

The mission of the Olympic Forest Coalition is promoting the protection, conservation and restoration of natural forest ecosystems and their processes on the Olympic Peninsula, including fish and wildlife habitat, and surrounding ecosystems.



Olympic Forest Coalition

Spring 2012

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We thank all our members and donors for their financial support. If you have not contributed yet, we hope you will become inspired to do so.

You can donate to OFCO online on our Web site www.olympicforest.org.



John Woolley

President's Column

OFCO continues to advocate for our forests. Please contact us at info@olympicforest.org for more information and how to become more involved.

Dungeness River Watershed Action Plan: The Olympic National Forest (ONF) initiated a water quality and habitat enhancement effort in 2011 for public lands near the Dungeness River and its tributaries. Many former logging roads and spurs are contributing to erosion. Funding to repair and maintain roads will not be available, so some roads will be decommissioned, unless they have recreational value. In addition to Forest Service internal funding, recreational support will be expected from user groups. (See article.)

- The Recreation sub-committee plans to meet soon with the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to discuss progress on the Burnt Hill Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) proposal.
- Discussion of priorities will take place at a public meeting to be held in Blyn May 23.

Calawah Watershed Action Plan: An OHV plan has been announced by Dean Millett, Pacific District Ranger, ONF. The area in consideration is referred to as Bonidu Creek; scoping comments are due by May 21. As with the Dungeness plan, the objective is to approve only motorized recreation routes that do not damage salmon habitat and water quality.

Streamkeepers: Clallam County budget cuts resulted in the near elimination of a data collection program on stream turbidity. Study results are filed with the Department of Ecology. OFCO has helped to fund this activity and board member Coleman Byrnes has assisted in gathering water samples. (See article.)

Engineered Log Jams (ELJ): Large woody debris was removed from nearly all rivers on the Olympic Peninsula, resulting in much-reduced salmon runs. ONF plans to construct a number of engineered log islands in the upper Dosewallips River, near the Dose Road washout. Such an effort will require critical placement to avoid damage of existing salmon runs. The draft Environmental Analysis is now available. Comments are due in mid-May. (See article.)

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President's Column.....Continued from page 1

Elwha Quarry: Owners Shaw and Lane own a potential quarry operation at the entrance to Olympic National Park. The property is located in a Critical Areas Designation and is on a steep slope above homes near the Elwha River. Legal issues continue and a willing buyer is sought to end mining activity.

Blowder Creek Logging: OFCO and its affiliate, the Western Strait Action Group, have met with DNR in the field for a good look at forest practices. This is an effort to put public scrutiny on devastating logging operations that threaten salmon and Marbled Murrelet habitat. Lorna and Darrell Smith (new OFCO board members) have joined this effort.

Elwha River Fish Hatchery: The removal of the Elwha dams is creating a great opportunity to study native fish returns to a natural-flowing river. Court appeals continue on both "enhancement" and "production" hatchery activities. The concern is that the return of native runs will be compromised by hatchery introductions.

Please be in touch! We greatly appreciate your support, financial and otherwise.

Hard Times for Marbled Murrelets

by Marcy Golde

Two recently released studies on Marbled Murrelets show that things are not going well for these mysterious seabirds.

One study, by the US Forest Service and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, estimates an annual decline rate of more than 7 percent between 2001 and 2010, based on counts of birds at sea.

The other study, also by the US Forest Service—and in keeping with requirements of the Northwest Forest Plan—addresses the status of nesting habitat from 1994 to 2008 in Washington, Oregon and California. It found that 36 percent of all MM habitat is on non-federal lands, and that nearly a third of that habitat has been lost over the last 15 years, in Washington, as in the three-state region. Losses on Reserved Federal lands, in sharp contrast, were less than one percent. There is no information on MM habitat loss on Department of Natural Resources (DNR)-managed lands.

