



OFCO News

Spring 2006

The Newsletter of the Olympic Forest Coalition

The mission of the Olympic Forest Coalition is to protect and restore forest and aquatic ecosystems on the public lands of the Olympic Peninsula.

Growing Pains: Big Changes Afoot; OFCO Hires Executive Director

The (new) mission of the Olympic Forest Coalition is to protect and restore forest and aquatic ecosystems on the public lands of the Olympic Peninsula.

The Olympic Forest Coalition will celebrate its fourth birthday this summer. As many of you may remember, our parent organization, the Quilcene Ancient Forest Coalition, opened shop in 1989, concentrating on the northeast corner of the Olympic National Forest (ONF). Our decision to become an ONF forest-wide watchdog organization reflected our recognition that the reasonably quiet and non-confrontational years of the Clinton-Gore Northwest Forest Plan were over. And we saw that there were threats and opportunities for all national forests and that OFCO needed to link up with a bigger coalition of forest advocates in the state and nationally, while building closer ties with environmental, salmon and tribal allies on the Peninsula.

In late 2003, OFCO's Board decided to build a program on Department of Natural Resources (DNR) managed state forestlands in the Olympic Region, with a primary focus on the 270,000-acre Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF) and the western Strait of Juan de Fuca in the northwest corner of the Peninsula.

This became a daunting task. In 2004, OFCO joined

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Pondering our Mission:

What's It All About?

As we contemplated revising our mission statement (see lead story, p. 1), OFCO board members found themselves in an intense email exchange, drifting from our precise niche to a broader philosophical dialogue on the human need and impulse to defend the natural world. Josey Paul contributed the following provocative reflection:

We are really shamans trying to restore a proper balance with the fuller world of beings.

David Abram, author of "The Spell of the Sensuous," speaks to the issue of mission in broader terms. Abram says anthropologists typically misunderstand the true role of shamans, which is to restore balance and a proper connection with the natural world. "We still need that which is other than ourselves and our own creation ... We are human only in contact, and conviviality, with what is not human," he writes.

So the shaman acts as an intermediary between the human community and the larger ecological field to ensure that the "relation between human society and the larger society of beings is balanced and reciprocal and that the village never takes more from the living land than it returns to it."

But we no longer have shamans, and I think we are poorer for it. We are taking too much from the living land. None of the good folks who I'm working with on the clean-energy initiative ever speak to me about salmon or forests or other living things. It's as if a clean environment absent of salmon and "the larger society of beings" is sufficient. It is not.

OFCO is about saving salmon and forests and owls and other parts of our humanity that are interwoven with nature.

As we each try to restore a proper balance with the fuller world of beings, we too aspire to the intent of shamans.

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with the Washington Environmental Council, National Audubon and Conservation Northwest in a lawsuit against DNR over their Sustainable Harvest Calculation (see article on page 3 of this newsletter). We won in court and negotiated a settlement with DNR. Our major gains were on the OESF; OFCO will play the leadership role in implementing this part of the agreement.

OFCO's board had mixed emotions about our successes and our expanded program. On the one hand, we were excited about having more opportunities to protect and restore these valuable natural resources; on the other hand, we were stretched mighty thin. We've been blessed with some real talent on our Board—and the fact that many of our members put a lot of time into our programs—but too much was falling between the cracks. Bonnie Phillips, who has been chair and lead volunteer in OFCO for the past several years, decided she needed a paying job and would have little time in the future to spend with us. With that in mind, we were facing a special January board meeting to discuss our future when a friend and ally found out about our conundrum and made a \$10,000 donation to hire Bonnie as our first Executive Director. Thus, our January meeting agenda was turned on its head—and with new energy and enthusiasm, we realized that with a lot of hard work, and a lot of fundraising, we would continue winning victories and building our programs.

The Board is currently developing what we hope will be a successful fundraising program to enable us to hire a part-time person to work on our state efforts. We're also launching a recruitment program for new board members and other volunteers to bolster OFCO's work potential. Frankly, even if we had money to hire more staff—it is only through the talent, skills and dedication of our active board that we achieve success.

