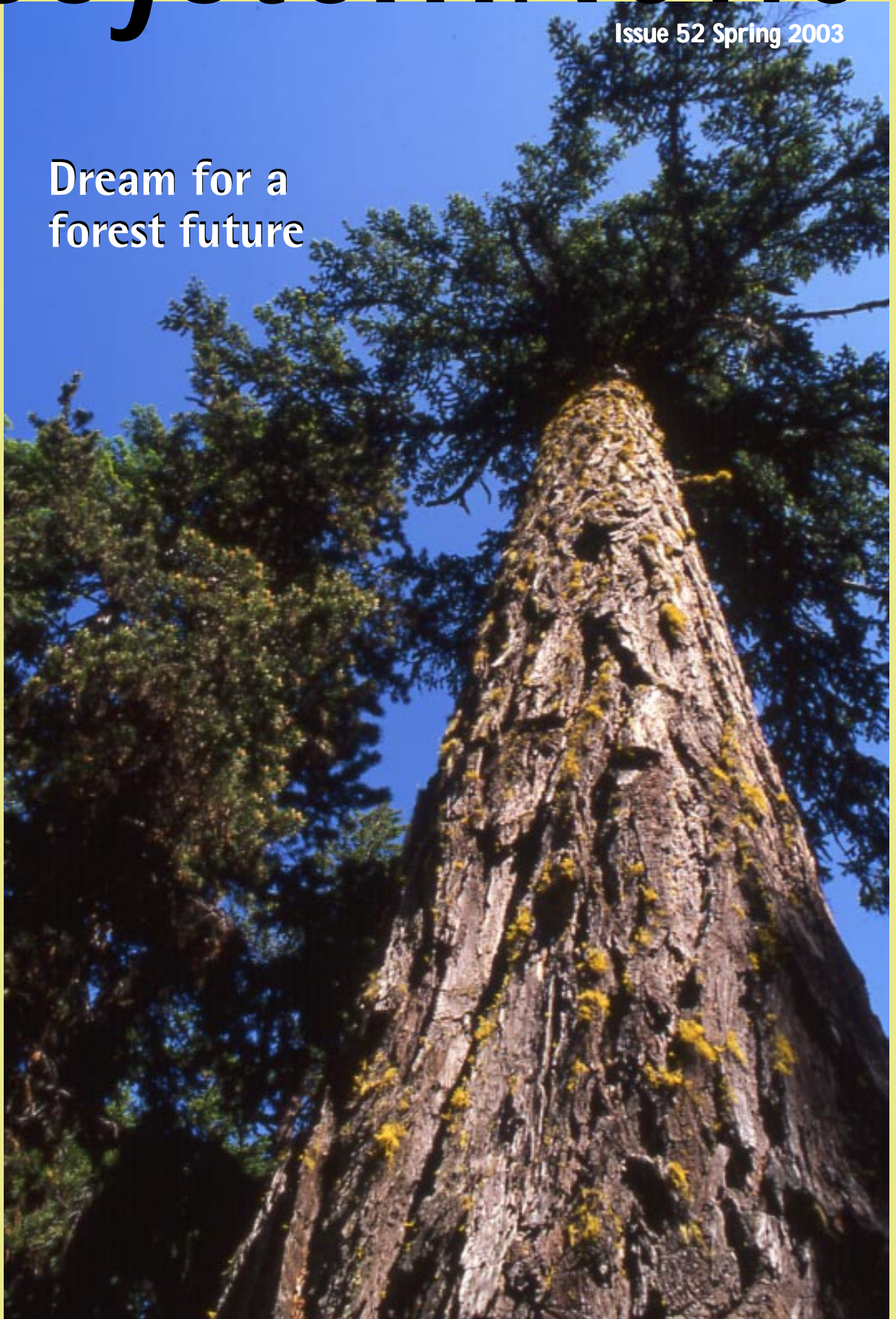


Northwest EcosystemNews

Issue 52 Spring 2003

Dream for a
forest future



Northwest Ecosystem Alliance

protects and restores wildlands in the Pacific Northwest and supports such efforts in British Columbia. NWEA bridges science and advocacy, working with activists, policy makers, and the general public to conserve our natural heritage.



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Note that our Bellingham office has moved as of March. See full address above.