About a year ago, Ken Berg, Washington state head of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, wrote to Public Lands Commissioner Peter Goldmark, head of the state DNR, warning him that the "delay in completing the long-term

strategy [for the MM] could be a possible violation of the commitments of the HCP [Habitat Conservation Plan of 1997]." Berg went on to specify three ways DNR could avoid such a finding:

- Completing the long-term strategy by the end of 2013;
- Preserving all options until the long-term strategy is completed, especially within proposed Marbled Murrelet Management Areas (MMAs) and the Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF); and
- Conducting restoration forestry within MMAs.

DNR did not respond to this letter until last December, proposing a "minor amendment" to the HCP: postponing the completion of the Long-Term Strategy until the end of 2014 and calling for standard Regeneration Harvest, as well as undefined thinnings, within the MMAs in Southwest Washington, and allowing the harvest of 10,000 acres of unoccupied MM habitat outside of the MMAs. The USFWS endorsed this proposal, although it was in clear violation of terms set forth in Berg's June 2011 letter.

Goldmark also emphasized in the accompanying letter that he believes his fiduciary responsibilities will limit his protection of MM under the HCP. OFCO, on the other hand, believes DNR met its fiduciary commitments when it agreed to the terms of the HCP in 1997 and that those terms are an enforceable contract with the federal government, in exchange for which DNR is allowed to take, i.e. kill, some threatened and endangered species including Northern Spotted Owls, Marbled Murrelets, bull trout and some species of salmon in some areas.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service and DNR scheduled hearings for the public to comment on their Draft Scope for the Long-Term MM Strategy from April 30 to May 9, 2012.

The key message for comments is *"This process should result in a comprehensive, detailed landscape-level plan that would help meet the recovery objectives of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, contribute to the conservation efforts of the President's Northwest Forest Plan, and make a significant contribution to maintaining and protecting marbled murrelet populations in western Washington over the life of the HCP."* (DNR HCP, IV44) [Emphasis added]

OFCO is making its concerns known in a variety of ways. Stay tuned for the next chapters in this saga of fighting for the Marbled Murrelet's survival.

Comments are due by May 21, and can be sent to: sepacenter@dnr.wa.gov or:

SEPA Responsible Official, Annie Szvetcz, Wash.
DNR, SEPA Center
PO Box 47001
Olympia WA 98504-7001

Spotted Owls Under Siege Again

by Lorna Smith

Back in the 1970s and 80s, the conservation community fought an epic battle against powerful adversaries in the timber industry and forest management agencies. The cause was to save the remaining old-growth forests of the Pacific Northwest, and the flagship or "indicator" species, representing all other old-growth-dependent species, was the Northern Spotted Owl, *Strix occidentalis caurinus*. Protests were staged, legal challenges brought, injunctions filed and, for a while, the small owl with the big, dark eyes got a lot of attention.

By the turn of the 21st century, logging in potential Spotted Owl habitat was down by 90 percent.

But the victory may have come too late. The owl population has continued to decline at an alarming rate: 2–3 percent a year, in spite of protections granted after its listing under the Endangered Species Act, and those who would "log it all" continue to push forward.

Without doubt, Spotted Owls are in serious trouble, and the obvious response would seem to be ending logging in and around all their habitat, on all lands—public and private. Instead, the US Forest Service (FS) and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) are proposing more logging in remaining old-growth stands, under the rationale of reducing fire hazards and creating more "healthy" forests.

This stance directly reflects current positioning of an industry grown more media savvy and politically correct. Industry's stance is "forest resources [including Spotted Owls] can best be protected by reducing the risk of wildfires and insect threats," in the words of a [recently published article](#) in *Northwest Science*. This language is code for more logging.

Commenting on old-growth forests, FWS Director Dan Ashe recently said, "The science is telling us that unmanaged, fire-prone forests aren't healthy for either the landscape or the spotted owl ... In fact, the FWS is strongly recommending an *active* (emphasis this author's) forest management approach—like the forestry practices that the Forest Service and BLM are expanding—to restore forest health, increase resilience, and foster diversity." See this February Bureau of Land Management (BLM) [news release](#). In other words, FWS is taking the position that more logging will lead to better old growth and more Spotted Owls.

