



Olympic Forest Coalition

December 2006

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

OFCO Appeals Huge Bear Saddle Sale; Lawsuit Is an Option for Early '07

by Kevin Geraghty

Last December we reported that a large timber sale was being cooked up in the northwest corner of the Olympic National Forest. Almost a year later, this 30-million-board-foot dish, known more formally as the Bear Saddle Sale, has been deemed ready to serve by decision-makers within the agency.

OFCO has made a significant effort in the intervening months to evaluate this proposal on the ground, to engage agency personnel, and to comment formally on the Environmental Analysis, which the agency produced to satisfy NEPA requirements. We think the proposal has serious flaws: excessive size, excessive road-building, excessive homogeneity and intensity of proposed thinning, and insufficient attention to aquatic effects and aquatic protections. Unfortunately, this input has had virtually no impact on the product served up, in the form of a NEPA decision, by the agency.

OFCO has formally appealed the decision to the Pacific Northwest Region of the Forest Service, and the outcome should be known by mid-December. We have little cause for optimism that the decision will be acceptable, so the next step, early next year, may well be a lawsuit.

It is received wisdom nowadays that clear cuts in old growth are bad. Even the Olympic National Forest views old growth logging as beyond the pale, a vestige of the "bad old days." But it was not always so. Twenty years ago, old-growth clear cuts had plenty of scientific and

silvicultural apologists prepared to talk about replacing decadent, overmature forests with vigorous young plantations. This is a useful perspective to keep in mind when evaluating the glowing claims now made regarding the benefits of thinning in younger forests. We believe that if there is a long-term place for thinning younger forest on the ONF, it is an appropriately cautious, moderate place, and it should be managed with a full appreciation of the obvious up-front environmental costs and the large uncertainties about the long-term effects of such thinning.

The full-speed ahead, more-the-merrier, triple-the-cut juggernaut of the ONF needs to be derailed, before it does serious damage to the lands in its care.

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Collaboration: Pros and Cons of A Growing Trend Among Forest Advocates

by Bonnie Phillips

The word “collaboration” strikes people in various ways. Some remember the usage during World War II; others think of it as a useful strategy. Many are somewhere in the middle.

In mid-November, 70 forest advocates from around the country met in Portland for three days to hash out just what collaboration is, its benefits and risks, with the focus on federal lands. Many case studies were discussed in the quest for a consensus definition of collaboration.

Most advocates felt it was important to start or join a collaborative group themselves, and not depend on the natural resource agency. In fact, many said that they had better luck with no agency involvement at all—the collaborative group then makes recommendations to the agency.

Other significant points of agreement:

It is essential to understand your goal and the expectations of your group—and to know whether your organization has time for the work involved. This means setting serious priorities.

NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, (and other good environmental laws) should not be circumvented to “get what you want.” Public lands belong to all Americans. (Surprisingly, activists—including those representing national environmental organizations—often ignore and violate NEPA rules to get something they want.)

A large number of dedicated forest advocates were appalled to learn some groups were actually planning timber sales with the Forest Service. One case study on collaboration considered some truly ugly timber sales that had been “blessed” by environmentalists.

There is a significant difference between environmental advocacy groups (willing to challenge bad management decisions) and community forestry groups that have a different way of approaching changes in forestry. Some questioned whether we were still all the same community and that some groups may be more comfortable joining the community forestry groups. In fact, there was such a meeting at the same time and place we met—and at least one organization had a person representing them at both meetings. Community forestry groups are indeed a very

valid and useful coalition concerned with public lands, but confusion on goals can lead to friction and resentment.

Many groups were comfortable with small collaborative projects. Most groups were opposed to collaborative forest planning groups (cutting out most of the public) and what is called “quid pro quo” Wilderness bills (often leading to trading or selling or gifting public land into private, county or state ownership).

This is a very tense topic among the national environmental community but fortunately everyone came to listen and share respectfully. Yet the goal of agreeing on a definition remained elusive.

