



# Clearwater Defender

## News of the Big Wild

Friends of the Clearwater

Winter 2000-2001, Vol. 1 No. 2

### Wildfires in the Wild Clearwater

By Gary Macfarlane

Contrary to popular perception, the wildfires of this past year didn't destroy the wildlands in the Clearwater Basin (Clearwater, Nez Perce, and portions of the Bitterroot and St. Joe National Forests) - they made them wilder. According to Larry McLaud of the Idaho Conservation League, Byron Bonney, the Forest Service fire staff officer for the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests said in a recent meeting that the fires did not burn out of the range of natural variability in the Clearwater/Nez Perce fire zone. In other words, the fires were perfectly natural.

Likewise, the Idaho Fish and Game Commissioner, Alex Irby, said at a meeting that the forest fires that burned through central Idaho this summer will in the long run, be good for wildlife. It is interesting to note that the director toured the largest fire in Idaho and came to that conclusion in spite of the chicken-little syndrome adopted by some so-called fire experts within the Forest Service and academia. This summer's fires were natural and in response to climatic events. All the hoopla about unhealthy forests needing thinning, logging, or other Forest Service-driven manipulation ignores paleoecological science and is based on faulty logic.

Ecologists and fire experts like George Wuerthner, Rob Ament of American Wildlands, Tim Inglesbee of Cascadia Fire Ecology Project, and our own Chuck Pezeshki have debunked

(Continued on page 9)

### Roadless protection plan finalized

By Kristin Ruether and Scott Silver

On January 6, deep in the wintry Clearwater backcountry, a wolverine poked her head out of her den. The snow whipped across the frozen ground and the ice crystals sparkled in the air as she plotted how to find some good carrion that day for her kits.

Also on this day, President Clinton announced his final rule for roadless protection, culminating a three-year process. Surprisingly, the administration strengthened the protection given to roadless areas at every step of the way, while deep flaws remain on the issue of recreation. While the Draft roadless protection plan released last year permitted logging, and the Final roadless protection plan document released in November banned logging, albeit with a very large loophole to allow logging under the guise of "stewardship logging". In the Final Rule just released, this logging loophole was substantially tightened.

The final rule provides roadless protection in many areas that environmentalists had only dreamed of before. The strengthening of the policy can be credited to all those citizens who turned out in force for public comment hearings, and who sent in written comments demanding full protection.

The final rule bans building new roads in roadless areas, with a few emergency exceptions. It generally bans logging in roadless areas, again with a few exceptions. It immediately extends these protections to roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest, which had been previously excluded. Only timber sales that have already produced an analysis may go forth.

The final, strengthened policy may halt some of the most immediate threats looming over the Wild Clearwater. The Clearwater National Forest has two large roadless timber sales in the works: 1) the North Lochsa Face (stalled after our appeal victory, but expected to rise again) and 2) the BHROWS: Middle-Black (Big game Habitat Restoration on a Watershed Scale). A part of the Clearwater Elk Initiative, this sale would clearcut immense blocks of the Pot Mountain Roadless Area near the North Fork Clearwater River.

(Continued on page 5)

### St. Joe appeal victory

By Kristin Ruether

In November, Region One Deputy Regional Forester Kathleen McAllister upheld our appeal of the Point Siam timber sale, a 1.0 million board feet sale on the St. Joe Ranger District of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. The sale would have logged over 200 acres just south of the St. Joe River, upstream of Avery. I wrote the appeal for Friends of the Clearwater, The Lands Council, Alliance for the Wild Rockies and The Ecology Center with help from Mike Mihelich and Jeff Juel.

Jeff coordinated the informal appeal resolution meeting with District Ranger George Bain. The Appeal Reviewing Officer determined that "The EA and DN do not adequately address cumulative effects."

Dear Friends.

Now is a time of Transitions. It is that time of year when transitions are hard to ignore. Leaves fall from the branches to be replaced with icicles and snow. Warm summer days when all you can do to stay comfortable is go swimming, are now faint memories as we huddle under blankets or bundle up and go skiing. While I would like to think that these transitions are only found in nature, once again I am reminded of how closely linked we are with the Earth.

FOC's office is going through its own transitions right now. Kristin Ruether will be leaving FOC this winter. While she will still be performing some contract work for us, reading and commenting upon environmental impact statements, she will no longer be in Idaho.

Kristin has been a great asset to FOC. She has been running the office since the summer of 1999, organizing potlucks, getting the board together, writing letters to regional newspapers, and basically being "wonderwoman". Kristin you have done a phenomenal job, we will miss you, and you have created very big shoes to fill. Kristin has done a lot of good work for FOC, as you will see in this edition of the Clearwater Defender.

The fall has been an active time for FOC. This autumn a group of us traveled to Winchester, ID to spend the morning with Levi Holt of the Nez Perce Tribe. He gave us a personal tour of the Wolf Education and Rehabilitation Center and discussed the importance of the center's work. Also in the past few months, Josh Burnim has been planning a hiking trip that will start in the Sawtooth Mountains and end in Canada in the Selkirks. He will be working to raise awareness about the need for biological corridors on the North American continent.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Clearwater Defender. Feel free to give us a call if you have any questions or want to know how to get more involved. Several articles in this issue of the CD provide opportunities for member involvement, including the FOC-sponsored Great Grizzly Search, and the upcoming Sawtooth-to-Selkirks hike this summer. We will also need volunteers to complete road surveys on our National Forests.

Our Forest Watch Potlucks, which are held approximately every other Tuesday evening, are also a wonderful way to get involved. Come and enjoy good food and company while we work to defend the wild Clearwater.

It is cold, and the days are short, but the transitions are already beginning and it will soon be spring. So relish in the beauty of the snow, go skiing, and write lots of letters.

Happy Solstice,

Emily Loeb

## The Clearwater Defender is a publication of:

Friends of the Clearwater  
PO Box 9241  
Moscow, ID 83843  
(208) 882-9755  
foc@wildrockies.org  
<http://www.wildrockies.org/foc>

Friends of the Clearwater is devoted to the protection of Idaho's Greater Salmon-Selway Ecosystem, the largest relatively intact wild area left in the lower 48 states. This undiscovered gem on America's public lands contains many unprotected roadless areas and provides crucial habitat for countless species. Friends of the Clearwater helps defend this ecosystem through an aggressive Forest Watch program and a proven track record.

Friends of the Clearwater is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions the Friends of the Clearwater are tax-deductible.

The Clearwater Defender welcomes artwork and articles pertaining to the protection of the Greater Salmon-Selway Ecosystem. Articles in the Clearwater Defender do not necessarily reflect the views of Friends of the Clearwater.

### Board Members:

Emily Loeb (President)  
Garrett Clevenger (Vice-President)  
Gary Macfarlane (Treasurer)  
Ashley Martens (Recording Secretary)  
Gretchen Stewart  
Steve Paulson  
Chris Norden  
Chuck Pezeshki  
Jeff Juel

Forest Watch Coordinator: Kristin Ruether

CD Editor: David Willard

Back Cover Photo of Meadow Creek Path

by Chuck Pezeshki

Many thanks to past board members Paul Weingartner and Marc Lawrence for doing a great job in helping out the organization. Your work and commitment is greatly appreciated.