In an effort to further turn all eyes away from stepped-up old-growth logging and incursion into Spotted Owl habitat, industry interest groups have rushed to embrace a new scapegoat for the bird's continued decline—its more aggressive cousin, the Barred Owl. A native of the eastern/southern U.S. and western Canada, Barred Owls have increased their range over the past 30 years and have made a fairly recent appearance in northwestern forests, now occupying former Spotted Owl areas. Barred owls are not nearly as specific about their diets or habitat needs. They do occasionally prey on Spotted Owls opportunistically, but more importantly, they frequently displace them in prime nesting areas.

In fingering the Barred Owl as the primary culprit, the timber industry, with FWS and FS, is down-playing a key point. Barred Owls have been able to increase their range into Spotted Owl habitat precisely because of past and continuing logging practices. Creating clearcuts and cutting of old growth led to habitat fragmentation and reduction in stand size. The Spotted Owl's habitat has been reduced to a point where they are no longer safe from harassment and predation from Barred Owls. Clearcuts create the edge habitat and open areas Barred Owls favor, thus allowing them to foray into habitat once occupied by Spotted Owls.

Reflecting the current industry and FS mind set, FWS says it is working to "embed" Northern Spotted Owl recovery within "broader efforts" to restore vitality to our great northwest forests. They claim to "support conservation strategies and forest treatments that revitalize entire forest ecosystems to sustain all their many values"—i.e., more cutting makes healthier forests. (Remember the "decadent" old growth of the 1980s?)

The FWS has recently released two new proposals on Spotted Owl management which reflect these changing views:

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Owls Under Siege.....Continued from page 3

- A proposed revised Critical Habitat Designation for the Spotted Owl; and
- A draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on experimental removal of encroaching Barred Owls from certain portions of Spotted Owl habitat.

The revised plan for Critical Habitat Designation was required following the conservationists' successful legal challenge on the adequacy of the existing plan. The new plan purports to add many acres of protected Spotted Owl habitat while allowing for a substantial increase in harvestable timber. Some sleight of hand at work here? Clearly a very close look at the new proposal will be necessary.

As proposed in the DEIS, Experimental Barred Owl removal *may* be a drastic step in a last-ditch effort to save the Northern Spotted Owl from extinction. Carefully monitored, targeted experimental removal is recommended by a number of biologists because there is a great deal of baseline data for comparison with the experimental results. To ultimately save the owls, however, the focus must be on preventing any more cutting of Northern Spotted Owl old-growth forest habitat, both occupied stands and suitable habitat.

OFCO will carefully analyze both documents and submit substantial comments. **The public comment period will end June 6 July 6** (date extended after print edition went to press).

Wild Olympics Campaign Update

by *Connie Gallant*

As you know, Congressman Norm Dicks and Senator Patty Murray introduced a draft proposal back in November to establish new Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers and willing-seller National Preserve additions to Olympic National Park. After hosting many public workshops and receiving input from the general public and many stakeholders, they have made a difficult decision to drop the willing-seller National Preserve addition portion of the proposal.

Although disappointed, we remain 100% supportive of the Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River protections that remain in Congressman Dicks' and Senator Murray's current proposal. Read more on this OFCO [Web site page](#).

ACTION NOTE

Spotted Owl Revised Plan Public Meeting & Comment Options

Public Meeting: Tuesday, June 12, Tacoma, Wash., 3–5 PM and 6–8 PM, University of Washington, Tacoma Campus, 1900 Commerce St., Jane Russell Commons, 253-692-4306.

Comments on the critical habitat proposal can be provided either of the following ways:

Electronically: Go to the [Federal eRulemaking Portal](#). In the Keyword box, enter Docket No. FWS–R1–ES–2011–0112, which is the docket number for this rulemaking. Then, in the Search panel on the left side of the screen, under the Document Type heading, click on the Proposed Rules link to locate this document. You may submit a comment by clicking on "Send a Comment or Submission."