During this process, OFCO re-evaluated its mission statement, which focussed on the forest ecosystem. In a narrow sense, this is indeed our focus, since our work is on national and state forestland. But in a broader sense, it did not describe much of what we do—defending, protecting and restoring the aquatic ecosystems within these lands. Thus, we enlarged our

(Continued on back page, **Growing**)

Complex Settlement of SHC Lawsuit Brings Modest Gains for Forest Protection

by Bonnie Phillips and Marcy Golde

In summer of 2004, the state's Board of Natural Resources substantially raised the timber harvest level for the next decade on state land. The state's new Sustainable Harvest Calculation (SHC) allowed an approximately 35% increase in logging over the previous decade, with the major burden falling on DNR lands of the Olympic Peninsula.

In response, OFCO and three other environmental organizations brought suit, citing concerns for owl habitat. Last fall, Judge Sharon Armstrong's ruling strongly favored the environmental plaintiffs.

But such cases are never simple. In November, the plaintiff organizations entered into negotiations with DNR, and after months of tedious and difficult work, all parties signed off on a settlement on March 21. The result: Some genuine progress -- and were some disappointments, too.



First, the positives: The Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF), about 270,000 acres on the west and northwest Olympic Peninsula, was the real winner in this settlement. Eighty percent of the remaining old growth is found in this area. Briefly, here's what we gained there:

* DNR will not conduct any logging activity in "old forest" stands.

* DNR will "jump start" landscape planning, which has been stalled for over seven years, and develop a Sustainable Harvest Implementation Plan (SHIP) on the OESF. (This will be the next such plan after the South Puget Sound, which is about half-way completed.)

* Until the SHIP is completed, there will be no clearcut logging in younger (structural) owl habitat.

* Experiments testing "innovative silviculture" (other than clearcuts) will be conducted in parts of the OESF; DNR will initiate modeling exercises with these techniques throughout the OESF.

Since the negotiation was technically restricted to Northern Spotted Owl habitat, we had no opportunity to address aquatic issues directly. Yet the agreement could help us in this area.

Although we had hoped for greater gains for the northwest Straits of Juan de Fuca, we were pleased that the agreement calls for preservation of about 8,000 acres of owl habitat. DNR will share habitat maps, greatly aiding our monitoring efforts.



This is a very complicated agreement and we've mentioned only some highlights. What is clear is that OFCO, as the only environmental organization that has a program on the Olympic Peninsula, will have its hands full monitoring implementation. As one OFCO board member observed, the settlement agreement will falter and fail without active involvement and monitoring.

For the interested and patient among our membership, check our website, www.olympicforest.org, for a copy of the executive summary. Other organizations involved are Washington Environmental Council, National Audubon, and Conservation Northwest.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to our patient and able attorney John Arum, whose guidance kept us focused -- and relatively sane -- through this very difficult process.

**Contributions and Comments
to OFCO News Welcome**
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\$300 Donation to OFCO Honors Forest Activist Marian Meacham

by Marcy Golde

Following the death of forest activist Marian Meacham late last year, OFCO received, and gratefully acknowledges, an anonymous donation of \$300 in her honor.

Marian Meacham's life was rooted in the Olympic Peninsula. She moved to Chimacum, in Jefferson County, in 1949 and spent the next two years in a wood-stove heated tent with a new husband and her four-year-old daughter. Then she helped cut and debark trees on their land to build a log cabin, the core of the home where she spent the rest of her life.

Marian began her forestry work in the late 1970s, motivated by her concern about the high rate of miscarriage suffered by isolated and often poor rural women. The apparent cause was indiscriminate herbicide spraying of DDT in recent clearcuts in Washington and Oregon.

Marian was elected to the Board of the Washington Environmental Council (WEC) and became the second chair of its forestry committee. As chair she oversaw the 2.1 Million Acres of Trees suit against the Department of Natural Resources in the early 1980's, challenging their first management plan and its EIS. That plan and EIS were required by the court's decision to uphold the citizen's challenge of the Classic U timber sale, a 300 acre old growth clearcut on Whidbey Island. That site is now part of Whidbey Island State Park.