Printed on 50% Sugar Cane, 50% Recycled (30% Post Consumer), Chlorine Free paper

# S2S

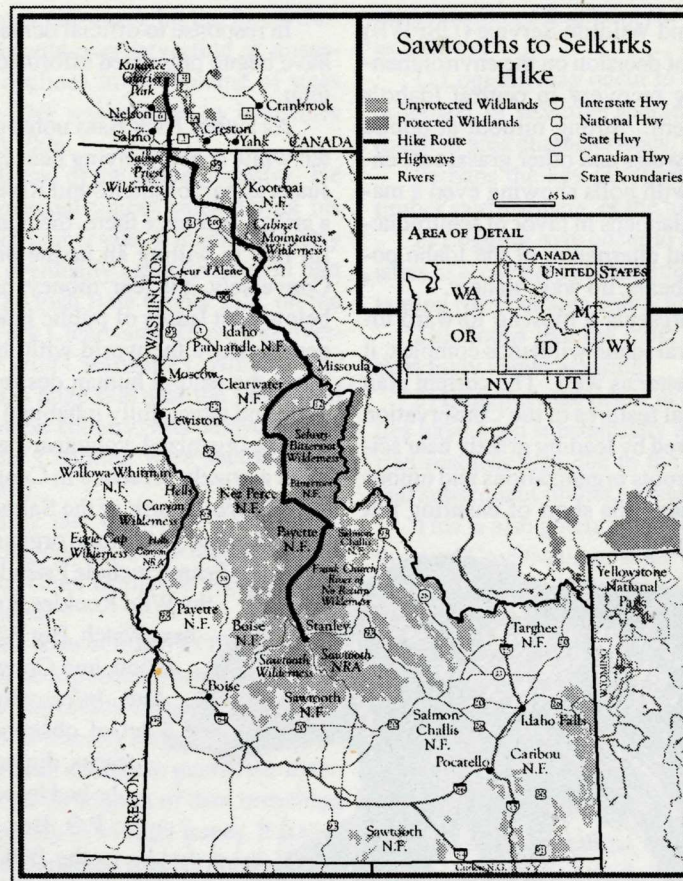
## Five-Month Hike to Galvanize Support for Wild Areas

In May of next year, Josh Burnim will throw on his backpack and begin a four-month trek from the Sawtooth Mountains of southern Idaho to southern British Columbia's Selkirk Mountains. His goal is to draw attention to the importance of Idaho and southern Canadian wildlands and human communities, as well as to document conditions in these biologically important areas.

His hike, called the Sawtooth to Selkirk Hike (S2S), will publicize the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y). Y2Y is a network of over 200 conservation organizations and individuals that are working together to promote the biological health of the vast area between the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the Yukon's Mackenzie Mountains. Y2Y's mission is to restore and maintain landscape and habitat connectivity along 1900 miles of mountains by establishing a system of protected core wildlife reserves linked by wildlife habitat and movement corridors.

While many of the areas Josh will visit still contain pristine components necessary to sustain healthy populations of wildlife and fish, these areas remain segregated from each other. These core "islands" include the Salmon-Clearwater Ecosystem of central Idaho, the Cabinet Mountains and Selkirks of northern Idaho, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, and in British Columbia, the Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park and the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy.

Conservation Biologists have documented the need for connectivity between core areas of habitat in order to maintain healthy populations of wildlife. If core areas are not connected, some wildlife will disappear from these islands. Isolation from other populations of a given species leads to inbreeding, and creates a situation where disease and human and natural disturbances can be devastating. Another crucial function of corridors is to provide adequate land for food gathering and habitat; many species of wildlife require large home ranges, such as caribou, grizzlies, wolves, wolverines and lynx.



Josh will be assessing vegetation cover, wildlife signs, roads, and human use of the areas. Besides helping fulfill the mission of Y2Y, this data gathering will help American Wildlands, which is currently mapping a corridor between the Salmon-Clearwater wildlands and the Cabinet-Selkirk wildlands. American Wildlands is ground-truthing elements of wildlife corridors.

At different towns along the hike, Josh will offer public hikes and offer slide presentations. Josh received a \$2000 grant from Y2Y migrants for this endeavor. He hopes he will inspire people to understand the importance of core habitat and wildlife corridors, as well as the Y2Y vision. A forthcoming web site will feature pictures and short narratives from the hike, and will detail and describe the biological importance of each wild area.

Josh's route will begin in the Sawtooths in May at the Idaho Conservation League's annual gathering at Redfish Lake. Next is the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, then the Mallard Roadless Area and Meadow Creek Roadless Area in June. From there, he and his companions will enter the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Selway Crags, dropping down to Highway 12. Next is Fish Creek, crossing the Lewis and Clark Trail, up to the Weitas Creek, Cayuse and Kelly Creek areas to the Bitterroot Divide. From Fish Lake, they will move along the stateline trail, cross Interstate 90, drop down to the Clark Fork River and go through the Cabinet Mountain Wilderness. In early August, they will traverse the Scotchman Peak Roadless area over to the Selkirks passing through Long Canyon and into British Columbia. From there, they will hike up the Nelson Range into West Arm Provincial Park, and finish in Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park in September.

For more information on S2S, to participate in a leg of the hike, to provide logistical support, or for a more detailed schedule as the planning progresses, please contact the FOC office at: 208-882-9755. Y2Y's web site is "<http://www.rockies.ca/y2y>". One will be able to link to the S2S Hike web site from here and from FOC's web site: "<http://www.wildrockies.org/foc>".

# Coming to Your Neighborhood Soon: Bears, Oh My!

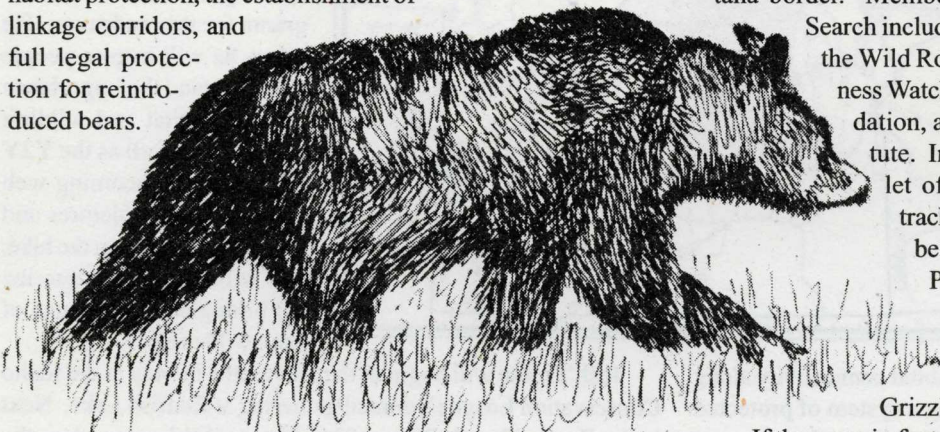
But is the Current Reintroduction Plan Designed to Fail?