By hard copy: Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS–R1–ES–2011–0112; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042–PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

[More info.](#)

Roadless Rule: Law of the Land

by *Connie Gallant*

"This Court previously granted Plaintiff declaratory relief and issued a permanent national injunction on the Roadless Area Conservation Rule ("Roadless Rule"), 36 C.F.R. §§ 294.10 to 294.14. In a lengthy opinion with reasons, the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit reversed that decision and remanded the case to this Court with instructions to vacate the permanent injunction."

So what does this mean? It means that on Feb. 16 a federal appeals court ruled in favor of the Roadless Rule, virtually ending a lengthy battle that pitted loggers, miners and political forces against the vast majority of citizens who rely upon pristine lands for recreation and repose.

A bit of background: Near the end of President Bill Clinton's second term, the Forest Service declared most logging and road-building off limits for nearly 60 million acres of wild, unprotected National Forest lands. The declaration followed one of the most comprehensive and extended rulemaking processes in the nation's history, including hundreds of public hearings and open houses and a very detailed environmental review. More than 2 million public comments were received.

The "Roadless Area Conservation Rule" immediately came under relentless attack. Lawsuits were initiated by logging and resource extraction interests and a few hostile state governments, with the active encouragement of the Bush administration.

Several environmental organizations retained the services of Earthjustice (attorneys protecting our Earth) and filed lawsuits to uphold the rule. In spite of the powerful interests pushing for its reversal, environmental organizations persevered and planted themselves (pun intended) on this rulemaking process.

Giving credit where credit is due, we applaud Earthjustice for doing such a fantastic job in defense of the Roadless Rule.

Botanical Bullies: Invasive Species Harm Forest Biodiversity

by Jill Silver

Walking east into the Sam's River watershed on the old USFS 2190 road past the road closure on a soft September day, I look down at a recovering second growth forest that tumbles down the slope to the river. Sword fern, salmonberry, salal, lady fern, faded trilliums, mosses and lichens cover every inch of ground between the tall fir and cedar overstory, and patches of nitrogen-fixing alder add visual contrast where an old landslide removed the soil and duff.

This is a forest ecosystem recovering from intensive harvest eight decades past; it's coming back strong. I hear woodpeckers, a Northern Flicker, 12 species of songbirds, and watch a Sharp-shinned Hawk zip through the upper canopy. A chipmunk chirps from a scramble of understory. Bear, deer, elk, and coyote scat are evidence they're here too. And cold, clear water is abundant, flowing in small gorges to the river in the valley below.

As I walk, I stop to kick out a non-native bull thistle, pull up a young Scotch broom plant, and crush a rosette of tansy ragwort leaves. I'm on a search for an invasive

plant from Japan—knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum* spp.). It was brought over as an ornamental in the 1800s and planted at homesteads, rail depots and timber camps. It is appreciated by beekeepers and users of herbal



Knotweed – Jill Silver

remedies. In natural settings, however, this is a true superweed—and not the kind being generated in response to Monsanto's Roundup® Ready crops.

Knotweed has tremendous capacity to survive. Adapted to low nutrient volcanic soils, in competition with giant bamboo, it thrives in the inhospitable conditions of its native environment. Once here—without any of its natural enemies or competitors, and with migrating rivers and people to move it to new locations—it has the upper hand over native plant communities. It can readily stop their successional processes and can permanently replace them in a decade. It grows 16 feet in one season and dies back to the ground in winter. The roots of each plant can extend 15 feet down and 30 feet out. Fragments of root as small as a centimeter can generate a new plant. It's being moved in infested gravel and rock, yard waste, fragments caught on off-road vehicles and on heavy equipment, by water in streams and rivers, and sometimes even by elk, beavers, and mountain beavers that find themselves in a stand with nothing else to cut. I've been [working for a decade](#) on this plant in the Hoh River.

So, why is this a problem? Why not just let it go, and let nature find its balance? Because it's NOT NATURAL. Invasive plants are considered the second largest threat to biodiversity after human development. These plants reduce or eliminate critical functions that support native wildlife and fish populations such as forage and food, and structures for nesting, denning and roosting. They eliminate the contribution of large and small woody debris, and affect water quality and quantity. They can

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start cascading effects in ecosystems, reducing nutrient cycling and pollination. They create monocultures that feed few except other non-natives: starlings, Brown-headed Cowbirds, Norway rats, or generalists like crows and coyotes. We brought them here and turned them loose. It's like inviting a 10-year-old bully into a pre-school playground.



