encouragement of appeasement is based on a desire to pass bills, and an overreaction to the narrow victory of the radical right in the 2004 election. Another source for this push to compromise is the fuzzyheaded wish that if people only talk together, everything can be worked out.

Several bright young men have gained a disturbing amount of attention with their recent speeches about the “death” of environmentalism.* Insofar as they consider Nature protection at all, they demand that conservationists drop their priorities to focus on social justice and other anthropocentric progressive causes. Overall, they call on environmental organizations to essentially go out of business and become part of the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. The overwhelming identification of environmentalism with the progressive movement and the Democratic Party is a key reason it lacks credibility with much of the American public.

Just as there has been a disturbing shift in attitudes among large segments of the American public, so have there been problematic changes among members of the conservation public. To be blunt, many of the employees and activists with conservation groups are ignorant of our history and have not read the classic books of conservation. There is an appalling lack of intellectual curiosity in the movement. On the whole, the radical right and grassroots anticonservationists both read and think more than do conservationists and environmentalists. In outdoor recreation, young people, who once would have been hikers and backpackers, now seek thrills on mountain bikes and thus cut themselves off from experiencing Nature and from having self-interest in protecting roadless areas. I don’t see kids out messing around in little wild patches; they’re inside, plugged in to a virtual reality.

These are trends. Of course there are exceptions. Dwelling on the exceptions, though, keeps us from doing something about the real problems. I’m not doing “nuance” here. This sober, unapologetic cataloging of the array of problems Nature conservationists face is, I am convinced, the first step in

(*Continued on p. 11, Foreman*)

(Foreman, continued from p.10)

developing a more effective strategy.

In December of 1776, the American Revolution was in its darkest hour. In response, Tom Paine wrote his first "Crisis" paper:

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

General Washington had the paper read to his miserable, disheartened troops in their frozen winter camps. There was no surrender. Years of hard battle lay ahead but victory was gained.

We need Tom Paine conservationists in our dark hour. Let us not apologize for loving wild Nature, for caring about other species, for speaking the truth. Reach out to others. Make deals when they are good deals. But let us not be frightened and browbeaten into appeasement. Let us instead offer a bold, hopeful vision for how wilderness and civilization can live together.

* See "The Death of Environmentalism" by Michael Shellenberger & Ted Nordhaus, October, 2004, www.thebreakthrough.org/

Meet OFCO's Valued And Able Advisors

The Olympic Forest Coalition is fortunate to have these allies who serve as advisors to our Board of Directors.

Susan Jane Brown, J.D., Esq. is a staff attorney at the Pacific Environmental Advocacy Center in Portland, Oregon. She is the former Executive Director of the Gifford Pinchot Task Force and deserves the major credit in stopping old growth timber sales on that Southwest Washington National Forest.

Linda Winter, Ph.D. received her forest ecology degree from the University of Washington. Her research was on multiple pathways in the development of old growth forests and her field work was done on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. She has recently joined our advisory group and will help us in our understanding of what is and what is not beneficial in second growth commercial timber sales.

Jill Silver is Watershed Program Manager for the 10,000 Years Institute. Her past experience is extensive and includes work as a habitat biologist for the Hoh Tribe. Jill's area of experience covers biological, technical and legal knowledge on state and private forestlands, especially on the Olympic Peninsula.

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(Dose Diary, continued from p. 8)

4/14/05 Saw a Marten today; circa 3pm. I was sitting by the edge of the rivver, just down river from Elkhorn campground in ONF. I was tired, and I'd spotted a dark sandy beach near the running waters (quite low), with a rock to lean back on. Facing the river, I saw to my left a reddish-brown bushy tail disappear into a rock hollow.

I kept looking. In a few seconds, it ran out onto a rock 40 feet away, above the river flow. Saw its entire reddish-blondish-brown body, a miracle in motion.

May be the first "reliable" sighting here in ten years. Wonder if it moved in since the wash-out.

This was my first Marten since 1980! Stephens Peak. Saw one in Rocky Mountain NP in the early 70s. The closest look I had was when one ran up on my sleeping bag --with me inside! Again, early 70s, Necklace Valley, Alpine Lakes.

**Contributions and Comments
to OFCO News Welcome
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**Olympic Forest Coalition
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