And: The Great Grizzly Search

By Chris Norden

In mid-November US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) released its long-awaited record of decision on the environmental impact statement for grizzly recovery in central Idaho's greater Salmon-Selway ecosystem. Strong turnout at public hearings by Friends of the Clearwater and other grassroots environmental groups, in tandem with polls showing even a majority of normally conservative Idahoans in favor of reintroduction, rendered moot the preferred alternative of the Idaho political establishment, namely no bears, no way, no how.

While USFWS's decision represents a moving forward toward grizzly recovery in the central Idaho wildlands complex, it may prove to be a recipe for disaster as well. The current plan fails to adopt many of the essential features of the Conservation Biology Alternative (CBA) favored by leading grizzly bear scientists, and by hundreds of grassroots organizations and unions as well. Notably, the current plan falls short of ensuring full habitat protection, the establishment of linkage corridors, and full legal protection for reintroduced bears.



Drawing by Peggy Sue McRae

Testimony offered by Friends of the Clearwater and other citizens at USFWS's public hearing in Lewiston, Idaho made an unambiguous case for the Conservation Biology Alternative as the only reintroduction plan with a good chance of success. Developed in conjunction with world-renowned scientists like Dr. John Craighead and Dr. Charles Jonkel, and analyzed but not selected by USFWS, the CBA is a coalition proposal spearheaded by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies and formally endorsed by both Friends of the Clearwater and the Clearwater Biodiversity Project.

Remnant populations of the great bear survive in the Northern Rockies in only a few isolated populations, notably Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier National Park, the Yellowstone area in northwest Wyoming, and the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak region in the Idaho panhandle and extreme northwest Montana. Reports that grizzlies still inhabit the central Idaho wildlands are routinely received, yet officials have failed to put any stock in the reports even though many come from reliable sources.

In response to official denials, citizen groups and scientists have begun organized efforts to look for grizzly sign in the region.

As author Rick Bass notes in his book *Lost Grizzlies*, written while accompanying bear expert Doug Peacock in the San Juans as part of the Round River Institute's effort to document a grizzly presence there, the human imagination plays a powerful role in willing an ursine presence into being in the wild. Conversely, it is fear, money, political power, vested interests, below-cost leases of public land, and ultimately an unwillingness to share the world with its other inhabitants which frustrates the natural human desire to live in a world that is complete and intact, fully inhabited by all its native species.

The organized, volunteer-based effort to discover and document a grizzly presence in Central Idaho is focused on the Bitterroot Crest, north of the Salmon River along the Idaho/Montana border. Member organizations of The Great Grizzly Search include Friends of the Clearwater, Alliance for the Wild Rockies, Friends of the Bitterroot, Wilderness Watch, Big Wild Advocates, Great Bear Foundation, and Craighead Wildlife/Wildlands Institute. Information on volunteering and a booklet of observation cards for recording scat, tracks, digging sites, and actual sightings can be had by contacting: Great Grizzly Search, P.O. Box 8983, Missoula MT 59807, or the FOC office, P.O. Box 9241, Moscow, ID 83843

Also, be on the lookout for a Great Grizzly Search link on the FOC web page!

If there are in fact bears still living in the Big Wild in Central Idaho, then we must find them, document them, and ensure they and their critical habitat be fully protected, before the current reintroduction plan is implemented. The current plan would offer only limited protection even to naturally re-colonized or native bears.

In the wake of a truly bizarre presidential season, it is imperative that the grassroots conservation community remains steadfast in advocating for the Big Wild. Likewise, we must continue speaking out vocally in opposition of harmful, unwise, cynical, and insincere land management and wildlife recovery proposals, including the current U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service proposal for a pro-forma reintroduction of grizzly bears to the central Idaho wilderness, a plan that may well be designed to fail.

*Editors note: As we go to press, Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne recently filed suit against any grizzly reintroduction or augmentation in Central Idaho, just to hedge his bets. Write him and tell him how you feel about this: [governor@gov.state.is.us](mailto:governor@gov.state.is.us)*

## Clearwater Supervisor Retires

By Kristin Ruether

Longtime Clearwater National Forest Supervisor James Caswell took an early retirement in November 2000.

Caswell presided over the CNF during some of the forest's most difficult times. The timber train-wreck hit the forest during the mid-nineties due to chronic overharvesting at unsustainable levels, forcing steep declines in the volume of trees logged off the forest. Also the CNF was ravaged by landslides during the winters of 1995 and 1996.

Caswell was considered a friend of the timber industry. He proposed several large, controversial timber sales during his reign. The proposed White Sands timber sale, in roadless country near the Montana border, was eventually cancelled due in part to extreme public pressure. The Fish Bate timber sale, on the steep slopes above the North Fork Clearwater River, was overturned in a lawsuit filed by our Wild Clearwater Coalition. The North Lochsa Face timber sale, a huge sale near the Lewis and Clark trail and partially in roadless country, was delayed when appeals by our Wild Clearwater Coalition were successful in reversing the decision to proceed.

He gained national notoriety last winter by referring to Idaho's roadless areas as "sticking out like a sore thumb" and by writing a letter to Forest Service Chief Dombeck urging him to nix the roadless protection process.

His new job is heading up the state of Idaho's Office of Species Conservation where he will be expected to bring state agencies together on wildlife issues, especially endangered species.

The creation of this office was roundly criticized by conservationists and others who see it as an attempt to punish the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for its support of dam breaching several years ago by reducing its say in wildlife issues. It is also a futile waste of money, since endangered species are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Caswell was recently quoted in the newspapers as saying, "Local decision-making is key," and "The feds have a huge role to play here. They do have a trump card. For someone like me, that's tough to take."

## Educating and Agitating in D.C.

Four of our Friends of the Clearwater trekked to Washington, D.C. in June 2000, for four days with other activists from across the United States to educate those who set policy and make the laws governing our public lands. The four from our area carried the message of thousands of like-minded conservationists to Senators, Representatives, staffers, and high governmental officials. To underline the urgency of forest protection, our intrepid travelers supported their words with photos of the destruction on our local public lands as well as photos of the remarkable beauty that remains in the untouched areas. In these visits to individual congresspersons' offices, our activists thanked those who have introduced, signed on to, or voted for legislation that protects public lands and encouraged others to get on board. The Idaho contingent participated in a meeting with U.S. Undersecretary of the Interior Jim Lyons and discussed with him the proposed Lewis and Clark National Monument.

## Roadless Protection

(Continued from page one)

### Logging Loopholes

Logging in roadless areas is prohibited, under the new Roadless Plan, with several exceptions. There are three significant exceptions that have the potential for mischief. They are as follows:

1) Logging may occur to improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species habitat, while also maintaining roadless area characteristics.

Perhaps the key question here is according to whom: the timber sale planners, or the biologists?