For the record, OFCO participates in a collaborative process on the Skokomish River, started by The Wilderness Society, aimed primarily at raising money for watershed restoration. OFCO also leads a second collaborative process in the Dungeness. In both cases the Forest Service is heavily involved. OFCO members and others from the group are helping to plan the timber sale associated with the project; proceeds will be used to decommission or fix roads for watershed and elk health.

CarrieAnn Thunell



Big Floods Heighten Need for ONF Road Decommissioning

by Jim Scarborough

November of 2006 has been the rainiest in memory, and with the wet has come severe flooding across the region. Local media have covered important stories in both populated areas and popular parks like Mount Rainier, but the effects of floods in the hinterlands of Olympic National Forest have received much less scrutiny.

Climate instability quickly comes to mind during extreme weather events and, indeed, the floods of November would appear to support the predictions of scientists who study the effects of fossil fuel use on our weather patterns. Here in the Northwest, as in most other locales, the trend of course will be a

warming one. Rain will likely fall less frequently, but more intensely, coupled with less snow falling in the higher elevations to prevent the rain from running off all at once. Our inordinately dry summer, followed by the unusual sog-giness of autumn thus far, may well be a harbinger of what's ahead.

When powerful rainstorms strike, as well as rain-on-snow events which are becoming increasingly common, the vast network of problem roads on Olympic National Forest (ONF) takes a beating. Major washouts, slope failures, and landslides occur on multitudes of forest roads all at once, wreaking havoc on creeks, rivers, and sensitive inhabitants, like salmon, that call these remarkable streams home. A very early initial assessment of roads on the ONF, as of November 16, indicates that at least 16 major

routes sustained serious damage, spread across the Skokomish, Wynoochee, Satsop, Queets, and Soleduck watersheds. Spur road conditions have not yet been reported.

To be sure, the Forest Service has recognized that many unneeded roads on the ONF need to be closed and permanently put to bed, or "decommissioned," in order to prevent watershed damage in the future. A 2003 Access & Travel Management Plan intends to decommission

ten rife with so-called "temporary roads," resulting in cumulative watershed damage, one bulldozer blade at a time. The recently approved Bear Creek Saddle sale near the Soleduck River, which OFCO has appealed, is laced with new and reconstructed roads in order to haul the sawlogs out.

OFCO's energies are in large part devoted to ensuring that the Forest Service's road closure priorities are addressed at an acceptable pace, while also educating lawmakers on the importance of adequately funding needed decommissioning and other road stabilization activities. We will also continue pressing the Forest

Science (along with common sense) tells us that a less roaded ONF will make for a far more fish-friendly and wildlife-rich Peninsula.

686 miles (roughly 30%) of the ONF's problem roads. This is a great start, but federal funding in recent years has lagged far behind, to the point that these road closure goals may take up to 40 years to accomplish—much too late for many depressed salmon runs that presently hang on by a thread.

Ironically, though, the Forest Service itself often gets in the way of its otherwise good work. An institutional stubbornness prevents consideration of decommissioning unraveling roads not previously targeted for closure. The massive Dosewallips road washout is a prime example of this contradiction, where Forest Supervisor Dale Hom has announced his desire to log dozens of old-growth trees above the river in which rare Chinook salmon still spawn. Elsewhere, timber sales on the ONF are of-

Service to modernize and limit its timber sale program, particularly as it relates to harmful roads, to avoid further jeopardizing the Olympic Peninsula's ecological health. One thing's for certain: The climate isn't likely to take on a gentler demeanor any time soon. Consequently, science (along with common sense) tells us that a less roaded ONF will make for a far more fish-friendly and wildlife-rich Peninsula.



Unusual Partners: OFCO and City of Forks Cooperate on OESF Management Forum

by Marcy Golde

In mid-September, OFCO joined with the City of Forks in requesting that the UW College of Forestry develop a forum on the Vision and Scope of the 260,000-acre Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF).

Since then OFCO board members Bonnie Phillips and Marcy Golde have worked with representatives of the College, the City of Forks, and DNR to formulate a vision, agenda and budget for this forum.

