



CLEARWATER DEFENDER

NEWS OF THE BIG WILD

A PUBLICATION OF
FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

ISSUED QUARTERLY
FALL 2018, NO.3

Agencies under the Trump Administration propose regulatory changes to NEPA and ESA implementation

Katie Bilodeau

This summer, several agencies under the current administration introduced proposals to amend regulations that govern the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). One deadline has passed, but there remain opportunities to comment.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has proposed a possible overhaul to NEPA regulations.

These regulations direct environmental-review processes and public participation for agency proposals that might significantly impact the environment. While our land-management agencies (the Forest Service, the Fish & Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service) have created their own NEPA regulations, CEQ's regulations serve as an umbrella by which all agencies must abide. In August 2017, President Trump issued Executive Order 13807, "Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure Projects," a section of which directed CEQ to develop actions "to enhance and modernize" the Federal environmental review and authorization process.

Following this order, CEQ published notice that it would be reviewing its NEPA regulations, most of which have been in place since 1978. In the notice, CEQ asked generally what it should revise. Although the administration gave lip service to the federal government's policy "to provide transparency and accountability to the public," the order directed CEQ to create a "timely" and "efficient" process. To this end, the order directed CEQ to consider

process. To this end, the order directed CEQ to consider modification such as 1) permitting agencies to recycle older environmental analyses; 2) using environmental studies by non-federal actors such as state or local governments, neither of which are required to follow NEPA; and 3) imposing time limits where CEQ had declined to do so in 1978 because they were too inflexible. Creating "efficiency," which appears to be an attempt to simply reduce the time taken to analyze environmental effects, also generates concern when CEQ proposes amending provisions to sections that govern public involvement. FOC submitted comments, advocating for increased and more inclusive public involvement, among other suggestions. FOC pointed out in our comments that similar to the adage, "The lazy man works the hardest," so too would the agency that tries to cut corners on a thoughtful environmental review in the interest of speed. Circumventing a detailed and fact-specific review of the proposed action may neglect aspects that will need to be redone later, whether the agency initiates that re-analysis voluntarily or does so at the behest of a federal court. If CEQ decides to amend its NEPA regulations, we expect CEQ to release specific regulation proposals and have another comment period. And FOC will keep you posted.



Al Poplawsky Photo Credit

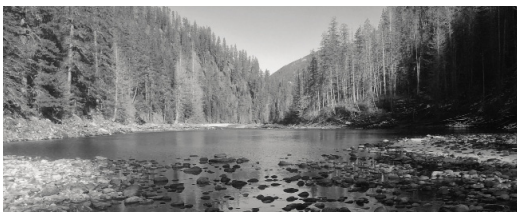
The Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act are under attack.

If the administration appears to have placed NEPA regulations on the chopping block, the ESA regulations are already there. In July 2018, the Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)—the two agencies in charge of implementing the ESA—proposed amending various ESA regulations. The driving force behind this revamp is Executive Order 13777, which, at minimum, directed agencies to identify regulations that were "outdated,"

See amended regulations page 4

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FOC File Photo

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Thanks to the following people for sharing their time and talent for our Wild & Scenic Rivers exhibit:

- Bill Voxman, Photography
- Dick Walker, Photography
- Gerry Snyder, Photography
- Dr. Fred Rabe, Photography
- Ron Marquart, Photography
- Alison Meyer, Photography
- Chuck Pezeshki, Photography
- Robert Millage and Borg Hendrickson, Photography
- Jonathan Matteson, MFA Graduate Student
- Sonja Lierman & Carl Lawrence
- Hannah Kroese, HK Creative
- Bobbi Kelly, Greg Pierce, Renee Hill
- Palouse Prairie Charter School students
- The Latah County Community Foundation

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FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER

THE CLEARWATER DEFENDER
IS A PUBLICATION OF:

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Friends of the Clearwater, a recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization since 1987, defends the Clearwater Bioregion's wildlands and biodiversity through a Forest Watch program, litigation, grassroots public involvement, outreach and education. The Wild Clearwater Country, the northern half of central Idaho's *Big Wild*, contains many unprotected roadless areas and wild rivers and provides crucial habitat for countless rare plant and animal species. Friends of the Clearwater strives to protect these areas, restore degraded habitats, preserve viable populations of native species, recognize national and international wildlife corridors, and bring an end to industrialization on public lands. All contributions to Friends of the Clearwater are tax-deductible.

The *Clearwater Defender* welcomes artwork and articles pertaining to the protection of the *Big Wild*. Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of Friends of the Clearwater.

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Riffles, Rapids, and Runs
Ashley Lipscomb

Rivers were part of Nimiipuu culture long before President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act into law 50 years ago. Three of the first rivers designated under the legislation flow through the Nimiipuu’s traditional homeland. Two of the three rivers are identified by their Nimiipuu given names today: Lochsa meaning “rough waters” and the Selway or Selwai meaning “smooth waters.” The Nez Perce referred to the Clearwater River as Koos-Koos-Kai-Kai, which translates directly as “clear water.”