2) Logging may occur to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure, again while maintaining roadless area characteristics.

This looks like the most problematic exception, given its extremely vague wording.

3) Logging may occur in areas where roadless characteristics have been substantially altered in a portion of an inventoried roadless area due to the construction of a classified road and subsequent timber harvest.

This is also potentially problematic. For example, three of the nine Cove/Mallard sales were logged. Does that mean the areas adjacent to these logged areas may now be further logged?

### Recreation problems

Although the final rule does provide some much-needed protection on roadbuilding and logging, it also supports the recent Forest Service trend towards commercialization, privatization and motorization of recreation opportunities upon America's national forests.

In a nutshell, the roadless Final Environmental Impact Statement says that roadless areas will be used to accommodate motorized recreation of all types in the quantities required to meet demand. It says that new trails, without restriction on trail width, will be built to accommodate all types of motorized recreation vehicles — from snowmobiles and dirt bikes to 4X4s.

It says that because new roads will not (generally) be built in these "roadless areas", this will somehow constitute a reduction in the inventory of roaded areas available to service a vibrant and growing industrial-tourism industry. The report says that as a result, existing roaded areas will be upgraded to far higher standards than exist today to accommodate the throngs of persons that the USFS is actively trying to attract to these forests through aggressive marketing campaigns.

The report concludes that because federal funding will not be available to provide this new and greatly expanded infrastructure, the USFS will increasingly rely upon the private sector to build and manage these facilities.

The Roadless Initiative could very well set the tone for the creation of future recreation/tourism management decisions for years to come. The tone it sets should be interpreted as a warning siren to everyone who cares about protecting public lands from all forms of destructive practices. Industrial Strength Recreation, with its emphasis on motorized access, is not an acceptable alternative to extraction.

# The New Public-Lands "Product": Recreation for Profit

## "TREES by the BOARD FOOT or by the HOUR" (US Forest Service)

We are ever-so-slowly winning the fight to kick the extractors off of our public land. However, an equally ominous threat looms—that of privatization and industrialization of our public land. The threat is real and if left unchecked will result in increased fees for using public land, private developments on public land, and more and more motorized use—at the expense of quiet use and nature itself. Forest activists may need to shift some of their attention from timber to recreation, to ensure that the USFS does not attempt to manage recreation in the same manner in which they have managed timber.

The shift to industrial recreation is well under way. The Recreation Fee Demonstration Program that was implemented in 100 test sites around the country is the most visible leading edge of this effort. USFS literature states:

"The purpose of this program is to test the effectiveness of collecting fees to help maintain federal recreation facilities and to enhance visitor services and wildlife habitat."

If this were true, then we would have little complaint. Unfortunately, there is a great deal left unsaid in this simple statement, but it is alluded to later when it states:

"The Forest Service's recreation fee demonstration program was developed in partnership with leading national recreation interests. Its implementation is occurring through a Challenge Cost Share partnership with the American Recreation Coalition (ARC)."

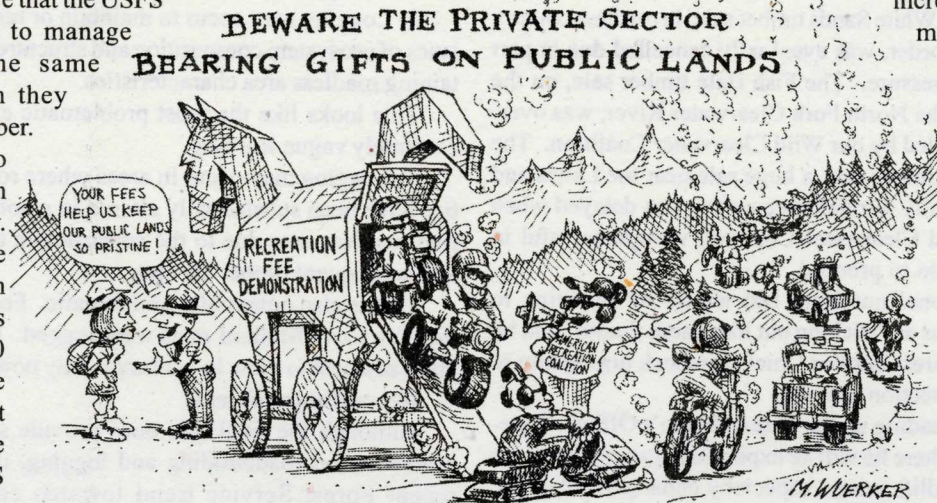
It's not until you know something about the American Recreation Coalition that you begin to understand what that program is really all about.

The American Recreation Coalition represents the interests of more than 100 industry organizations. Included on its member list are dozens of motorboat, jet-ski, RV, motorcycle, ORV and snowmobile manufacturers and associations. The remainder of the coalition includes ski area associations, sporting equipment manufacturers, tour associations, public-lands concessionaires, petroleum companies—and even the Walt Disney Company. Not one hiking, backpacking or environmental organization is on this list (though there are some pretenders). ARC is an active participant in the "wise-use" movement, and is closely linked to

two other anti-environmental organizations, Coalition for Vehicle Choice and the Foundation for Clean Air Progress.

Over a period of 20 years, ARC has become perhaps the most influential force affecting governmental recreational policy in this country. Through its Recreation Roundtable and Recreation Exchange, ARC continues to nurture its deep connections within the political system. ARC's goals are: (1)

to ensure continued and increased access for its many motor sports members, and (2) to promote a climate ripe for new and expanded opportunities for public/private partnerships between federal land management agencies and A R C ' s commercial development interests. In short, ARC wants to



"privatize, commercialize and motorize."

The Fee Demo program is, in other words, a project pushed by large industrial recreation companies who happen to have very strong clout both in Congress and the Administration. These companies' interests are counter to the interests of quiet recreationists and nature.

If friends of the forests don't rise up against their plans to privatize, commercialize, and motorize our public land, we will be faced with:

- increased numbers of private campgrounds on public land
- increased numbers of ORV and motorbike trails on public land
- increased fees for recreating on public land
- increased corporate-influenced management on public land

Forest activists can keep their eyes peeled for insidious privatization projects on your local forests—and when they find them, complain loudly! Also they can follow the national scene and join in the nationwide days of protest against such entities as the Fee Demo program. Overly commercialized, inappropriate and motorized forms of recreation may truly be one of the most serious threats our forests are facing. It will take all of us to keep our public lands Wild and Free!

*This document was prepared by Wild Wilderness, a grassroots organization involved in recreational issues since 1991. To find out more information, visit their website at [www.wildwilderness.org](http://www.wildwilderness.org). To receive email updates on national recreation threats, please email [ssilver@wildwilderness.org](mailto:ssilver@wildwilderness.org)*

# The Best Fire Season Ever?

Commentary by George Wuerthner

The fire-fighting juggernaut continues to exploit the recent rash of western wildfires. I have yet to see any serious discussion in the media about the positive value of fires to western ecosystem, nor anyone questioning whether it's even possible to halt these blazes.