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cover and inside art

Our cover features an eastside old-growth Douglas fir in Negro Creek: lands protected by The Cascades Conservation Partnership. Photo © Gregory Mroz, www.salishsea.org. Fisher drawing (page 5) by Cynthia Armstrong; fern scratchboard (page 23) by Jennifer Martin.



from the director

Public forests problem solving 101

“Ideology aside, will these guys ever decide that their job includes solving problems, not just using them?” –New York Times columnist Paul Krugman

That’s what I’m talking about! Krugman was writing about tax policy and the White House, but his words sum up well the approach this administration has taken to our public forests. Instead of addressing problems with solutions, they use problems as the bowls in which they serve gifts to special interests. Cases in point:

The administration used the occasion of last summer’s forest fires to advance policies to reduce environmental review and citizen participation and to increase logging on national forests. In contrast, real solutions to increased fire risk on some forests would include:

- Funding for grants to private landowners for careful thinning (most of the problem acres are private, not public);
- Funding for grants to rural communities for developing fire plans, buying fire equipment, replacing combustible structures, and clearing brush to create defensible space where it matters;
- Focusing Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management silvicultural activities toward careful thinning in areas that meet criteria as high priorities, namely dense regrowth around homes and communities;
- Doing something—anything—to address climate change. The White House proposal offering business owners a deduction of up to \$75,000 on the cost of an SUV, under the latest tax relief package, is not what I have in mind.

But such actions would not sufficiently reward campaign donors from the timber industry, nor would they perpetuate the convenient anti-environmental climate in rural western communities. So instead the President uses public fear about fire to advance policies that improve industry access to wild areas and old forests.

The reason for this divisive tactic is that the industry doesn’t want the brush and small-diameter trees that are so combustible; they want the bigger trees that happen to be fire resistant. End result: The President’s policies could actually worsen fire risk as they raid our heritage.

On the westside of the Cascades, the White House is using the excuse of a stagnant federal timber sale program to peck away at the Northwest Forest Plan, a positive and progressive Clinton-era policy that did more to put the timber wars behind us than anything else in two decades of acrimony. Again, real solutions would include:

- Directing the FS and BLM to abandon timber sales in mature and old-growth forest;
- Focusing silvicultural activities toward careful thinning of young tree plantations (regrown clearcuts), which can provide ecological and economic benefits;
- Funding restoration programs that put people to work—removing unneeded forest roads, fixing streams, stabilizing slopes, and thinning plantations.

Instead the administration is proposing process shortcuts that make it easier for the Forest Service to log old growth and even damage streams. They’ve also reopened the spotted owl debate by rolling over on a weak timber industry lawsuit.

There is no explanation to these actions except special interest politics. It isn’t as though America needs more wood. In fact, we’re so awash in timber, both flowing from plantations in the southeastern US and, as a result of liberalized trade, from countries ranging from Canada to Germany, that timber prices are too low for many mills to process logs at a profit.

Solutions bring people together. Instead President Bush’s timber policies are dividing Americans, with the public getting the short end of the log.

Mitch Friedman, executive director

This issue of Northwest Ecosystem News focuses on current forest protection rollbacks, what NWEA is doing to stop them, and how you can help.



Taylor's checkerspot.
Kelly McAllister, WDFW

Butterflies in the coal mine

NWEA, with the Xerces Society, Gifford Pinchot Task Force and others, has filed to list as endangered three butterflies—Taylor's checkerspot, island marble, and Mardon skipper—under the Endangered Species Act.

The petition requests protection for the butterflies' prairie habitat in southern Puget Sound, the San Juan Islands, and near Mt. Adams in Washington; in the Willamette Valley and the Siskiyou Mountains in Oregon; and in Del Norte County in California.

"[Butterflies] are like the canary in the coal mine," says Scott Hoffman Black, director of the Xerces Society, "another reminder that these grassland ecosystems, and all of the species that depend on them, are in trouble."

Agricultural and urban development, tree encroachment, and invasive plant proliferation threaten the butterflies' native grasslands. Pesticide use, recreation, and grazing threaten the insects themselves.

The island marble is found in only one place on San Juan Island, and of Taylor's checkerspot only four populations remain. "In the last two years, we've only narrowly avoided catastrophic loss of Mardon skipper populations from development and insecticide spray programs," says Dave Werntz, NWEA's science director. "Without federal protection, these rare butterflies will likely disappear from the face of the earth."

Backroom settlements: Bad for wildlife

As northern spotted owl populations continue to decline, timber industry and Bush administration lawyers have filed proposed settlements in two federal court cases that challenge the protected status and critical habitat designations for spotted owls and marbled murrelets. NWEA and other environmental groups have been excluded from the settlement talks, a situation we are objecting to in court.