Scotch broom – Jill Silver

Many other plants brought over from Europe and Asia are invading our forests. These include some that we know and like, such as butterfly bush, Himalayan and evergreen blackberry, English and cherry laurel, English holly and ivy, and foxglove. Scotch broom, herb Robert, yellow archangel, tansy ragwort, and reed canarygrass are others. They arrived here with explorers and settlers, as accidental transients packed away in ship holds and as hitchhikers in livestock feed, or intentionally transplanted as ornamentals. Indeed, more than half of the species on Washington state's noxious weed list are escaped ornamentals. More are being introduced every day at nurseries and by travelers, unaware that the intriguing plant they picked up in Australia or California may eventually take over ecosystems and cost millions of dollars to control, and result in impacts from herbicide application, too.

These plants generally have mechanisms to defend themselves and recover quickly from damage—exceptional productivity, toxicity or an unpalatable taste, or thorny stems—which have likely evolved over thousands of years of grazing pressures in the Eurasian continent. They hang around for decades, between 80 and several hundred years, and then explode, taking over larger areas of native plant communities, especially in disturbed sites like harvest units, roads, and river courses, from which they send their seeds through air,

water, birds and animals, and people, to new locations. The biota that eats plants generally is not evolving to eat these species (though some plant species have been present for a century or more here). All of these plants take over space and resources from all other plants, unlike native plant communities that also compete for light, space and nutrients, but support a community of species.

Weeds are the MOST unsexy of all the issues that can generate a public response to harm in a forest. It's pretty easy to get worked up over the prospect of a clearcut harvest along your favorite trail. It's not so easy to understand that once the trees are gone and the roads remain, what comes in unintentionally can cause much more harm than the harvest, and for much longer. A harvest unit grows back. If the plant communities are native, there is a corresponding native insect, avian and mammal community using it. If the plant communities are non-native, it is essentially a biological desert. STOP THE CYCLE! Become familiar with invasive species when they're young—and pull them before they go to flower and seed! Scotch broom has 6,000 seeds per plant per year, lasting up to 80 years in soil (or a gravel mine). Think of your impact on that species spread, just pulling one plant! Species that should NOT be pulled include knotweed and Canada thistle, because pulling rhizomatous plants stimulates growth.

Next time: The Conundrum – Using herbicides as a tool to control invasives in forest conservation

Jefferson County Commissioners Request Trust Land Transfers

by Fayette Krause

On April 11 the Jefferson County Commissioners sent a letter to Commissioner Peter Goldmark (Department of Natural Resources-DNR) requesting that the agency expand two existing Natural Resource Conservation Areas (NRCAs) in Jefferson County. One would add 415 acres to the Devils Lake NRCA above Quilcene Bay and the second would add 350 acres to the Dabob Bay NRCA. If approved for transfer, both expanded NRCAs would be managed by the DNR's Natural Area Preserve (NAP) Program.

The Devils Lake additions would incorporate some steep-slope, naturally regenerated forest contiguous to Hood Canal. This segment is not likely to be on DNR's asset base presently. A 120-acre upland segment of the proposed addition would protect a rare plant association

of Douglas fir/rhododendron, recently identified by DNR's Natural Heritage Program. In addition, the two tracts, along with the existing NRCA, would constitute the only publicly protected mountains-to-Canal corridor in the Hood Canal.

The West Dabob Bay addition protects increasingly rare portions of mature, lowland forest plus the only known "occupied" Marbled Murrelet habitat on DNR land in Hood Canal. The southernmost segment of the Marbled Murrelet population on the west coast of North America (listed as federally threatened) is especially vulnerable in the Puget Sound/Hood Canal/Straits of Juan de Fuca zone where their population is estimated to be declining at a 7.41%/annum rate. Dabob Bay is a well-documented foraging area for the species, and incorporation of an occupied site within protected forest very near the bay would be highly desirable.