Over and over again the media portrays fires as some kind of catastrophic disaster. Yet wildfires are to western ecosystems what rain is to a tropical rainforest. They are necessary for the continued health and existence of these ecosystem. The use of pejorative statements like the fires "destroyed" so many acres of land or wildfires continue to "threaten" forests clearly portrays wildfires in a negative light. Yet wildfires do anything but destroy a landscape. Indeed, they are one of the major ecological forces that rejuvenate western ecosystems. In fact, it is large blazes that burn hundreds of thousands of acres at a time that do the bulk of forest rejuvenation work. Small "controlled" fires are almost meaningless from an ecological perspective—we need big fires.

Wildfires cleanse the forest of disease and insects. They thin forest stands. They recycle nutrients. They create snags that are homes for thousands of species. When such snags fall into streams, they provide bank stability and fish habitat. We couldn't pay enough or hire enough people to do all these positive things in our forests that fires are doing for free. In short, our western ecosystems need wildfires and attempts to suppress them are like killing predators thinking we are helping the deer herds.

Furthermore, there is a huge misconception perpetuated by the fire fighting junta that gives people the impression that all fires can be contained or suppressed. In fact, a great deal of fire research, plus experience over the decades has shown over and over again that under conditions of extreme drought, and high winds—the very conditions that are driving all the large fires in the West at this moment—fire suppression is impossible. It is not fuels that create large fires, but periodic drought.

Our puny efforts to suppress large blazes can't change the climatic conditions that have spawn these fires, and at best we can only hope to deflect blazes away from towns or other important property. We might as well dump dollar bills on the blazes as fire retardant or water—for nothing we can do will stop such flames until the conditions that allow for the fires to burn are altered—typically a change in the weather. How often do we hear how fire fighters finally got the fire under "control" after it rained or snowed? Did the fire fighters put out the fire? Or are they taking credit for what was going to happen anyway?

Spending any money and risking any lives trying to stop these fires is as futile as standing at the edge of the beach with your hands up to stop an incoming tide. The tide will simply flow around you, and only go back out when it's time to reverse the flood.

The only fire suppression that should occur is to protect communities and lives. But even here one has to question where government responsibility for protection of life and property ends and individuals must bear the consequences for their own unwise decisions. It doesn't take a genius to know if you build a home in the middle of the forest that is fire prone, you are gambling with your property. Spending tax dollars to protect isolated cabins and homes built in the midst of fire-prone landscapes is no different than building houses in the flood plains of rivers or condos on hurricane prone Atlantic coast barrier islands.

There will undoubtedly be members of the timber industry and politicians set on increased exploitation of our forests that will use these fires as an opportunity to argue for more timber harvest. But logging doesn't reduce fire hazard, indeed, there is quite a bit of fire research literature that suggests that logging can increase fire hazards by opening up forests to more rapid drying, and greater wind circulation, accelerating fire spread by exaggerating the effects of drought and wind. Unless we are willing to remove all trees over millions of acres, logging will only exacerbate fire conditions, not help.

Rather than characterize this summer as the "worst" fire season in recent history, a more enlightened and informed perspective would call it the best fire season in a long time.

*George Wuerthner is an ecologist and author of 24 books on environmental and conservation subjects. He is founder of A Hunter Voice, POB 3156, Eugene, OR 97403.*

## The Redfish Blues

(sung to Deep River Blues by Doc Watson)

Let it rain, let it pour	Water flows over the spill
Wash the silt right in my door	But these gasses gonna make me ill
And I've got them muddy water blues	And I've got them nitrogen blues
Carve some roads, cut the trees	Made it through that one fine
Watch the hills come down on me	What do you mean there're more in line?
And I've got them landslide blues	Guess I've got them Army Corp blues
I'm meant to swim in water free	What is this thick green paste?
Instead I've got lead and mercury	Oh, it's algae from the agro-waste
And I've got them heavy metal blues	And I've got them eutrofied blues
Try to grow up big and strong	They kicked the Terns off rich folk' sand
But these poisons make my body wrong	Now they gorge upon my clan
And I've got them dioxin blues	'Cause I've got them development blues
Yikes, this water is way too hot	Out to sea, finally
Stinkytown's not my favorite spot	Oh, what will become of me?
'Cause I've got them paper mill blues	'Cause I've got them big troll net blues
Swim to sea, if I can	I am the, Redfish you see
But my way's blocked by a dam	If you don't help then dead I'll be
And I've got them slack water blues	'Cause I've got them extinction blues
Pressure builds, turbines whirl	Said I've got them extinction blues
I think I'm gonna have to hurl	
'Cause I've got them meat grinder blues	

© 2000 David Willard, permission granted for any non-commercial use.

## Otter-Wing and Mackey Day Resistance Continues

By Grumbles, for the Cove/Mallard Coalition

After a quiet summer of raging wildfires and hysterical calls for mass "Forest Health Logging," the chainsaws and feller bunchers are busy again in destroying a vital chunk of the Greater Salmon/Selway Ecosystem. At stake is the Twentymile-Wing Creek roadless area home to threatened bull trout, steelhead trout, and chinook salmon in the Mackey Day and Otter-Wing timber sales. The piliated woodpecker, bald eagle, lynx, and other old growth-dependent species are having their last viable habitat on the South Fork of the Clearwater River destroyed at the direction of the U.S. Forest Service.

The destruction started with the Mackey Day timber sale in late September. Activists from the Cove/Mallard Coalition responded as best they could after a low-key summer during which a report was submitted to the Nez Perce National Forest documenting violations. A small group of dedicated people headed to the sale. They were greeted by hostile loggers and a gaggle of Federal Law Enforcement Officers. Logging has stopped on the sale and the only remaining units of pristine old growth are slated for destruction this coming summer after the end of elk calving season in mid-June.

In the middle of October we received word from the Forest Service that Shearer Lumber Products would conduct logging on the Otter-Wing timber sale for the duration of the winter. The Coalition organized a demonstration at Region 1 Forest Service Headquarters in Missoula on November 11. During the demo, several salmon attacked Smokey "the timber slut" Bear for destroying their home. After the protest, a dozen folks headed up to 1875 (the access road to the two sales) for a weekend camp-out. Early Saturday morning we awoke to the belch of exhaust from four law enforcement vehicles. When asked why they were not checking so diligently on other campers, one officer responded that other campers don't set up tripods (never mind that the only tripod set up was only three feet tall and used to hang pots over the fire).

On the legal front, Randy Mark served the rest of his suspended sentence for violating probation (for an arrest at last year's blockade). Drea, Molly, Erika, and Locust were on trial on December 8th for the June 15-17 bridge blockade. Among their trumped up charges are "maintaining a picnic table" (which they were eating at, not locked to). Also the Cove/Mallard lawsuit against the Forest Service, Idaho County, Highland Enterprises, and Shearer Lumber Products for the August 1998 attack on our support camp continues to grind along.