With today’s threats of development along wild and scenic corridors, the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act has proven a useful tool to protect the Lochsa-Selway-Middle Fork Corridor from megaloads and salvage logging proposals. In honor of this statute, Friends of the Clearwater has been celebrating our region’s river heritage through a speaker series and a vibrant art exhibit featuring interpretive panels, professional photography, and student-created watercolors and traditional canoe paddles.

Thanks to Tim Palmer

“Van life” is not a new phenomenon for author and photographer Tim Palmer. For twenty of his forty years on the road, he’s lived out of a well-equipped vehicle with all of his boating paraphernalia carefully strapped to every outside surface except his windshield.

Tim is on the road for a 40-stop tour with his program “Wild & Scenic Rivers: An American Legacy.” It isn’t just any ol’ slideshow. His vivid presentation required floating some of the most iconic rivers in the United States to get the best shots of rapids and runs, and riffles and pools. He melds photography, storytelling and just enough information about the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act to help make anyone an effective advocate for one of the many waterways in the United States.

We are grateful to Tim for swinging by Moscow and Lewiston, Idaho, and to Idaho Rivers United for co-sponsoring the events. If you’d like to learn more about Tim’s photography and/or the 25+ books he’s authored check out timpalmer.org.

Curating currents

Friends of the Clearwater ventured into the world of exhibits to educate and inspire the public about the visionary wild and scenic river legislation enacted in 1968. *Fifty Years of Wild Rivers!* uses photography and art to capture the wonderful complexity and beauty of river systems.

Each two-dimensional print and painting depicts

a much deeper story into a three-dimensional underwater world. Our collection, traveling around the Moscow community, showcases waterscape images spotlighting protected rivers in the Clearwater Basin and hand-carved canoe paddles adorned with line art and watercolors painted by Palouse Prairie Charter School students.

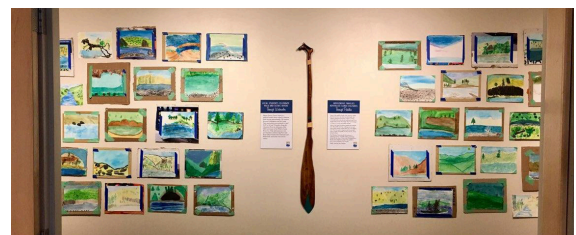
A special tribal canoe paddle created by 16-year-old Elias Pinkham, grandson of Friends of the Clearwater board member and vice president Lucii Simpson, was donated to us by our friends at Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment. It’s accompanied by a wonderful description of paddle uses beyond propulsion.

The exhibit at the University of Idaho’s *Reflections Gallery* was up for two weeks in the beginning of the fall semester. Thanks to Masters of Fine Arts candidate Jonathan Matteson for teaching us the art of “60 and Center,” the universally recognized method for hanging exhibit pieces.

Fifty Years of Wild Rivers! is now at the 1912 Center in Moscow and will be showcased through our Annual Meeting & Gathering on November 3. All photo sales will directly benefit the 2,000 miles of rivers and tributaries that flow through the Clearwater Basin. Special thanks to the Latah County Community Foundation for funding our year-long river celebration!



FOC File Photo



FOC File Photo



FOC File Photo

FOC installed its *50 Years of Wild Rivers!* exhibit at the University of Idaho this September (pictured above). The Lochsa, Selway and Middle Fork Clearwater were some of the first rivers in the United States permanently protected in 1968.

amended regulations cont. page 1

unnecessary, or ineffective.” One proposed change includes removing a current phrase that directs the agencies to make listing decisions “without reference to possible economic or other impacts.” This change would permit FWS and NOAA to present economic and other impacts in their listing decisions, even though the agencies themselves recognized that the ESA requires determinations based solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available. The agencies justified presenting these impacts—unnecessary for listing determinations—because they “may be informative to the public.” Currently FWS regulations extend prohibitions that apply to endangered species to threatened species as well, but the FWS has proposed eliminating this extension of protection. And, FWS and NOAA have proposed to define “foreseeable future” in a way that could impact whether the agencies consider global warming in a determination to list a species (e.g., the wolverine) as threatened. These are just some of the changes proposed. If you would like to review these changes and comment (you have until September 24, 2018), visit our website at friendsoftheclearwater.org/proposed-changes-to-esa.

FOC plans to submit comments on these regulations as well. There will likely not be another comment period for the proposed ESA regulations, so the next action will be release of these final rules. We will keep you posted on this front as well.



FOC File Photo

Looking west into the Mallard - Larkins Roadless Area from Larkins Peak.

Judge rules against USDA Wildlife Services

On June 22, 2018 Advocates for the West won a strong ruling that USDA Wildlife Services failed to properly analyze the environmental risks of shooting, trapping and poisoning Idaho’s native wildlife. Plaintiffs included Western Watersheds Project, Center for Biological Diversity, WildEarth Guardians and Predator Defense.

Chief U.S. District Judge B. Lynn Winmill issued a decision holding that Wildlife Services did not carefully consider how its predator-killing activities impact the environment. The ruling states that the agency ignored clear science showing that killing predators does not decrease conflicts with livestock and warrants a much more thorough analysis. Congratulations to Advocates for the West and the plaintiffs. Thank you for your work!