With several others, Marian spent the better part of a year negotiating a settlement in that suit with Brian Boyle, the then Land Commissioner, elected in 1980 primarily because of the controversies over DNR's forest management. That settlement established a series of common law principles, two of which are still recognized today as the legal basis of all environmental protection on State lands. The need to respect these principles has held even in the current Sustainable Harvest Calculation, which has just been successfully challenged by OFCO, WEC and others because of its inadequate protection.

Marian also worked for better regulation of state and private lands, producing the first major revisions of Forest Practices Act regulations. These revisions also produced extensive studies of the cumulative effects of timber harvest and management of riparian zones, which resulted a few years later in the first requirements that logging operations leave trees standing along fish-bearing streams.

Marian's greatest focus was always the liquidation of old growth in DNR's Olympic Region. In the late 70s and 80s that region produced more than one-third of all trees harvested from all State forest lands. Her work on the 2.1 Million Acres of Trees lawsuit had a significant impact on the Olympic state forests because of the size of the harvest there. Early on she had acquired a profound understanding of old growth ecosystems. She became a disciple of Jerry Franklin, after reading his first paper on old growth, published in 1979, and understood its relevance to the forests in the Olympic Region. Not long after Boyle's 1980 election as Land Commissioner, she asked him to reduce that harvest and protect that ecosystem. The answer was, "I would like to, but that is the money forest."

Marian Meacham's work along with that of other volunteers led to all the improvements made in forestry on State and private lands all across Washington State. In recognition of these accomplishments Marian, along with Marcy Golde, was awarded the State's Environmental Excellence Award by then Governor Spellman in 1983.

Buen Viaje, Ted

Board member Ted Labbe recently told us he was resigning his board position because, in his words: "I will take a year to travel in South America and maybe beyond." Sounds like a bold and great adventure. Not without envy, we wish him well, and a safe return.

Playing Defense: National Forest Updates

Bush administration urges sale of National Forest land. In a move unpopular with Democrats and many Republicans, the Bush administration has sent legislation to Congress to allow sale of 300,000 acres of national forest land in 41 states. The proceeds of these sales, predicted to bring in \$800 million, would fund the phase out of the Secure Rural Schools Program. This program, which OFCO believes should be continued, has been successful on the Olympic Peninsula. Public lands belong in public hands, and not sold to the highest bidder for development or clearcuts. We have written letters to the Forest Service and members of Congress opposing this bad deal. Four former Chiefs of the Forest Service, serving under both Democratic and Republican administrations, recently wrote an open letter to Congress opposing this move.

Roadless Areas. In March, Washington State environmentalists sent a letter to the Chief of the Forest Service requesting a moratorium on any management activity in roadless areas. Two projects, both on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, are currently planned for roadless areas. Environmentalists from many other states, some governors, and national environmental organizations sent separate letters, all asking for a moratorium.

Walden-Baird Fire Salvage Bill. The controversy surrounding the Walden-Baird logging bill continues to grow, with a number of scientists questioning the credibility of the sponsors' "scientific" claims. Contrary to the claims made by Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR) and Rep. Brian Baird (D-WA), logging does not "restore" or "recover" forests following natural disturbances.

This bill would fast-track logging after natural disturbances; cast aside meaningful public input, agency accountability and transparency in federal decision-making; side-step the Endangered Species Act; and not provide protections for clean water, old growth forests, roadless areas, rivers and streams, and wildlife. The Walden-Baird logging bill would apply to all national forests and would transform natural landscapes into industrial forestry zones for

Upping the Cut on the Olympic National Forest

OFCO, Sierra Club and Conservation Northwest representatives recently met with staff from the Olympic National Forest to discuss their strategic plan which increases logging levels.

From the time the Northwest Forest Plan went into effect, in 1994, until two years ago, the average amount of logging was 10-12 million board feet a year. For the past two years, the logging has increased to 17 million board feet. The ONF, however, believes if they have sufficient funding they could log 30 million board feet a year—a 300 percent increase.