In recent cases where industry coalitions have brought challenges to environmental protections, the federal government has either failed to defend the lawsuits or settled on terms that benefit special interests and harm the environment. For example, in settlements earlier this year, the government eliminated habitat protections for many salmon species as well as imperiled red-legged frogs in California. Coupled with the government's failure to defend against legal attacks on coho salmon and on roadless forests protection, citizen groups increasingly are forced to play the role usually reserved for the Department of Justice.

In the owl/murrelet case, Earthjustice is representing NWEA

and other groups, including Biodiversity Northwest, Environmental Protection Information Center, Gifford Pinchot Task Force, Oregon Natural Resources Council, Audubon Society of Portland, Seattle Audubon Society, Sierra Club, and The Wilderness Society. "It was a knock-down, drag-out fight to get protections for owls, murrelets, and our ancient forests, and now the Bush administration is giving away special deals right and left," says Kristen Boyles, an attorney with Earthjustice.

Lynx listing: A lawsuit victory



Lynx with hare taken by remote camera.
Friends of the Loomis

It took nine years and numerous lawsuits for NWEA and others to get lynx listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Last year NWEA and conservation organizations across the country once again went to bat for lynx.

On December 26, 2002, a federal judge ruled that, yes, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as required by law, must designate critical habitat for the wild cat. The USFWS must also revisit their "threatened" listing of lynx within parts of the cat's range where the species is currently devoid of reproducing populations. In all likelihood, we may soon see the lynx's status changed to endangered over much of its historical range.

U.S. spotted owls not "out of the woods"

The spotted owl is getting scarcer. "From what we can tell from our demographic studies, the population still appears to be declining overall," says research biologist Eric Forsman.

Forsman, with the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station in Corvallis, Oregon, co-authored three of the original spotted owl papers. "You can point to some areas that appear to be doing better than others, but I don't think the data are particularly comforting," he says.

The spotted owl, solitary and slow to reproduce, requires unbroken expanses of mature and old-growth forest with layered canopies to thrive. *Greenwire*, 2/21/02

DNR owns up to owls

After announcing in 2001 that they would log spotted owl circles, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has changed its tune to allow for some protection of owls. DNR says that it will postpone logging until 2007 on 14,000 to 15,000 acres of prime spotted owl habitat in southwestern Washington, as part of a conservation-oriented landscape management plan

agreement between DNR and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). The logging postponement came in response to intense citizen and DFW pressure.

A 1999 analysis suggests spotted owl numbers are dropping by 4 percent annually. Biologists say southwestern Washington comprises about 30 percent of the owl's range, which makes remnant old-growth forest there increasingly important.

BC's spotted owls: Going, going, gone?

If the U.S. northern spotted owl is in trouble, the Canadian northern spotted owl has it worse. In Canada, according to the most optimistic estimate, there are fewer than two dozen mating pairs left—all of them in British Columbia—and no more than a handful hatched this year.

A decade ago the B.C. government devised a plan to protect the owl in established habitat management zones. Yet the government allows loggers to clearcut in these zones as long as 63 percent of the land is left as suitable owl habitat. That plan has proved "inadequate to stabilize the population," according to a July science report.



B.C. logging in a "spotted owl management zone." *Jeremy Williams, Western Canada Wilderness Committee*

Recently a team of biologists in B.C. found two mating pairs of owls with two chicks each. When the biologists returned in late fall, one pair was gone, presumably killed by predators.

The Sierra Legal Defence Fund, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, and others have tried to protect the bird in the courts, but have few legal tools. To date, only one timber company has promised to stop logging in spotted owl habitat. *Information from New York Times (12/04/02)*

Cut SUV guzzling, not caribou nuzzling

The Bush administration's plan to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to drilling suffered a major blow in January when six Republican senators, including former presidential candidate John McCain of Arizona, said they would not go along with a plan to tack ANWR drilling language onto a massive spending bill that would enact the 2004 federal budget.

"Because the opening of the Arctic refuge to drilling raises a host of policy concerns, including serious environmental ramifications, we do not believe this issue should be injected in the budget process," the lawmakers said.

Many believe that the administration should cut oil imports instead by boosting the mileage standards of gas-guzzling sport utility vehicles and other automobiles.



Mycena monticola, an old-growth, forest floor dwelling fungus. *Thom O'Dell, USFS*

Old growth for national defense

As reported in *Jane's Defence Weekly*, a fungal strain discovered by a Northwest fungi cultivation company was found to "completely and efficiently degrade" chemical surrogates of VX and sarin, potent nerve gases. Says Paul Stamets, founder of the company Fungi Perfecti in southern Washington, "We have a fungal genome that is diverse and present in the old-growth forests. If you look on the fungal genome as being soldier candidates protecting the U.S. as our host defense, not only for the ecosystem but for our population...we should be saving our old-growth forests as a matter of national defense. Fungi," Stamets reminds us, "are the grand recyclers of the planet and the vanguard species in habitat restoration."