Editor’s Note: Advocates for the West represents FOC and others in court regarding a lawsuit challenging the Wildlife Services wolf killing program in the Clearwater and throughout the state. We will keep you informed.

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ANCIENT TREE STANDS TRANSCEND our lifetimes. Just as mixed age forests ensure young trees may become old one day, your legacy gift safeguards this ecological process. Consider the long-lasting impacts of bequests, contributing to an endowment, gifts of stock, or charitable annuities. To learn more visit friendsoftheclearwater.org/membership or give us a call at 208-882-9755.

We cannot log our way to fewer fires

Guest Opinion, George Wuerthner

In a recent meeting in Bozeman, Montana, Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) once again opined that more “active” forest management (logging) would reduce wildfires.

This may make “intuitive” sense to some, but I can also show you that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, and “intuitively” argue that the sun circles the Earth. We all know that the Earth circles the sun despite the daily apparent movement of the sun across the sky.

What Daines and other “active” management supporters fail to realize is that climate/weather, not fuels, is what drives large fires. When we have drought, with the right combination of low humidity, high temperatures and especially wind, you get fires.

If you have cool, moist conditions, you don’t get fires. This is why the coastal forests in Alaska where it rains nearly all summer almost never experience wildfires despite the fact that they harbor far more biomass (fuel) than anything here in the Rockies.

Furthermore, live trees, particularly in a drought when fires occur, are more incendiary than dead trees. Green trees have fine fuels of flammable, resin-packed needles and branches, which are what burns in a blaze - the main tree bole typically does not burn well, which is why we get snags after a fire.

This is not hidden science. There is much in the scientific literature that finds under extreme fire weather, thinning and active management either make no difference in fire occurrence, nor reduces the likelihood of fire spread.

For instance, when I Google bark beetles and wildfire, I immediately come to a study published by the *Ecological Society of America* titled, “Does wildfire likelihood increase following insect outbreaks in conifer forests?”

The article states: “research shows that high-severity blazes typically occur under extreme fire weather, where research again suggests, logging and other “vegetation treatments,” like prescribed burning are ineffective at halting wind-driven fires.”

Another study concluded that, “Managing forest fuels is often invoked in policy discussions as a means of minimizing the growing threat of wildfire to ecosystems and Wildland Urban Interface communities across the West. However, the effectiveness of this approach at broad scales is limited...the area treated has little relationship to trends in the area burned, which is influenced primarily by patterns of drought and warming.”

A paper published by Forest Service researchers concluded: “Extreme environmental conditions... overwhelmed most fuel treatment effects...This included almost all treatment methods including prescribed burning



FOC File Photo

Forest management does not reduce likelihood of forest fires.

and thinning....Suppression efforts had little benefit from fuel modifications.”

A study published in 2016 looked at the relationship between “active” management and wildfire severity. “We investigated the relationship between protected status and fire severity applied to 1500 fires affecting 9.5 million hectares between 1984 and 2014 in pine (*Pinus ponderosa*, *Pinus jeffreyi*) and mixed-conifer forests of western United States.... We found forests with higher levels of protection had lower severity values even though they are generally identified as having the highest overall levels of biomass and fuel.”

I could go on with numerous examples that conclude that “active” management (logging) is not effective, and yet many politicians continue to harp on the idea that we need more logging, while almost never acknowledging that climate/weather is what drives our wildfires. In the era of a warming climate and drought, is it any wonder we are seeing more fires? Not if you know much about fire science.

Instead of hiding behind the false assertion that they are improving forest health and the flawed idea that logging will reduce wildfires, politicians like Senator Daines would serve us all better if he did what he could to reduce greenhouse gases and climate warming, along with helping communities to protect themselves by reducing the flammability of homes. We cannot log our way to fewer fires.

Editor’s Note: This article was originally published in the *Montana Standard* on August 28. George Wuerthner is an ecologist and has written 38 books on various environmental issues. We appreciate his contributions to our newsletter over the years. While this article expresses concern over Montana Senator Daines, the issue of “active” forest management and “fuels reduction” applies to many National Forests and other federal public lands across the West, including those in the Clearwater Basin. The climate/weather driven fire regime of the Northern Rockies is historically one of high-intensity, stand-replacing wildfires with long intervals between burns. Climate change and a warming planet may alter the current fire regime to one of greater frequency and intensity.

Around the Clearwater
 Gary Macfarlane

As this article goes to press, the Forest Service just released one of its monstrous timber sales, Lolo Insects & Disease, in draft decision form. Friends of the Clearwater and allies will be filing an objection to this sale. It would log over 3,000 acres and build about 15 miles of new roads (supposedly temporary). The proposed decision no longer includes logging in inventoried roadless areas, the Nez Perce Trail corridor or within streamside buffer zones. However, that could change when a final decision is reached. This is the first of multiple massive timber sales expected to come out in the near future. The others are Hungry Ridge, End of the World and Clear Creek. They would log thousands of acres and combined, would remove several hundred million board feet. Other sales like Tinker Bugs would log in roadless lands and the Middle Fork Wild & Scenic River Corridor. To see what the Forest Service is proposing for the future, please see the graph on page 7.