As always, we need your help. Cove/Mallard Coalition can provide directions and field guides if you wish to journey to Idaho and help us resist these destructive sales. We need new energy and ideas, especially with the threat of massive salvage sales in the Bitterroots in the wake of the fires this year. We could also use donations of cash, backcountry food, and warm winter gear.

## Protestors Ask Staples to Stop Destroying Old Growth Forests

By Julia Piaskowski

Bundled up in hats, scarves, and mittens, protestors from the Cove/Mallard Coalition and the Forest Action Network, based in B.C., stood outside Staples Nov. 15 in Moscow, Idaho, offering passerbys information about Staples, recycled paper, and tree free alternatives.

Part of the International Day of Action against Staples, this protest, occurring simultaneously at Staples stores across the nation, began the campaign to convince Staples, Inc. to sell forest friendly office products. At over 1000 stores nation-wide, Staples is one of the largest and fastest growing office superstores. Inside their store, the products of old growth forests abound: desks, chairs, shelves, and countless reams of paper, all made from the wood of virgin forests. While a limited stock of recycled paper is available, post consumer recycled paper is not available, nor is any tree-free alternative such as kenaf, straw, or hemp paper.

Despite low numbers, morale was high. One protestor was dressed as a bear. A table filled with free literature about the status of Northern Rockies forests and coastal rainforests of the Pacific Northwest was set up. We handed out fliers to Staples customers and occasionally engaged in conversation with them.

The demands for Staples include phasing out all products that originated from old growth forests or public lands and selling recycled paper containing post consumer contents ranging from 50-100%. Many corporations have agreed to become old growth free and are moving forward to implement this, including Office Depot, Kinko's and Starbucks.

This nationwide action was sponsored primarily by the Coastal Rainforest Coalition and the Dogwood Alliance. For more info, visit [www.coastalrainforest.org](http://www.coastalrainforest.org)

## Cove/Mallard 2001 Strategy Session February 3 & 4 in Missoula, MT.

Bring your creative ideas to share or send them to us. The Cove/Mallard Coalition is at a critical point in our ten year history. We need to make a decision on how to continue and be a more effective group. The need to redefine the Cove/Mallard Coalition and perhaps replace it with a new biocentric direct action entity is pressing. Continuing threats to the Northern Rockies include massive salvage sales in the Bitterroots, anti-predator management policies, and inadequate protection for species' habitat. We need new energy and dedicated office folks, as well as a higher participation in our field campaign. If you are interested in the future of the Cove/Mallard Coalition's role in Northern Rockies conservation, please come to this strategy session or email us your ideas.

Please contact the Cove/Mallard Coalition at [cove@moscow.com](mailto:cove@moscow.com) or  
P.O. Box 8968, Moscow, ID 83843 or call 208-882-9755

# Wildfires in the Wild Clearwater

(Continued from page one)

industry and agency myths that somehow undeveloped, wild forests are overgrown and unnatural and need management (thinning, logging, etc.). Fires, especially big, hot fires, are part of the northern Rockies, and will likely become even more important given global warming trends. Trying to prevent wildland fires in remote areas is like trying to stop the wind or the rain, a futile and wasteful effort. Wildfires belong in wildlands as much as wildlife.

One of the most amazing stories to come from the fires is a sordid tale of Forest Service deception uncovered by Keith Hammer of the Swan View Coalition. Keith discovered that a photo the Forest Service was using to show that forests were historically less densely vegetated than today was, in fact, taken after a logging operation nearly 100 years ago on the Bitterroot National Forest. The Forest Service archives clearly mark the photos as post-logging even though the agency's spin doctors described it otherwise.

Such deliberate misinformation leads to policies that rob citizens of their economic and environmental wealth. For example, congress gave a bundle of our tax dollars to the Forest Service, BLM and other agencies to spend on dubious logging, heli-torching, thinning and other make-work projects that further manipulate the land and leave it less wild and natural, not to mention the virtual blank check given fire fighting efforts. Sometimes, the Forest Service wants to light fires in places where it puts fires out, all done to justify budget increases.

In our northern corner of the Big Wild, the Clearwater wildlands may fall prey to these myths, even though the Forest Service fire specialist says fires didn't burn outside the natural range of variability. A massive logging, thinning and burning project is planned under the disingenuous guise of fire prevention, elk restoration, or ecosystem management for the wild Pot Mountain roadless area.

A number of the lightning strikes that caused fires in this wild area were put out while adjacent areas burned from lightning caused fires. The Idaho Director of Fish and Game referred to the Clearwater Basin by saying, "It would have been beneficial if some of that had burned this summer." The good news is that some of it did burn. The bad news is the Forest Service still proposes the massive timber sale in Pot Mountain in spite of the fact that other fires created all of this elk forage next door.

The real question is how to protect homes and personal property during climatic events that precipitate fires, not how to control fires in the backcountry which can't be done. A story here on the Nez Perce National Forest, where the Forest Service is currently headed in the right direction, addresses that issue. About a year ago, the Red River Ranger District office sent out a proposal ostensibly designed to reduce the threat of fire in the small community of Dixie. The preliminary proposal called for controversial and massive clearcuts, justified as fire breaks, quite some distance from town.

Instead of ignoring public input, the Forest Service carefully evaluated the comment letters submitted by citizens including citations of crucial research undertaken by Jack Cohen, a Forest Service researcher. Cohen's research shows that what works best is keeping the 40 meter area immediately surrounding homes and buildings free from flammable material through brush removal, mowing and raking and removing some trees close to buildings. After that distance, thinning and treatments rapidly become less effective. In other words, the urban-wildland interface is about 40 meters wide. Thinning, logging, and agency-ignited fires do not protect homes.

The District went back to the drawing board and is currently headed in a new direction, which would largely involve the private lands surrounding homes in Dixie. While this new plan has yet to be worked out, if it does indeed follow the recommendation in Cohen's research, it will offer the best solution for the future. It makes sense that we who live in the West need to take a large measure of responsibility for our own places.

The Forest Service can and should help with professional expertise and other resources, but we need to be actively involved.

A policy of allowing fires to play their natural role across the Clearwater basin wildlands is in order. Fires are natural. The most destructive things about them is the damage caused by fire fighting efforts like erosion from the fire lines. The Forest Service, BLM, Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service should

drastically alter fire policy to prevent the robbery of the treasury and the irreplaceable loss of wildness.

Here are some suggestions on what the agencies could do:

1- Fire suppression efforts in Wilderness Areas and other backcountry regions (roadless areas and remote lands) should be stopped. It is wasteful of tax-dollars, destroys wild areas and is largely unnecessary or counter-productive.

2- Fire fighting efforts should concentrate exclusively on protection of structures and homes.

3- State and Federal agencies should play an extension and education role in teaching those of us in the West that live in fire-prone regions about how to protect our own property using the best available information from Dr. Cohen's research. That is the best way to spend the pile of money from Congress, not on some idiotic policy to clear the vegetation from our wildlands, which can't be done without ecological costs far greater than anything fires—whether they burn hotter than in the past or not—could ever do.