The two requested transfers were recommended in a 2011 report to the County Commissioners by the Public Lands Group, a citizens advisory group to the commissioners that assessed DNR lands in east Jefferson County for potential as continued commercial forestland. While the vast majority of DNR lands in east Jefferson was recommended for some form of harvest, a few tracts, including the Devils Lake and West Dabob areas, were selected as appropriate Trust Land Transfer (TLT) blocks because of their environmental sensitivity.

While endorsing the two TLT requests, the Commissioners stressed in their letter that they support DNR's continued presence in east Jefferson County. Indeed, the Commissioners urged DNR to purchase additional timberlands in east Jefferson to further broaden the harvest base and to help prevent conversion of forestland to inappropriate residential development.

The OFCO Board and membership express appreciation to the County Commissioners for their strong support for appropriate environmental protection of key tracts in the county, and for their continuing support for an expanded state forest base in east Jefferson County.

Dungeness Watershed Action Plan – Field Work Begins

by John Woolley

Dungeness Valley and the City of Sequim are the beneficiaries of a well-managed watershed. Clean water and quality wildlife habitat are the primary objectives of the Olympic National Forest (ONF) plan. To this end, the Forest Service will devise a road management plan

that maintains funding for Legacy Roads, as well as decommissioning costly excess roads and restoring passages for salmon.

Mike Anderson will meet with Congressman Norm Dicks and ONF staff person Judith Morris to devise a three-year action plan to assist in determining project priorities. The ONF is "shovel ready." Volunteers will play a primary role in setting recreation use protocols. Mountain bikers, Off-highway Motorized Vehicle (OHV) riders, stock riders and hikers will meet with the FS to discuss watershed concerns in the northeast part of the Forest, east of the Dungeness River. The recreation sub-committee will meet to discuss implementation strategies: managing volunteers, grants, and priorities, and coordinating OHV opportunities with the DNR's proposal for Burnt Hill, south of Sequim.

Summer work parties include Camp Handy restoration by Back Country Horsemen of Washington; Slab Camp Parking Area repairs, including re-establishment of large boulders to encourage appropriate OHV use; Dispersed Camp Site clean-ups; and clean-up at Dispersed Public Shooting Areas. Volunteers from User Groups are essential to carry out future user recreation. The North Olympic Salmon Coalition intends to be involved.

The next conference call is planned for early May. A **public workshop** will be held in **Blyn**, at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's Red Cedar Room on **May 23**. For more info on public participation, contact Susan Piper at spiper@fs.fed.us.

Biomass Supply Report Released

by Bonnie Phillips, Washington Citizens for Clean Energy

Harvesting woody biomass for energy and fuel continues to be a major concern for many environmental organizations, including OFCO. As reported earlier, OFCO joined two appeals against proposed plants in Port Townsend and Port Angeles.

One of the major issues has been: How much biomass is really out there to harvest sustainably. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) set out to study this question more than a year ago by contracting with the University of Washington and TSS Consultants to produce the *Washington Forest Biomass Supply Assessment*, released in mid-March.

There are two basic problems with this assessment that my non-technical mind can discern. First, any assessment of this nature, using modeling programs,

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Biomass Report.....Continued from page 7

contains a large number of assumptions. It would be an exaggeration to use the term Garbage In, Garbage Out but such modeling exercises must be reviewed very carefully for key assumptions.

The second problem is how this report is presented to the public. For example, the report ([link is on this page](#)) shows a range of possible biomass harvest levels under various models. Craig Partridge, Policy Director for DNR, said at a public information session in Olympia that the high end was unrealistic, in that the new roads required and other problems would make the cost prohibitive. At the same time, KING 5 TV news featured a DNR forester claiming that the high number was doable.

Public Lands Commissioner Peter Goldmark, predictably, has characterized the report's findings as strongly supportive of expanded woody biomass development.

Fortunately for the conservation community, the Washington Forest Law Center is taking a careful look at the report.