Another big piece of news is that the Forest Service released its preliminary alternatives for the Forest Plan. While the agency says those alternatives are not final (the Forest Service doesn't have a comment period on the preliminary alternatives), it is maddening to see just how biased and unbalanced the alternatives are. The Forest Service ignored the vast majority of people who provided scoping comments and came up with a fatally flawed and skewed set of preliminary alternatives.

For example, under no alternative does the FS recommend Pot Mountain, Cove - Mallard, the western half of Meadow Creek, and areas the Forest Service had previously, either in whole or part, included in the old Selway Primitive Area - specifically, the Lochsa Face and Rackliff - Gedney.

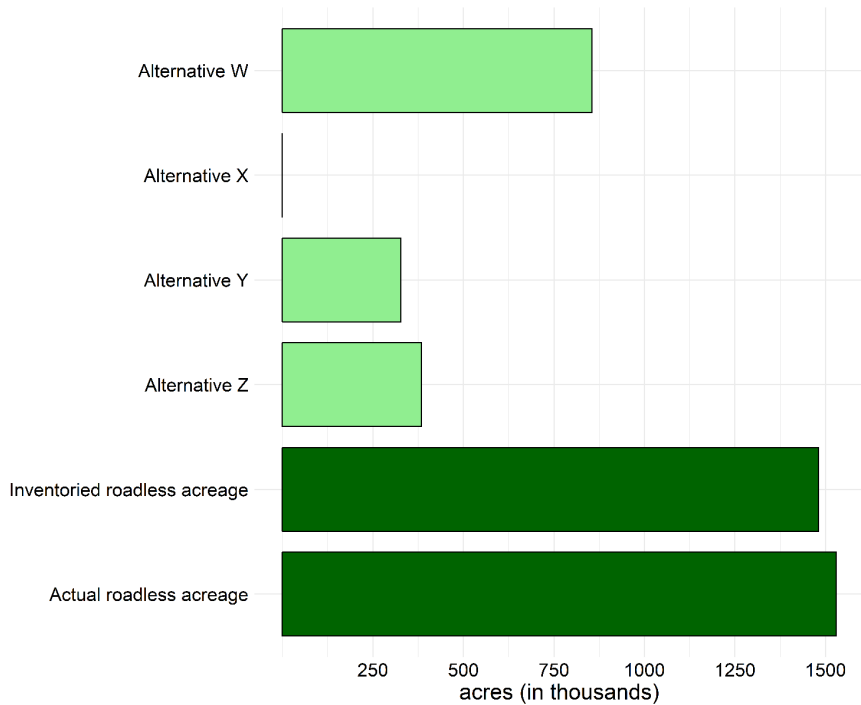
Smaller very wild areas like Weir Creek, so remote it only has one trail that even enters a corner of the area, are also ignored under every alternative. Weitas Creek (which includes most of Cayuse Creek), the Upper North Fork, and Fish & Hungry Creeks are only included in one alternative, likely one the Forest Service will not select. Furthermore, there are no alternatives to protect roadless areas as non-motorized/non-mechanized wildlands regardless of whether those areas are recommended for Wilderness or not.

Potential Wild & Scenic Rivers would suffer. The FS is violating the law by doing a suitability analysis in the Forest Plan in order to remove protection for a few hundred miles of eligible rivers. All river protection would be removed under the most extreme alternative and under the best, only a third of the eligible rivers would retain protection.

Important Roadless Areas the Forest Service Fails to Consider in any Alternative

Pot Mountain Roadless Area, in the North Fork Clearwater drainage, spans 51,000 acres. Seven major peaks punctuate the skyline; the area's namesake, Pot Mountain, crests at 7,130 feet. Four cool, crisp mountain lakes dot the high elevations. Rushing streams race from

the ridges down to the valley - Chateau Falls plunges sixty feet - where the North Fork of the Clearwater creates a southeast boundary. Together with intriguing rock formations, the steep terrain is a vast diversity of vegetation. Two-thirds falls within a cedar-hemlock-pine ecosystem flush with western red cedar, Douglas fir, grand fir, and interspersed with slender copses of birch. The higher elevations largely



Recommended Wilderness under the proposed alternatives compared to roadless acreage.
 Chart by Julia Piaskowski

support the remaining third: dense stands of mountain hemlock, subalpine fir, and Engelmann spruce.

Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness Additions: At approximately 64,000 acres, the Cove - Mallard Roadless Area is located just north of the Salmon River Breaks, adjoining the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness to the south and east. This area comprises the gentlest terrain, which makes it more wildlife friendly, in the entire Salmon River Canyon region. This area serves as an important biological connecting corridor for migrating wildlife and genetic diversity. Indeed, the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness and Gospel - Hump Wilderness are connected, making them the single largest protected area of Wilderness in the lower 48 states. This wildland complex is divided from another large wildlands complex, the Selway - Bitterroot Wilderness and surrounding roadless lands, only by one dirt road - the Magruder Corridor.