The design and purpose of the OESF was described in the 1997 Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) between DNR and the federal agencies, but there has been no plan for implementation. Finally, a landscape planning process for the OESF is scheduled to begin next March. Cooperation with the City of Forks on this forum will help assure that OFCO will be able to participate in the planning process from the outset, rather than being limited to critiquing and commenting after the fact.

The forum will take place in Forks at the Olympic Natural Resources Center on January 30 and 31. Between 35 and 40 people interested in the OESF will be invited. They include representatives of state and federal agencies, the local tribes, and interested partners in the Sustainable Harvest Settlement, such as OFCO, Audubon, the City of Forks, the American Forest Council and DNR.

The event's first day will begin with a review of the history and activities that led to the establishment of the OESF, with its unzoned conservation strategy. The next session will deal with the accomplishments of the six management processes as described in the HCP. The evening session will be devoted to informal brainstorming. The next day's program will begin with a quick review of the Settlement Agreement (resulting from the successful lawsuit brought by OFCO and its conservation partners in 1994, see *OFCO News*, Spring 2006) as it applies to the OESF, and then the parties will share their respective visions for implementing the six management processes. After lunch will come a session on next steps, and a quick review of the structure, scope and general content of the report to DNR and the public on this forum.

OFCO has played a key role in instigating and planning this forum and in keeping the budget as low as possible. The City of Forks, OFCO, and the forest industry are all

making appropriate contributions to the cost of the forum. DNR has not yet decided on what contribution it will make.

(Polly Dyer Grove, continued from p. 5)

is often overwhelming, and it is remarkable that a steep, narrow road along the falls was ever blasted out of the cliff rock. Many other treats along the old road are not well known, and wait to be discovered by curious walkers.

In very early 2007, the Forest Service is expected to release an Environmental Impact Statement on plans for the closed portion of the Dosewallips Road. In addition to the up-slope road alternative, the EIS is expected to consider a 350-foot bridge below the cliff, in place of the old road. The alternative to decommission the road, letting visitors walk through the ancient trees, will not be included.



*Does Anyone Not Know Polly Dyer?

Maybe so, though I doubt it.

Polly Dyer, who may be something like 87 years old, is an intrepid and tireless forest activist. She is remembered fondly as the person who contributed the word "untrammelled" to the 1964 Wilderness Act. She recruited Tim McNulty into activism, many years back.

On a recent stormy night, with Hood Canal Bridge closed, I'm the one who had to cancel the last Olympic Park Associates meeting in Kingston; Polly was ready and willing to test the ferry.

Polly founded and chairs the Olympic Coast Alliance (OCA), along with Jim Davis and is a stalwart of the North Cascades Conservation Council.

Polly was in the elite individuals in conservation in a recent Washington Trails issue. She is now organizing the 2008 Wilderness Conference. Stay tuned for more on this.

— John Woolley

Revisiting the Polly Dyer Grove

Annals of the "Dose Road"

(while awaiting a new, *a priori* flawed, EIS)

by John Woolley

November 18, on the Dose Road. We were barely able to get our van around the two-foot diameter boulder. The steep drop into the Dosewallips River was clearly in view beneath my driver's seat window. The next trouble spot would be just a mile farther west at Cable Creek. The creek has run through the road for a few years now, its depth and width varying each visit. Despite the recent heavy rain, the eroded channel was reasonable for us to cross, this time.

Every visit I make up the Dose, especially after fording Cable Creek, brings Polly Dyer* to mind. Her visit was nearly three years ago and she was driving the car ahead of us, through the February snow. A snow-laden alder had fallen across the road just beyond the creek, and a few of us got out to wrestle it off the road. Polly led us on. Only a mile more and we'd reach the washout. Our objective was to walk the surveyed route for the new road that might contour the rather steep damp slope above the wetlands to reach a small bench over the 60-foot cliff that looks down on the river, where the road used to be.