They justify this because they contend that all of their commercial thinning sales are good for the forest ecosystem. OFCO disagrees and has repeatedly pointed this out. One of the many cases in point is the proposed Jackson Thin commercial timber sale that would thin naturally regenerated forests over 100 years old. Hard to believe that this sale would be good for the forest ecosystem. Also hard to believe the forest AND aquatic ecosystems are delighted with the many new road miles regularly built to accommodate these thinning operations.

the logging industry. It defines catastrophes so broadly that virtually any natural disturbance would qualify as a "catastrophe," including fire, snow, rainstorms, drought or insects, and geological events.

This legislation has received national attention, as some academics at Oregon State University tried unsuccessfully to keep the highly regarded journal *Science* from publishing research conducted by a graduate student which exposed flaws within the bill. Baird constituents have been baffled by his support of this bill.

More info on these topics: www.olympicforest.org,

Port Townsend Based Group Helps Forest Landowners Profit From Responsible FSC Logging

While OFCO's work is explicitly focussed on the public lands of the Olympic Peninsula, our success, in the long run, depends on how well forests are managed -- on private as well as public lands. We have always been strong advocates for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification for the State's forest lands. Meanwile, we applaud private landowners who take this step.

The process of certification for a small landowner can be costly and daunting, and an organization based in Port Townsend has set up a program to encourage and ease this process, and to help develop and locate lucratie markets for their certified wood products.. Northwest Certified Forestry, a program of the nonprofit Northwest Natural Resource Group (NNRG), provides -- according to its brochure -- "cost-effective and comprehensive access to FSC certification and marketing services in the Northwest." It's mission: "To promote innovative forest management strategies that support the health of forest and freshwater ecosystems while enhancing economic development in rural communities."

The NCF program is ably run by Ian Hanna, founder of Windfall Lumber in Olympia. Other staffers at NNRC are Denise Pranger, executive director, and Kirk Hanson, development director The following retailers are certified outlets for FSC wood; several others are pending. Check with NCF for updates:

Seattle: Compton Lumber & Hardware, Dunn Lumber, and Environmental Home Center
Port Townsend: Edensaw Woods and Pintery Communications
Bainbidge and Redmond: Lumbermens
Olympia: Windfall Lumber, Lumbermens
Chimacum: Cart's Building Supply

NCF is actively seeking forest landowner members. For info, go to www.nnrg.org/ncf/ncf.php, click on "download brochure."

See p. 7 for Workshop announcement.

OFCO Joins Coalition Against "Takings" Initiative I-933; All Hands Needed

OFCO is part of a large and varied group of organizations that make up the Community Protection Coalition, whose mission is to defeat Initiative 933, the so-called "regulatory takings compensation" measure. Like Referendum 48, rejected by Washington voters in 1995, it would require compensation to developers when environmental protection rules are seen to limit profits.

The measure is similar to Oregon's Initiative 37, approved by voters in the 2004 election. Funded and promoted by developers, that initiative was presented to the public as family-friendly, by spokespersons resembling everyone's uncle, son or grandma. Now, jurisdictions are struggling with the fallout, and neighborhoods are at risk.

Unfortunately, Initiative 933 -- like Oregon's law -- has been framed to sound fair and benign to unwary voters.

It's important that rural and urban residents alike understand I-933 for what it is, and understand how much they have to lose if it should pass. (It's also important to work out ways to spread the burden of environmental protection more fairly, such as transfer of development rights.) Voters throughout the Olympic Peninsula were at the top of the learning curve back in 1995, when they voted solidly to reject Referendum 48 -- Jefferson County, 66.4 percent (second only to Seattle); Clallam 57.1; Mason, 55.7; Kitsap, 58.6; Grays Harbor 51.8).

This might seem reassuring, but the landscape is very different this time around. For one thing, the well-heeled opponents, quite literally, have the initiative, so they will mount a full-court press for signatures to place it on the November ballot.

For our side, grass roots word-of-mouth campaigning is important. So spread the word. Contact Dan Stonington of the Community Protection Coalition for more info, dan@protectcommunities.org or 206-323-0520.