Gospel - Hump Wilderness Additions:

The approximately 55,000 acres of roadless lands adjacent to the Gospel - Hump Wilderness include land that drains into two major river systems - the Clearwater and the Salmon Rivers. These important areas should have been included in the original wilderness boundary, but unfortunately, were left out. Studies in the 70s and 80s suggested the most important wildlife habitat in the region consists of the roadless lands contiguous to the existing wilderness. The proposed Hungry Ridge Timber Sale would destroy some of the roadless wildland.

Selway - Bitterroot Wilderness Additions:

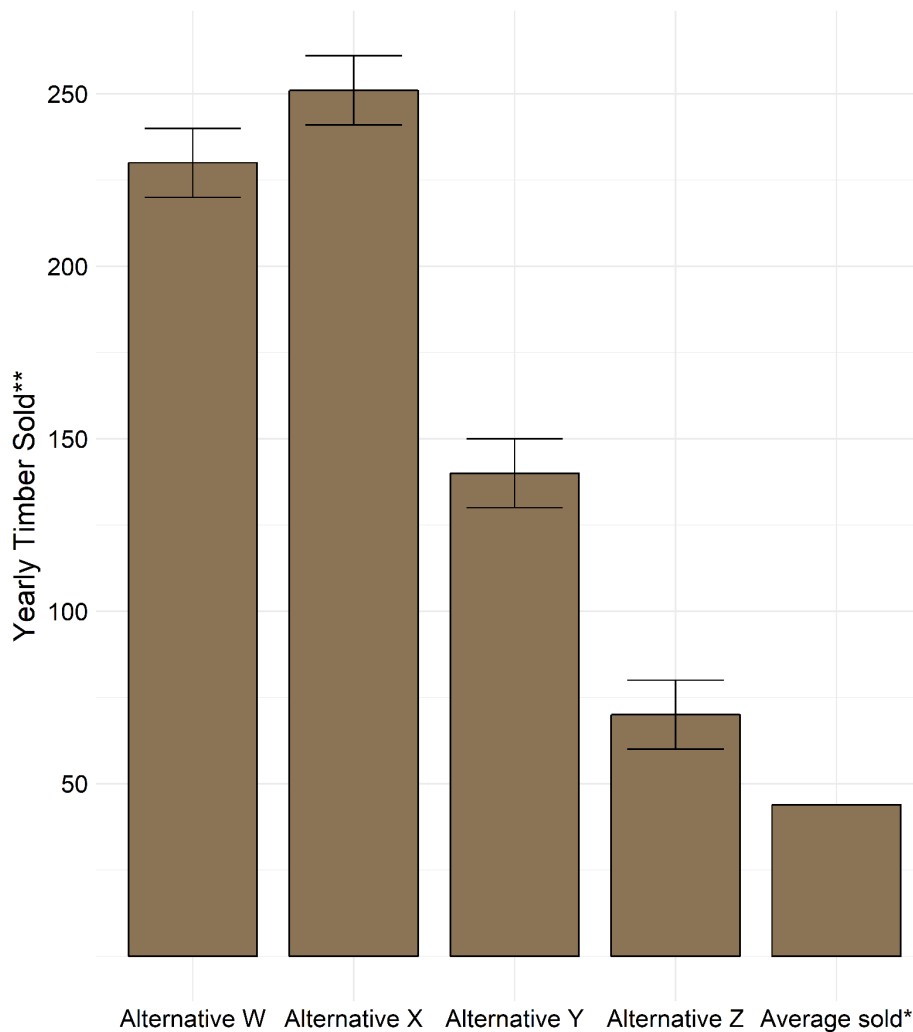
There are approximately 440,000-acres of roadless wildlands adjacent to the Selway - Bitterroot Wilderness on the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests. Only 140,000 acres are considered for protection under the most generous alternative. Over half of Meadow

Creek and all of the Rackliff - Gedney and Lochsa Slope areas are excluded under every alternative.

Mallard - Larkins Roadless Area: Under no alternative is the spectacular Elizabeth Lakes Region considered for Wilderness. This 40,000-acre region also includes the wild headwaters of Skull Creek.

Forest Service Timber Program

The Forest Service timber program would greatly increase over existing levels under every alternative. The current program can't be sustained, let alone the massive increases proposed in most alternatives. The following chart reflects the alternatives and the current situation.



Projected Sales from Proposed Forest Plan Alternatives compared to Current Levels
 * Average Sold Last 15 years
 ** Million Board Feet
 Chart by Julia Piaskowski

Alternative X (see both charts in this article for details about that alternative) was developed for anti-public lands extremists in Idaho County, specifically the county commission. In other words, the Forest Service is kowtowing to people who support stealing federal public lands from Americans.

It is time to let the Forest Service know the direction it is taking is wrong. If there are numerous messages telling them there needs to be a robust range of alternatives for the agency to consider, it could result in positive changes. The

Forest Service must represent all Americans. Complaints can be sent to fpr_npclw@fs.fed.us and zacharyapeterson@fs.fed.us, or by calling (208) 935-2513.

Who Will Save our Wild Salmon and Steelhead?