Partridge also commented that if this report had been done years earlier, the proposed Adage plant in Shelton would never have progressed as far as it did before the company abandoned the proposal.

One last note: Although thus far we have not seen more logging for fuel on our local National Forests, we can see this coming. The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture has made a very big deal of financially supporting this industry (in the name of "forest health") and likely will be cutting environmental assessment corners to get the job done.

Dose Engineered Log Jam Project – Will It Help?

by Josey Paul

The US Forest Service released its public review draft in April for the Environmental Assessment (EA) of the Wild Fish Conservancy (WFC)'s LWD (large woody debris) project on the Dosewallips. The assessment says that salmon and steelhead of multiple species are in poor shape on the Dose, at least partly because of degraded habitat. The authors say the middle section of the Dose has too few pools and too little large wood—findings that are almost universal on the peninsula's streams.

The no-action alternative, according to the assessment, means salmon and steelhead will continue to struggle to survive. That finding too is nearly universal on our area's rivers.

The recommendation is to add more wood to the stream in key places. The wood will be large, stable constructions consisting of dozens of logs, debris and fill. The authors point out that wood is a key factor in high-quality habitat and many LWD projects have proven beneficial to salmon. If well placed, logs can redirect stream energy, creating pools, habitat and stable beds of sediment that salmon need for building redds (salmon nests in the gravel).

Although LWD is vital to healthy salmon habitat, the assessment lacks a discussion of how these particular artificial structures will improve habitat. LWD projects often fail, and the assessment gives no clue that the WFC has considered the reasons for past failures and successes and offered a carefully considered approach to swing the odds of this particular project becoming one of the successes.

There is also no consideration of how critical the current spawning habitat is to salmon in the stretch of river where the log jams will be built. Nor is there a meaningful discussion of the potential damage that re-engineering a section of river could have on the fish that already depend on that reach. The construction will be finished by September, before the new spawning season, but the construction will leave a stream out of equilibrium with the river's energy. Until the river sorts out its new confines during the first few winters, salmon could have a difficult time finding stable gravel for digging their redds downstream of the new structures. Rapid and large movements of medium and coarse sediment can bury or wash away salmon eggs.

To find out more about this project, please visit [this US Forest Service site](#).

You can send comments regarding the **Dosewallips Engineered Log Jams #34575** Project to:

Marc McHenry
PO Box 280
Quilcene, WA 98376
mmchenry@fs.fed.us

"Dangerous" Old Growth – Thoughts on High-cut Wildlife Snags

by John Woolley

While driving along the Dosewallips (Road 2610) recently, visitors noted a number of cut trees, including old growth. Why, they wondered? What's going on? Is this tree poaching, or shocking Forest Service (FS) management?



Since two of the logged trees were the first remnant old-growth trees on the drive to the national park, they were strong representations of the patriarchs that used to dominate the valley. Gone to stumps!

Olympic National Forest (ONF) staff quickly responded to our concerns by sending road maintenance and tree-cutting staff to meet with us at the Quilcene office. We shared concerns, information and anecdotes, and learned something about FS terminology and M.O. (mode of operation).

"Hazard" trees are those in campgrounds and public areas that pose a threat to people and property, while "dangerous" trees are roadside threats, dead or dying trees with crumbling limbs. Binoculars are used in making assessments.



The now-gone 62-inch DBH (diameter at breast height) Grand fir was a matriarch, nearly 300 years old, born soon after the last big fire in the area, in 1706. Nearly as large, an old silver fir was also felled. Both stood near the little-used Tunnel Creek Trailhead.



On our visit, only a 16-foot long, 5-foot-through log was left next to the stump. Tree debris was pushed toward the river, over the edge and into the brush in order, eventually, to add much needed large woody debris into the salmon habitat.

Unfortunately the need for high old-growth snags that are very important to wildlife had not figured into the decision. Leaving a standing trunk of some height would have been both an aesthetic and wildlife enhancement. We're working to make this a constant in future decisions on snags.