The Jackson Sale: An Alliance in the Woods

by Jim Scarborough

On a Saturday in late February, OFCO board members Kevin Geraghty, John Woolley, and I ventured to the Rainbow Campground near Mount Walker to spend the day meeting and exchanging ideas with our colleagues from the Environmental Resource Center (ERC). Based in Olympia, ERC is composed primarily of student activists from Evergreen State College – nearly two dozen of whom participated in the weekend outing. The impetus of this OFCO/ERC rendezvous was the need for an on-the-ground look at the Forest Service's proposed Jackson thinning sale, while brainstorming strategies on how most effectively to contest this sale by way of each group's respective strengths.

Readers of prior "OFCO News" issues and www.olympicforest.org will recognize the Jackson sale as the likely monstrosity that would log 115-year-old naturally regenerated forest on Mounts Walker and Turner, along with mixed-age Late Successional Reserve forest in the Rocky Brook valley (a tributary of the Dosewallips River). This sale would potentially construct up to a dozen miles of new logging roads, including in designated Riparian Reserves.

The group opted to tour Unit 13 of the Jackson sale, across the road from Seal Rock Campground, on the lower eastern slope of Mount Turner. Unit 13 is highly representative of the larger problems associated with this timber sale, sporting as it does such impressive attributes as numerous old-growth legacy trees offering nesting habitat for marbled murrelets, scattered among the otherwise diverse 60-to-115-year-old forest. Pausing at Turner Creek's chattering cascades among big cedar trees, OFCO and ERC reps tried to make sense of the Forest Service's bizarre suggestion that roading and thinning this robust forest would somehow "accelerate" its development.

Problem is, the Jackson sale makes no ecological sense whatsoever, instead appearing to be a direct indication of the Bush administration's pressure on

the Forest Service to get the cut out on our vulnerable Olympic National Forest. Given the gravity of this sale, the need for OFCO and ERC to establish a working alliance has become abundantly clear.

In the twilight that evening, back at Rainbow Campground, Kevin and I admired the skill of several ERC members honing the art of tree-climbing with harnesses (as one means of forest defense). Closer to the campfire, other participants made plans to write official comment letters to the Forest Service to protest the harmful illogic of the Jackson sale. And before the weekend was out, ERC would offer additional workshops in olive oil lamp-making, ground-truthing, Earth First! history, and native plant identification. Throughout, the beauty and benevolence of the deeply forested Olympic hills, rising high all around, offered their own silent-yet-powerful lessons.

Note: OFCO and allies continue to await publication of an environmental assessment for the Jackson sale, which should offer much greater detail regarding what's at stake. We'll be in touch with our membership soon after the EA's release.

NCF Workshop April 22

Northwest Certified Forests will present a workshop on "Managing Biodiversity on Small Forestlands" Presenters: Jim Bottorff, Joe Arnett, Kirk Hanson and Janet Strong

DATE: Saturday, April 22, 2006

LOCATION: Wild Thyme Farm, Oakville, WA (directions on reverse side)

COST: \$35/person or \$60/family

MORE INFO: For more info contact:

Kirk Hanson, 360-316-9317, kirk@nnrg.org

LUNCH: Please bring a bag lunch. Coffee and tea will be provided.

REGISTRATION: Preregistration is required as space is limited to 25 participants.

To register, please use the form on the reverse side.

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(**Growing**, continued from p. 2)

mission statement— but **not** our mission.

These are exciting—and scary—times for OFCO. Over the past few years, our yearly donations have totaled into the \$2,000-\$3,000 range. Now we are seeking to phase in a budget of \$86,000. Forest advocacy organizations that started in the 1980’s and 1990’s in this state had the luxury of a great deal of foundation money, both within the region and nationally. Most of those funds have dried up. Though we are reaching out to foundations for money, we also need a diversified funding base—and that means we will emphasize membership recruitment. We’re also developing a major donor program—which for OFCO means anyone who donates \$250 or more per year. In fall and winter, we will look at fundraising events, for example a silent auction.

Will this quest for money divert us from doing our work? No!! OFCO expects more accomplishments in the years ahead—working to protect and restore forest and aquatic ecosystems on the public lands of the Olympic Peninsula. With your help, we can do it.

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