Guest Opinion, Linwood Laughy

Southern Resident Killer Whales are on the brink of extinction. Idaho's sockeye salmon are on life support. The Clearwater River's once famous wild B-run steelhead population is in a state of collapse. These are data-based facts, and anyone who denies them is ill informed, unable to accept reality, or running for re-election to Congress in eastern Washington's 5th district.

In 1880 an estimated 35,000 sockeye salmon returned to Idaho's Redfish Lake. In 2017 that number was 162. In 1962 the Idaho Department of Fish and Game counted 43,196 wild B-run steelhead crossing the old Lewiston Dam on the Clearwater River. Last year fewer than 500 wild B-run fish entered the Clearwater. The population of Southern Resident Killer Whales is now 75, and many are starving for lack of their principal food source, Chinook salmon. Fish biologists estimate that the Snake River and its tributaries once supplied over half of the millions of Chinook salmon produced in the Columbia River basin. Despite containing some of the most pristine habitat in the nation, today the Snake River basin's contribution is around 15%.

The federal partners responsible for this sad reality will not fix these problems. These agencies are principal supporters of the status quo. They have spent billions (yes, Billions) of taxpayer and ratepayer dollars on failed fish recovery projects, have defended for twenty years Biological Opinions repeatedly declared illegal by three federal judges, and have proposed 50 to 100-year fish recovery plans, the latest of which astonishingly states the plan will not achieve recovery.

Most fish biologists agree that Snake River threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead cannot recover while the lower Snake River dams (LSRD) remain in place. The federal hydro system (dams and reservoirs) account for over 50% of migrating juvenile fish loss, which makes impossible the achievement of a smolt-to-adult return ratio (SAR) of 2% - 6%, the level required for recovery. A 1% SAR is needed to avoid extinction. Over the past twenty years, SAR levels for most Snake River salmonid species have hovered around .80% - a clear path to extinction.

Can anything or anyone save our wild Snake River salmon and steelhead? Consider three possibilities.

First, Southern Resident Killer Whales may save our wild salmon. J-35, the grieving orca mother that carried her dead calf for seventeen days through the Salish Sea, has sent a message to the world - and particularly to the citizens of Puget Sound, the dominant political force in the state of Washington. With just 75 of these animals remaining and with no surviving calves in the last three years, the southern resident orcas' survival depends on greatly increasing the

availability of Chinook salmon.

Second, California solar energy might save our wild salmon. Bonneville Power Administration is the federal agency that controls the Columbia/Snake hydro system and is responsible for financing major salmon recovery efforts. For years BPA was able to sell its surplus power, mostly to California, at a price around \$60/Megawatt hour (MWh). Since 2008, increases in wind and solar power and cheap natural gas prices have created a growing surplus of power now selling on the open market for around \$20/MWh, which has driven BPA to the edge of a fiscal cliff. In response, BPA over the past ten years raised the price it charges its contracted customers (mostly public utility districts) by 30%, spent down its reserves from \$917 million to \$5 million, and is \$15 billion in debt.

All power produced by the LSRDs is surplus power. BPA has not required any LSRD power to meet contracted customer load demands for the past nine years. Wind and solar energy continue their rapid expansion, particularly in California. BPA's strategic plan to get itself out of its financial mess calls for selling more surplus energy for prices below the cost of production in a rapidly declining market with falling prices - a questionable business strategy. Just BPA's fish mitigation costs attributable to the LSRDs exceed \$100 million each year.

Finally, the surest path to saving Snake River wild salmon and steelhead - as well as the quality of the Clearwater River ecosystem - could be citizen outrage.

Are you outraged that Southern Resident Killer Whales and the Clearwater River's wild B-run steelhead are approaching extinction? As a taxpayer, are you outraged that since 2005 the Corps of Engineers has spent over \$30 million addressing sediment management in the Lower Granite pool, principally for the benefit of a private corporation that ships wheat from its own property over its own docks? Are you outraged that taxpayers subsidize every barge load of wheat that leaves Idaho by over \$25,000? If you are an electrical ratepayer, are you outraged that BPA charges your public utility district nearly twice as much for electricity as the price it charges California customers? Are you outraged at the skewed information and lack of facts that come from pro-LSRD agencies, politicians and special interest propaganda machines?

Concern without anger is insufficient to save our wild Snake River salmon and steelhead and the Southern Resident Killer Whales. Anger without outrage belittles the truth. Outrage without action is a sure path to species extinction.

Editor's Note: Linwood Laughy moved with his family to Lewiston, Idaho in 1948 and has spent much of his life in the upper Clearwater Valley. He currently serves as the President of the Board of Directors of Advocates for

the West, an environmental law firm with offices in Boise, Portland and Washington D.C. Lin and his wife, Borg Hendrickson, recently moved to Moscow. Find more details of BPA's financial crisis and the potential impacts on the LSRDs in two recent reports at:

1. <http://www.rmecon.com/examples/BonnevillePower%20May%202018.pdf>
2. <http://www.rmecon.com/examples/BPA%20&%20LSRDs%206-5-18.pdf>

Look for an article about the 4th Annual Free the Snake Flotilla, which occurred on September 7-8, 2018, in the next issue of the *Clearwater Defender*.