For more see www.salon.com/tech/feature/2002/11/25/mushrooms/index.html?x



Fishers move quicker than science teams

As noted in past issues of *Northwest Ecosystem News*, NWEA and the Washington state Department of Fish and Wildlife, are working collaboratively on a plan to reintroduce the fisher, a mid-sized carnivore, to its native Northwest habitat. The fisher science team met recently to develop parameters for the final habitat feasibility study. By our next issue we should know where exactly in Washington would be the most suitable areas to release reintroduced fishers.

A rare and exceedingly beautiful animal.... Members of the weasel family, like the fisher, are keenly adapted predators that have been very successful. By studying them we gain a better understanding of the ecology and behavior of predatory and prey species.

—Roger Powell, from *The Fisher: Life history, ecology, and behavior.*



RAND report creates ripples for dam removal

According to the international nonprofit research and analysis firm, RAND, removing four dams on the lower Snake River could positively impact the region's economy or at worst would have no impact. For years opponents to Columbia River basin dam removal have claimed the region cannot afford to lose the electricity these dams produce, about 4 percent of our area's energy. The September 2002 RAND report, "Generating Electric Power in the Pacific Northwest" is conservative: it ignores the economic benefits of salmon recovery, of improved fishing opportunities, or of a healthy Snake River. Yet the report still concludes that replacing power from the dams with investments in energy efficiency would create as much as 15,000 new jobs. *Information thanks to Save Our Wild Salmon, www.wildsalmon.org. NWEA is a long-standing member organization of SOS.*

Another tool in the toolbox

Hot new tool: The Clean Water for Salmon Pesticide Action Kit includes organizing tips, information resources, and fact sheets on topics such as how pesticides put kids as well as fish at risk. "The kit gives communities the tools they need to get hazardous pesticides out of our parks, and off our roadsides and municipal properties," says Angela Storey, pesticides organizer with Washington Toxics Coalition. The Clean Water for Salmon campaign has already had one success with the adoption of a municipal policy in Lynnwood, Washington, eliminating use of pesticides that pose a significant health risk to salmon and people. *To download the kit, visit www.watoxics.org.*



Taking farmed salmon off the menu

Last fall the British Columbia-based Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR), whose members include the B.C. Aboriginal Fisheries Commission, announced a North American boycott of farmed salmon. The campaign is asking businesses along the West Coast to stop selling or serving farmed salmon. CAAR points to the numerous problems affecting salmon aquaculture, including pollution, use of antibiotics, coloring agents and pesticides, and escapes from net pens. While Chile is the biggest supplier of farmed salmon to the U.S., Canada makes up 25 percent of the farmed salmon imports imported into the U.S. *For more information, go to www.farmedanddangerous.org or www.sublegals.net.*

A protest a day...

Taking part in protests and demonstrations can be good for your physical and mental health, says a new British study. Psychologists at the University of Sussex found that people who get involved in campaigns, strikes, and political demonstrations experience psychological well-being that can help them overcome stress, pain, anxiety, and depression.

"Empowering events were almost without exception described as joyous occasions," said researcher John Drury. "Simply recounting the events in the interview brought a smile to the face of the interviewees."



Happy protesters at the Seattle Restore Our Roots rally for forests Sept. 29, 2002. *Joe Scott*

Roads to ruin

Another controversial administration proposal means that you may encounter more off-road vehicles zipping by while hiking in one of your favorite wild places. The Bush administration announced in January 2003 that it will use a Civil War-era law to make it easier for states and local jurisdictions to create official roads out of dirt tracks and abandoned trails across public lands.

The one-sentence loophole, R.S. 2477, or Section 8 of the 1866 Mining Act, provides simply: "The right-of-way for the construction of highways over public lands, not reserved for public uses, is hereby granted." This obsolete statute remains a problem because even though the Federal Land Policy and Management Act repealed it in 1976, the repeal was subject to "valid existing rights." Thousands of uninventoried miles of long-abandoned wagon roads, cattle paths, jeep trails, and miners' routes crisscrossing national parks and wildlife refuges could potentially now be transformed into roads—some of them paved.