In the Winter of 2001, high water moved north, taking out 350 feet of the Dosewallips Forest Service Road 2610 and creating a steep cliff with a sometimes beach of debris at its foot. Walkers along the riverside often experience pebbles, crumbling dirt, and small rocks falling from above. Changes in the cliff can be noted on each visit.

Last week the cliff was starting to concave, the river driving right into it. This week the cliff is shear, and a big pile of rocks and dirt lies along the river, that now no longer directly strikes the cliff base but busily moves the latest fallings downstream. Two old growth Douglas firs have tumbled, blocking the river awhile, eventually to be pushed aside. A third big fir awaits at a switchback in an early version of the way that trail goes up and over the wash. The switchback crumbled away last year.

Three years back, when Polly and the rest of us reached the

start of the Federal Highway Administration survey, one-fourth mile before the washout, our driver said he wouldn't be clambering the surveyed route with us, as he'd just recently had a heart attack. So most of us walked into the big cedars and damp forest, following ribbons and posts, and crossed a wetland stream to begin our steep climb up and along the surveyed road route. Tim McNulty, while aiding Polly across the shallow waters, noted a Coho fry.

The route is quite steep and would require more than the usually 60-foot width to accommodate a road across the slope. This hike is a fun old growth experience that includes Douglas firs up to 78 inches in diameter, and cedar nearly that large. One cedar is burned out from the slope side, and has been noted as a probable Native American spirit quest

site. It was not an easy ascent for Polly, Bonnie Phillips, and others, but we did manage to reach a slight bench and a remarkable grove of big firs and cedar, where they rested

Beyond the washout, the old Dose Road has become a rewarding walking trail or cycle ride. It runs near the river, amidst big trees. . . .

awhile. We had become an elongated line of ground-truthers. Tim guided Polly and others back from this point, while the rest of us contoured on along the steep mountainside, crossing three creeks, and being awed at the extent of the big trees.

Now, three years later, Nancy and I are returning to the Polly Dyer Grove to catch the spirit of the place once again. The washed out cliff changes constantly, while the steep, wetland slope of old growth matriarchs fortunately stands in place. In years past, we would drive the Dose Road to Muscott Flat at the road's end looking for big trees, always seeing some. Yet the biggest are right here along the road, just up slope. It took a road survey for me to discover them.

Beyond the washout, the old Dose Road has become a rewarding walking trail or cycle ride. It runs near the river, amidst big trees, and has many interesting destinations. Dosewallips Falls is a spectacular example. Its volume

(Continued on p. 4, Polly Dyer Grove)

Thanks for Supporting OFCO

Donations from January 1 to November 30, 2006

OFCO has raised close to \$55,000 thus far in 2006. We also have a pledge for a \$15,000 personal donation. This is a great start for fully funding our important programs and we want to thank all those listed below.

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Climate Change: It's Happening Now, It's Changing the Forest—and Our Thinking Must Change Too

by Bonnie Phillips

We just experienced the hottest summer on record, the rainiest November on record. It's all happening earlier than scientists had predicted: climate change, with its impacts on fish and wildlife species, increased flooding episodes, sea level rise and countless other problems that will affect our daily lives.

A November 26 Associated Press article (from which we quote) covers the findings in a newly published synthesis of 866 peer-reviewed studies on how climate change affects wild plants and animals. Author Camille Parmesan, an assistant professor of integrative biology at the University of Texas at Austin, describes a "clear, globally coherent conclusion" from the scientific community. (The entire article, entitled "Ecological and Evolutionary Responses to Recent Climate Change," can be found by going to OFCO's Web site at www.olympicforest.org and clicking on climate change.)

Flora and fauna are migrating north or climbing to higher ground if they can, said Parmesan, whose paper appears in the December issue of the *Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics*. If they cannot move, she said, their numbers are often declining, their health is getting worse, and some are disappearing altogether.

"Wild species don't care who is in the White House," Parmesan said. "It is very obvious they are desperately trying to move to respond to the changing climate. Some are succeeding. But for the ones that are already at the mountaintop or at the poles, there is no place for them to go. They are the ones that are going extinct."