4- End the thinning, logging and most of the agency-ignited fire projects. These do nothing to enhance human safety, wildlands, or naturalness. Even if the evidence was there to conclusively show that our wild, unroaded forests are somehow unnatural and unhealthy, the damage from such a so-called cure from all the manipulation across the tens of millions of acres of public land in the West would be far greater than the so-called disease.



## Lolo Ski Race

By Steve Paulson

This is a story of the first-ever Lolo Trail Ski Endurance Race, an early project of Friends of the Clearwater that did not succeed as planned. The goal was to raise awareness of the Clearwater country on a national level and diversify the local logging dependent economy, by initiating a national endurance ski race that would appeal to hardy EarthFirst! types, i.e. low-tech, risky, groundbreaking, and if successful, of immense consequence.

When I originally proposed the plan, there was a large amount of interest. My original mailing list of potential racers during the summer of 1991 contained about a dozen names. Over the course of the fall, the list started shortening with accompanying excuses. Undaunted by the decreasing numbers of contestants, when enough snow had covered the high-country I started building snow caves on the route. One was built on the summit at Indian Graves Creek and another on the headwaters of Lolo Creek, both cached with one day's worth of rations for three people. The week prior to the agreed start-date, the last two contestants declined my offers of fame and the chance to win the first race.

After much soul-searching and actually filling out a Last Will and Testament, fellow activist Ramon, of the Ancient Forest Bus Brigade, agreed to drive me to the starting gate. Peterson's Corner is about seven miles east of Weippe, Idaho. I can still remember how nonchalantly he drove away and left me standing there in the cold, with an pair of freshly pine-tarred wooden Bonna 215s attached to my hiking boots and a pack on my back that weighed-in at 32 pounds. I felt that he could have, at least, tried to talk me out of this.

I found my first snowcave that night and built a nice fire under a big cedar tree near the creek and enjoyed my cache of frozen deer meat, dried tomatoes and dried fruit, all boiled together over the fire, along with homemade bread. The next night, I dug a snowcave into a cutbank slope next to the road, somewhere along Yoosa Creek. My third night out, I built an igloo near the summit of Beaver Dam Saddle. The next morning, I could not thaw-out my waterlogged boots enough to get my feet into them. I thawed them out by stuffing them into the sleeping bag while I cooked breakfast on the gas stove. I was about a half-mile from camp when I realized that my toes were not going to get warm. I made a hasty retreat back to the igloo and dove into my sleeping bag until my toes were toasty again, and the boots were totally thawed.

The fourth night found me at Weitas Meadows building another igloo in a very cold wind. The progress had been delayed where the road crosses Rocky Ridge, for fear of avalanche. After digging a test pit and trying to cave it in, I decided that it was safe to cross, that day. At this igloo, I learned the value of filling in all openings in the igloo. I have no way of knowing the temperature that night, but it was cold! I estimated it to be below -30 degrees F. I was forced to get out of the sleeping bag in the middle of the night and fill in some of my vents.

The next day was another slow start. The cold was part of it, but I had been dreading the crossing of the avalanche chute

that I knew existed at Chimney Butte for weeks. I hoped to cross it in the early evening, after the temperature started dropping again. I hesitated on the downhill side of the crossing until I was cold, and then decided it was probably safe and made a run for it. Of course, the snow was good and on the other side of the avalanche chute it felt so good to be alive! I remember running along on my skis on the up-hill side of Chimney Butte as if a great weight had been removed from my pack, pondering how much dread and fear for the future that there is in life that is unjustified when that time finally comes.

A cozy, warm igloo built with a winter view of Liz Butte, Weitas Creek basin, Cook Mountain, and a night sky filled with stars gave the next morning a feeling of being an insignificant part of this timeless and beautiful land. Then it got warm. By noon, I was torturing along in about six inches of slush. I had to find some dry ground on a windblown slope and wait for better times. When it froze-up again that evening, I decided to ski most of the night, anticipating another thaw the next day. The day's skiing in slush proved to be too much for the bindings on my skis. All at once, in the pitch dark, one ski stopped working and I took a header into the snow. All that I knew was that I could not travel anywhere in that deep snow, that I had not seen anyone in six days, that I had about four days food supply left, and that I still had many miles to go. I dug out a snowcave below the road and waited until morning light. By 9 a.m. I had breakfast and my cable binding repaired with the copper snare-wire that I carry on long trips, and was underway again, but not for long.

By noon I came to a large unexpected avalanche chute at Bald Mountain. The snow had been awful for about two days and the road completely disappeared into over twenty feet of wind-blown ice, snow, and probably slush. I started climbing the nearest ridge and in short order crossed over the top of Bald Mountain and back down to where the road should have come out of the snowfield. There was no road, anywhere! Climbing back up Bald Mountain to get a view up the Lolo Trail, I occasionally heard faint snowmobile noises from a long way further up the main ridge, maybe more than ten miles away. Seeing the way that I needed to go, I struck off cross-country, down the main ridge and found the road within a few miles.

Then I had my first wildlife encounter of the trip. Until then, I had seen a few ravens, a few squirrels and several flocks of chickadees, as well as snowshoe rabbit tracks, rodent tracks and one set of wolverine tracks. Completely unexpectedly, around the curve of the road comes roaring about eight snowmobiles. They slow down and stop, obviously shocked to see me. Then they grin to each other that expression of "We, the hardest rescuers of lost souls, have arrived." The lead snowgoer shuts down and takes his helmet off, still seated. I realize that it is too late to run.

First Question: Where did you come from?

Second Question: Why?

Third Question: Do you want a candy bar, how about a soda?

By this time they are all gathered around me, offering food, drinks, and a ride. We talk trail-talk. They are loggers from Elk City, on holiday, sledding from Lochsa Lodge at Powell. I pru-

dently decide not to broach the subject of Cove/Mallard, or Van Camp Timber Sale, or Mex Mountain Timber Sale, or the bank monkeyflower, or the Dworshak Extension Road or anything else related to my occupation with Friends of the Clearwater. Then suddenly, they saddle-up and roar away, leaving me a groomed trail.

Following their tracks, I start making fast time skiing. I ski on into the night, knowing that my igloo on the summit of Indian Graves Creek is already built and stocked with deer meat, cheese, and bread. From this igloo, I decide that is my finish point in the race. Food is low (but probably enough to get on into Powell). I haven't seen my family in eight days. My stomach is going bad from living on melted snow. I want a real bath and clean clothes. I want to walk on dirt again.

It takes half the next day to ski down to Highway 12, falling on the ice several times. Nobody will stop to pick up a hitchhiker, even 50 miles from the nearest house, standing in the wilderness, carrying a pair of skis with the temperature at around 10 degrees below zero. I lose all faith in humanity, until a truck driver stops about 2 p.m. the next day and takes me downriver to near my home in the community of Sunnyside.

The national destination Lolo Trail Ski Endurance Race never materialized as planned. On the other hand, I won the first one.