FOC File Photo

It is beyond time to recover wild salmon and steelhead.



Whitney Hassett Photo Credit

Many canoe families participated in the flotilla this year.



Whitney Hassett Photo Credit

Over 600 people attended the flotilla this year.

Fifty Years of Wild Rivers

Guest Opinion

FOC Member, Bonnie Schonefeld



Gerry Snyder Photo Credit

N. Fork Clearwater deserves permanent protection.

Our move to Idaho in the 1970's was always about wilderness and backcountry. As avid backpackers we explored the wild heart of Idaho. It didn't take us long to realize that there was another way to experience the wild country we loved: rivers. Back then the 1968 Wild & Scenic Rivers Act (WSR) had been recently passed, and Idaho's Middle Fork of the Clearwater, Lochsa, Selway, and Middle Fork of the Salmon Rivers were included in the original act. We cut our kayaking teeth on the first two rivers. In those days there were only a handful of other boaters, mostly from Moscow and Missoula, braving the rapids.

As soon as we thought our skills were sufficient we started tackling more remote rivers. For us it was a simple matter of transferring our backpacking skills to our kayaks and living out of our boats instead of our packs. By then additional river miles in Idaho "with outstanding natural, cultural and recreational values in a free-flowing condition" had been included in the WSR System, so we explored the Main Salmon, Snake and much of the Jarbridge-Bruneau and Owyhee country, plus the already protected Selway and Middle Fork Salmon.

Today, Idaho's Wild & Scenic Rivers total 891 miles. That's eight-hundred-ninety one miles of free-flowing rivers running through deep, scenic canyons in some of the most remote regions of our state. But those miles represent only 1% of the rivers in our state. While this is ten times the national average (1/10th of 1% of rivers are designated nationally), it is not enough! Rivers and creeks in the Wild Clearwater Country that still do not have WSR status include iconic wild segments like the South Fork of the Clearwater, the upper Lochsa, the North Fork of the Clearwater, Cayuse Creek, Kelly Creek, Colt Killed Creek and Meadow Creek, to name a few.

So while we celebrate 50 years of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act and enjoy the beauty of our rivers, let's remember that our work isn't done. Many rivers have been studied and deemed eligible for WSR status but have not yet been designated. Others have not even been studied for inclusion. For the enjoyment of present and future generations, let's get it done!

Lawless suction dredge mining on the South Fork Clearwater

Update from Pat Finnegan, Bluwater Solutions LLC



FOC File Photo

Dredging on the S. Fork Clearwater, July 2018.

I have closely monitored suction dredging activities over the years and have a great grasp of the permits and plans of operation needed for individuals to dredge for gold in the Clearwater. The suction dredge mining season runs from July 15 - August 15.

This year, 14 dredges operated on the South Fork Clearwater throughout the season. Eight of these operated without Federal Clean Water Act permits or legal plans of operation. Individual dredges were usually tended by more than one violator. Violations were numerous, flagrant and damaging. Illegal miners exceeded sediment discharge limits, over-concentrated dredging activities, stored large volumes of gasoline, unattended on stream banks, refueled within the active South Fork Clearwater River channel, failed to backfill dredge holes and dredged outside of stream reaches that were designated under specific permits issued by the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR).

These types of violations destroy macroinvertebrate habitat, smother salmon, steelhead and trout spawning and rearing habitat, bury rare mussels, release mercury from prior mining activity into the river and alter the hydrologic functioning of streams.

Although the US Forest Service (FS) developed and approved an Environmental Assessment (EA) with specific suction dredge permit conditions based on consultation with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA) and the Nez Perce Tribe, IDWR blatantly violated these conditions by issuing permits to miners that allowed them to ignore conditions required under the Forest Service EA. Further, the IDWR permits were issued to miners who expressed their intent to operate in violation of the Clean Water Act and FS regulations. All violating miners were given the opportunity to obtain federal Clean Water Act permits and file lawful plans of operation for FS approval but refused to do so. Their violations illustrate wanton disregard for Idaho's aquatic resources, particularly salmon and steelhead.

More illegal trespassing on the Clearwater National Forest

Brett Haverstick

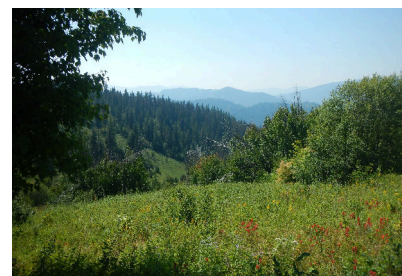
I did some off-road vehicle monitoring this August prior to our camping trip on the N. Fork Clearwater (page 11). Specifically, I hiked portions of the Kelly Creek and Moose Mountain Roadless Areas on the Clearwater National Forest. These special places are largely off-limits to off-road vehicle use, per the Clearwater National Forest Travel Plan. Unfortunately, the Forest Service does little in the way of monitoring and enforcement, and therefore, it's imperative that citizens bring violations to the agency's attention.