Old-growth losses from tree poaching too are all too common. ONF now requires contract loggers to mark the stumps of leaning trees along roads with an orange paint swirl. Stolen trees are marked with a big light green spot. Both the sheriff and FS personnel take note as they drive by. Poaching tree cuts are usually easy to identify, as they lack the "forest training" look.

Oversight of contract loggers is top priority; procedures are followed and personnel highly trusted. In regard to the logging of those two "dangerous" old-growth trees along the road, the loggers twice consulted with Forest Service wildlife management. FS loggers are highly conscious of public response. Sharing of anecdotes regarding hazard trees in campgrounds could help assure that ecologically valuable trees are not removed unnecessarily.

But nothing is simple, even if it is a reasonable idea. Susan Piper of ONF contacted me to explain why my idea is not easy to implement. But we'll be talking more about this with the FS. When and why is a healthy looking old-growth tree next to the road "dangerous?"

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DNR Will Issue Revised Landscape Plan for the Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF)

by Marcy Golde

In the summer of 2010 the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) held a public review of its proposed OESF Landscape Plan. Under OFCO's leadership, 11 experts in various ecological disciplines contributed a total of 110 pages of highly constructive and critical comments. The forest industry also submitted substantive commentary. A couple of months later, DNR announced that a revised plan would be drafted.

That plan is due out in June 2012, just two years after the first draft. OFCO has again assembled a team of experts to review the plan and its Draft Environmental Impact Statement. We expect about a 45-day comment period. There will be public hearings in several locations, the times and places of which have not been announced yet. We'll share that information when we receive it.

Streamkeepers Lives on in Clallam County

by Coleman Byrnes

Streamkeepers of Clallam County, a volunteer water monitoring organization sponsored by the county, almost met its demise this past winter. The Department of Community Development, Streamkeepers' host within the county government, decided to eliminate it as part of a cost-cutting measure.

Streamkeepers' final date was to have been the last day of November 2011. But at the last moment the Roads Department offered to adopt Streamkeepers and, as a result, it is still a part of Clallam County government. Its funding has been reduced but volunteers still conduct spawning surveys, monitor water quality, study aquatic insects in Clallam County streams, and maintain a database. Streamkeepers also assists concerned citizens with special projects, works with high school and college students, and performs community outreach and educational work.



IN MEMORIAM



- Larry Eifert, for whom Eleanor was a real role model; he really liked her.

Eleanor Stopps, 92, whose efforts led to the preservation of Protection Island as a wildlife habitat, died on April 25 after a battle with cancer.

She was a housewife and mother who testified before both the state legislature and Congress, and persuaded Congress, through tireless letter-writing and lobbying over a decade, to grant Protection Island National Wildlife Refuge status in 1982.

Additional comments from Alex Bradley: Eleanor is the reason I became an environmental activist. I heard her speak about Protection Island in the late '70s at a Soroptimist luncheon. She was charismatic, being a woman who was doing the right thing for the right reason. I joined Admiralty Audubon soon after she helped that chapter form, which led to my helping form the Quilcene Ancient Forest Coalition, which is now OFCO. I hope we can all honor her memory with our work.

Victor Scheffer, Friend of the Olympic Peninsula

Vic Scheffer, long-time friend and student of the Olympic Peninsula's mammals, died at 104 on September 20, 2011. Dr. Scheffer, a University of Washington graduate, was surveying in the Olympics as early as 1935 and ultimately produced a manuscript on the Peninsula's mammals in 1946. After revisions, he readied it for publication in 1949, but lack of funds prevented its printing until 1995 when it appeared as a monograph, "Mammals of the Olympic National Park and Vicinity," published by the Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology in *Northwest Fauna*. Vic's later career focused on Pacific Coast marine mammals, but he always retained an interest in the Olympics and continued a keen interest in ecological matters well into his nineties. Moreover, his early work provides an unsurpassed baseline to which future researchers can refer.

The Olympic Forest Coalition received a memorial contribution in Scheffer's memory. We join with others in offering condolences to the Scheffer family and in honoring the long and productive life of one of Washington's premier ecologists, and true friend of the Peninsula. – *Fayette Krause*

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