Meanwhile, many pest species—including roaches, fleas, ticks and tree-killing beetles—are surviving warming winters in increasing numbers. "We are seeing throughout the Northern Hemisphere that pests are able to have more generations per year, which allows them to increase their num-

bers without being killed off by cold winter temperatures," said Parmesan.

Federal scientists say that the first six months of this year were the warmest on record in the United States and that the five warmest years over the past century have occurred since 1998. In her review of studies measuring the impact of climate change on wild plants and animals, Parmesan said this "sudden increase" in temperatures appears to have been a tipping point, triggering substantial responses from a broad range of species.

"The magnitude of impacts is so overwhelming that many biologists are now calling this the single most important problem they need to work on," said Parmesan. "You can save all the habitat you want, but if it is not any good climatically, what is the point?"

And this is indeed the point for environmental advocates and others who are trying desperately to save the habitat of sensitive species. Are we focused totally on the current habitat or are we also looking into the future? It is a difficult and confusing point for most environmentalists—and thus we seem to be flying in the dark as much as the land managers we often criticize for their inertia.

We need to factor climate change into all our advocacy, be it related to timber sale planning, road building, or recreation. While our responses will, and should, surely grow more nuanced as time goes on, one thing seems clear: Whatever the impacts of global warming on the forest we seek to protect, those impacts will be less severe and less costly to mitigate the less we disturb the land (and the more we heal past disturbances). So pressing the Forest Service for road decommissioning and a lid on new road construction has to be a step in the right direction.

On the other hand, some of us relate to the forest not just as

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(Continued on p. 8, **Climate Change**)

(Climate Change, continued from p. 7)

protection advocates, but also as recreationists. We like access to the places we love, and some of us are reluctant to give up convenience. And so we may reinforce the land managers' intransigence.

A local example is the Dosewallips Washout. Since a severe flood event in 2002, the landslide has continued to move. Yet Olympic National Forest managers insist they can build a road through an area that is unstable and very, very close to the Wilderness boundary—in other words, another road that if built will wash out again and again, at huge taxpayer expense.

This is NOT, however, just the responsibility of public land managers. We all have a big role in solving these problems. Hikers and other recreationists are also major players.

Many of us who recreate on public lands—and, at times, fight vigorously to save natural habitat—are inclined to demand unquestioningly the same access we had in the past to our favorite places. As the Dose Washout demonstrates, it won't work. The world is changing and we all must change in accordance with the new realities.

OFCO Plans Climate Change and Forests Conference

Just because I sound preachy doesn't mean I have the solutions. It takes dialogue and lots of it. Toward that end, OFCO is cosponsoring a conference on *Climate Change and Forests on the Olympic Peninsula* along with Olympic Natural Resources Center-University of Washington, on February 23. In order to assure representation of a wide range of interests and forest professionals, the event will be invitational.

The morning session will feature a group of scientists who will look at climate change predictions, and changes to forests, salmon (and aquatic resources), and wildlife. The afternoon session will be an opportunity for land managers and regulatory agencies to discuss what they are doing to re-evaluate their management and identify research that would help them chart a new direction. We all have a great deal of learning and changing ahead of us, -- Bonnie Phillips



OFCO Forms Our State Forest Team

OFCO continues to draw together some very important team members as we gear up to a very busy 2007 on the Olympic Experimental State Forest. Our team will continue to be led by executive director Bonnie Phillips, aided by the enormous experience, talents and hard work of board member Marcy Golde. Beginning in January, Jill Silver and hydrologist Mike Haggerty will serve under contract to provide scientific and technical expertise to our efforts. Toby Thaler, formerly with the Washington Forest Law Center and Washington Environmental Council, has just joined our board and will assist us in legal questions and issues. We have a small group of volunteers who have offered to be trained as monitors. Training will occur in late January or early February.