Trail 478 heads east along Osier Creek before climbing Pollock Ridge and eventually the Bitterroot Divide. The first motorcycle track I observed was near the confluence of Osier Creek and Swamp Creek. As I climbed the ridge, I observed more signs of motorcycle trespassing. Trail 478 is closed to all off-road vehicles according to the Clearwater National Forest Travel Plan.

Trail 429 heads east along Osier Ridge. It is part of the Kelly Creek Roadless Area (so is Osier Creek) and supposed to be closed to all off-road vehicles. Unfortunately, this area is being abused, too. It's possible that motorcycles are also traveling down from Fish Lake to Wapito Point, and then traveling west along the ridge.

Trail 427 to Moose Mountain is about three miles long. The trailhead did not have a sign stating that this area is closed to all off-road vehicles, despite being closed in the Clearwater National Forest Travel Plan. Lo and behold, the trail was littered with motorcycle tracks. Of the three areas, this one is receiving the most abuse.

FOC mailed the Forest Service a letter and a CD with pictures following the monitoring. We hope the agency will respond swiftly, and take the necessary actions to prevent further trespassing. These roadless areas, along with others on the Clearwater National Forest, contain crucial fish and wildlife habitat that need protection from the motorized madness that is ravaging our public lands.



FOC File Photo

**Looking west towards Moose Mountain
from Pollock Ridge.**

Editor's Note: FOC will keep you informed of our next steps regarding suction dredge mining and off-road vehicle abuse.

Fun on the N. Fork Clearwater

Brett Haverstick

The Kelly Forks Campground on the Clearwater National Forest is a wonderful place to spend a few days camping and playing in the summer sun. The large campground is ideal for group outings, with its proximity to hiking trails, fishing holes and swimming access. The campground is located at the confluence of Upper N. Fork Clearwater and Kelly Creek, not far from the Kelly Forks Work Center.

FOC and Palouse Group - Sierra Club sponsored this year's summer campout. Over thirty people attended, including folks from Washington, Idaho, Montana, and, yes, even Kansas! Members of the Kootenai Environmental Alliance and Montana Chapter - Sierra Club were also in attendance. Thank you for traveling from far away.

The weekend campout on the river(s) came at an ideal time. Temperatures that week soared into the upper 90's, and the shade of the forest, combined with the soothing water temperatures, made for an ideal oasis. Many trip participants spent time exploring the river (middle right), while others waded in the pools with fly rod and reel. Others sat in beach chairs and soaked up the sun, reading a book or watching the water peacefully roll by.

Two different hikes were offered on Saturday morning. Mac Cantrell with Palouse Group - Sierra Club (top right) led a gentle hike up Junction Mountain. Views of the Pot Mountain Roadless Area and the sprawling N. Fork Clearwater could be seen as the group gained elevation. Gary Macfarlane with FOC led the other hike up Kelly Creek, which offers sunny south-facing slopes and fantastic views of the beautiful, winding creek.

Dinner on Saturday night in camp was a feast. The vegetarian chili feed (bottom right) resulted in a huge spread encompassing countless toppings, including homemade cornbread, and watermelon for dessert. Jerry, Katie and others played music for us afterwards, which was a great way to wind down the evening.

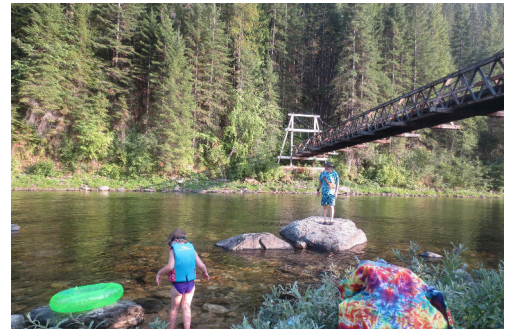
FOC member Patrick Reed made pancakes for the group on Sunday morning. Tupperwares of peaches and berries, along with syrup and coffee, filled the breakfast table. Thank gosh we did all that hiking and swimming beforehand because both meals really packed it on if you know what I mean!

Stay tuned for the next outing with our friends at Palouse Group - Sierra Club. We average two outings per year, and they are always a great opportunity to meet people and develop new relationships. Our next outing will occur sometime this winter. We will keep you informed.



FOC File Photo

Mac Cantrell with Palouse Group - Sierra Club goes over the map with hikers.



Sharon Cousins Photo Credit

The river was a perfect place to cool off in the hot afternoons.



FOC File Photo

The chili feed on Saturday night was delicious.

If you want to receive monthly e-newsletter updates about upcoming outreach events visit friendsoftheclearwater.org/newsroom

Clearwater Country Report



Ron Marquart Photo Credit

Meadow Creek should be protected under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, which turns 50 years old this year!

FRIENDS OF THE CLEARWATER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUTUMN POTLUCK
Tuesday October 16, 6:00 - 8:00pm

438 E 8TH, MOSCOW

TIMBERS SALES, PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND MORE

ANNUAL MEETING & GATHERING
Saturday November 3, 6:00 - 10:00 pm

1912 CENTER, 412 E. THIRD, MOSCOW

POTLUCK, CASH BAR, SILENT AUCTION, AWARDS CEREMONY

Friends of the Clearwater
P.O. Box 9241
Moscow, Idaho 83843

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