**Tentative FOC Calendar:**

- Forest Watch Potlucks - 2/6, 2/20, 3/20  
(contact FOC office for more information)
- Roadless Snowshoe Trips - 1/27 and 2/17  
(Sierra Club outings, FOC is co-sponsoring)
- Fred Rabe presentation about Research Natural Areas -  
2/13, 7:30 PM, UI Forestry Bldg., Rm.10
- Yellowstone to Yukon presentation by Harvey Locke -  
3/6, time and location TBA
- Wildlands Center for Preventing Roads workshop -  
3/13, time and location TBA
- Clearwater Elk Habitat Initiative Forum -  
4/3, time and location TBA

## In Memoriam

In addition to the losses of Sierra Club, League of Conservation Voters, Friends of the Earth, and Earth Island Institute founder David Brower and wilderness area advocate Congressman Bruce Vento from Minnesota. The Wild Clearwater region lost a great advocate in Bob Einhaus of Lewiston, Idaho, who passed away recently. His passion will be missed.

A great memory I have of Bob was at a hearing on grizzly recovery in Lewiston a few years ago. The usual list of suspects representing all the bad guys were there. The small room filled up rapidly. Bob was the first to arrive and he seemed a bit nervous, fearing nobody was there to speak for the Great Bear.

When the hearing began, the peoples' voices were heard, even though the politicians got to go first. I seem to recall Bob's name was among the first citizens called and he set the tone. The audience was struck by his passion and eloquence. He spoke in his soft Texas drawl, which sounded even more local than the locals. It was as if he was speaking for all of us. The majority of those speaking that night spoke for grizzly recovery in Idaho's Clearwater country and followed his lead in supporting real protection by supporting the conservation biology option.

The last time I saw Bob was at the roadless hearing in Lewiston. He walked up with his cane to the podium and spoke for the wild even though he had laryngitis that day. His courage brought tears to the eyes of those of us there.

On many occasions I had the opportunity to speak with Bob on the phone about issues surrounding the Clearwater country. He was always concerned and consistently involved in writing letters and speaking for the Wild. He was a great Friend of the Clearwater. I hope we can live up to his legacy.

His family has generously asked that donations be sent to Friends of the Clearwater in his name. Many people have donated a significant amount, showing how well loved and respected he was. He will be sorely missed.

Gary Macfarlane

"Today's mail brought a \$100 check to our National treasury from a New York woman. Oh! That a thousand of our good women who wish success to our cause would be moved thus to send in their checks! Only a very few women can go abroad to lecture, organize, agitate and educate, but very many can contribute money. . .and they who can't go, and can't speak, must help, each and everyone in every possible way, with their hope, their faith, their money. . . Who will send the next \$100? Oh, that we had \$10,000 to start with! Can't we have it, is the question." —Letter, Susan B. Anthony, 1893

### Help protect the wild Clearwater by joining Friends of the Clearwater today!

- \$15 - Living Lightly
- \$25 - Basic Membership
- \$100 - Forest Supporter
- This is what I can afford,  
please send me the newsletter.

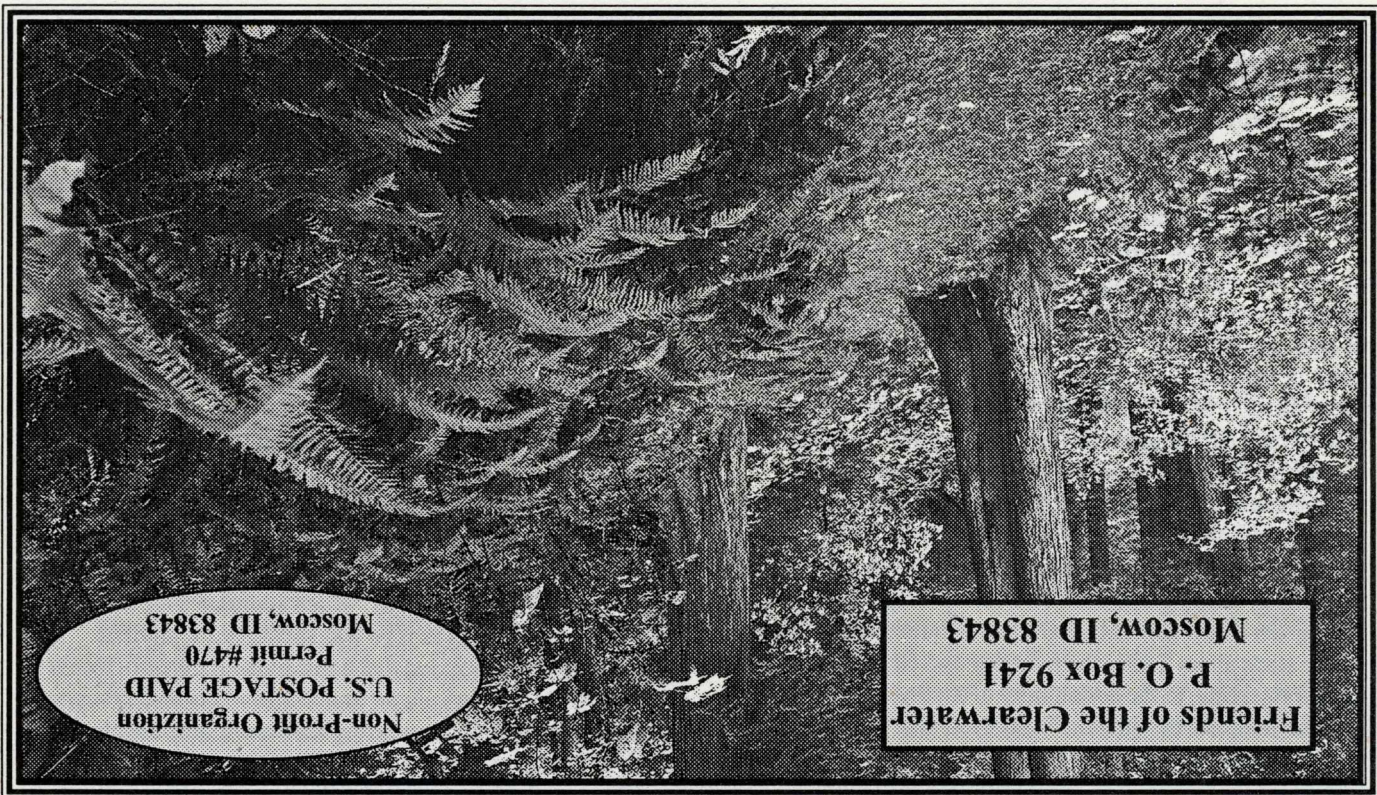
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please clip and send your tax-deductable donation to Friends of the Clearwater, P.O. Box 9241, Moscow, ID, 83843



Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Permit #470  
Moscow, ID 83843

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

## In this issue of the Clearwater Defender:

Debunking the Wild Retoric from the Wildfires

Roadless Protection?

S2S - The Sawtooth to Selkirk Hike

Wreckreation

Otter-Wing and Mackey Day Updates