We would like to thank DNR Olympic Region Manager Charlie Cortelyou for his openness in information exchange as we begin this endeavor. —BP

State and Feds Work to Conserve Murrelet Habitat in State Forests

When the DNR signed a multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries in January 1997, there was insufficient information about marbled murrelet ecology to create a credible long-term conservation strategy for this seabird that nests in old growth forests.

In October, NOAA, FWS and DNR finally began the scoping process for a full EIS, a step toward a permanent strategy for murrelet protection. OFCO and its DNR settlement worked together on a scoping letter spelling out a lot of practical and technical concerns.

This will be a long process. A draft EIS will be released this coming spring and at that time we will have detailed information to share, so you can make your own comments. The final EIS is expected in 2008.

In case you wonder how important murrelets are to forest protection, be assured that they are the major reason the ONF is not logging old growth. Though the Bush administration is trying to de-list the species on phony scientific grounds, court challenges will beat back this effort. Stay tuned. —BP

Beating Back I-933: Let's Figure Out How to Keep It From Coming Around Again

by Peggy Bruton

There's no need to belabor the point that the political landscape will be more environmentally friendly, locally and nationally, as a result of the November election.

But let's talk a bit about the defeat of the supremely anti-environmental ballot initiative, I-933 (which OFCO opposed, along with just about every other environmental organization in the state)—clearly cause for a big sigh of relief, if not an all-out cork-popping celebration.

Statewide, I-933 was defeated by about 59% to 41% -- a healthy 18 percentage point margin. But the counties in our neck of the woods did even better: in Jefferson County, 66% of voters rejected I-933; Clallam, 61%; Thurston, 65%; Kitsap, 63%. Mason and Grays Harbor also said No, but by lesser margins, 57% and 56% respectively. (King and Skagit led the pack, with the No vote at 67% and 70% respectively.)

In any case, the last thing we should do is rest on our laurels. The forces that brought us this ballot measure will surely be back, and repetitions of this fight are costly in time, money and activist energy. Better to avoid a rematch.

I believe we need to do two things: First, we need to find incentives to keep land in timber and agricultural uses, looking for fairness to landowners and blunting the drive to convert open land to inappropriate development. Second, and certainly simpler, we need to help the public understand that taxpayers have no responsibility to ensure speculative land investments against changes in zoning or environmental protection measures.

The public is seriously confused on this latter point; the daily *Olympian*, in its editorial opposing I-933 (ironically enough), supported the idea that downzoning constitutes a "taking."

But it does not. Zoning does not equal a promise to develop at a given density, and a governmental body can and must change zoning designations in light of needs to protect areas from flooding, protect critical natural resources, and avoid overburdening areas with inadequate infrastructure. (If a landowner is vested, having completed an application for development, a zoning change would indeed call for compensation.)

Like stock market investment, real estate speculation means taking a chance. Financial advisers tell their clients to diversify for a good reason: Speculation means one is taking a chance.

While OFCO's focus is the public lands of the Olympic Peninsula, we can't escape the reality that water flows downhill across all the boundary lines humankind can draw.

Those interested in pursuing this issue should contact Futurewise, <http://www.futurewise.org/> or 206 343-0681.

Or share your ideas on the subject, even—or perhaps especially—if they differ from those expressed here.

YOUR HELP WANTED

Volunteers Needed for State Forest Timber Monitoring and Field Review Program: OFCO will present a training program on monitoring timber sales and conducting field review checks in January or February. We need volunteers interested in this effort. Once you have the training, you will be able to help through using your home computer and linking together with the lead monitor and all of the other monitors. For those who love to be in the woods, there will be field review opportunities; for those who live too far to travel to the west end of the Olympic Peninsula on a regular basis, paper checks (followed by a triage of sales that need further field checks) will be enormously helpful.

Our goal in this monitoring effort is several-fold: Monitor implementation of the settlement agreement; monitor implementation of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which is a slight extension of settlement monitoring; and red-flag potentially environmentally harmful timber sale practices, including road building. If you are interested in finding more about this program, contact Marcy Golde (Marcy@olympicforest.org) or Jill Silver (Jill@olympicforest.org) for more information.

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