GBOP, I bop, and you bop

The Grizzly Bear Outreach Project (GBOP) is a new independent project offering to community groups and others presentations on grizzly bears: the bear's history in the North Cascades; their status, ecology, and behavior; as well as the recovery process, bear identification, and many tips for coexisting with bears and other wildlife. GBOP is guided by community members and facilitated by Insight Wildlife Management and the Conservation Partnership Center. *For more information or to get a free brochure with fold-out "Bear Necessities" poster, contact www.bearinfo.org.*

in brief

Administration forces hopscotch on Partnership checkerboard lands

Nearly three years ago, The Cascades Conservation Partnership initiated an unprecedented campaign to purchase and protect key private forestlands in the “checkerboard” lands between the Alpine Lakes and Mount Rainier. NWEA is a founding member and the fiscal administrator of this coalition effort. The Partnership has protected over 20,000 acres so far by raising private funds and leveraging additional funds from Congress.

Public funding update: The numbers for fiscal year 2003 are finally in. Though it appeared funds for land acquisition in the Central Cascades of Washington would be stuck at \$3 million (the President’s request), the final figure was \$4 million, thanks to the efforts of Rep. Jennifer Dunn, Rep. Norm Dicks, and Sen. Patty Murray. This will protect several of the key Plum Creek corporation sections, mostly clustered north of Roslyn, on which purchase options expire this year. Though \$1 million in Forest Legacy funds for the Yakima River was axed at the last minute, we hope to recover those funds in the next lobbying round.

In his proposed budget for fiscal year 2004, President Bush reduced funding for Forest Service acquisitions nationally by 66 percent, and zeroed out funding for land acquisition in the Central Cascades. Our disappointment has registered loud and clear in D.C. Of course, Congress determines what ultimately goes into the appropriations bills, and The Partnership and its allies in Congress can turn this around. Quoted in the King County Journal, Rep. Jennifer Dunn said, “I will get to work, as I have the last three budgets, to get money set aside for this.”

Tieton River: On February 11, The Partnership lobbied in Olympia for funds to acquire much-loved Tieton River lands west of Yakima. The Tieton River project would protect some of the state’s most diverse and imperiled habitat (including old-growth ponderosa pine) and is a candidate to receive funding through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.

Our diverse lobbying contingent was organized by outgoing Outreach Director Heidi Eisenhour. Approached and encouraged by The Partnership, The Nature Conservancy of Washington is now leading an effort to protect more than 10,000 acres of Tieton River lands. The Partnership will continue to support this effort.

Stopping the Clearwater dam, saving Warm Creek

Last month, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) dismissed an application by Balaton Power of Boise, Idaho, to construct a dam and hydroelectric facility on Clearwater Creek. Clearwater Creek is a tributary of the Middle Fork of the Nooksack River in Whatcom County.

The Clearwater Creek application began some years ago and was finally denied on grounds that Balaton Power did not obtain a shoreline permit from Whatcom County in sufficient time. Balaton had previously obtained an extension and FERC issued a new deadline of January 10, 2003. The company failed to meet that deadline. There is a 30-day period in which the company can appeal FERC’s decision. There is now some indication that Balaton Power is seeking companies to purchase the project and appeal FERC’s dismissal.

The news came as Northwest Ecosystem Alliance planned a public forum held March 5 in the Whatcom County Council Chambers in Bellingham’s county courthouse to educate the public about the Clearwater project and a similar proposal for nearby Warm Creek. The Warm Creek hydroelectric project, also proposed by Balaton, is still moving



Pete Kendall / The Bellingham Herald

Clearwater Creek, saved by the bell?

through the application process. The Warm Creek dam and hydro facility poses even larger threats because a pipeline, carrying diverted water to a powerhouse, calls for logging of several acres of nearby old growth. The pipeline would bisect habitat for the only remaining spotted owl pair on state DNR lands north of the Skagit River. Marbled murrelets have also been

documented in this old-growth forest.

If the Warm Creek dam is denied as hoped for, the last remaining obstacle to a wild and functioning Middle Fork Nooksack River system is an aging diversion dam owned by the city of Bellingham. The Nooksack Indian Tribe and the city have been working together to ensure fish passage. The city is investigating the feasibility of removing the dam, which is being quickly eroded by the gravel-rich flows of the Middle Fork, and putting in a less expensive pipe to divert water. If the study determines that the pipe will work, another 20 miles of salmon habitat would be opened for Nooksack Spring Chinook salmon runs, which fight an uphill battle against extinction.

For more information or to get involved, please contact conservation associate **Seth Cool** at scool@ecosystem.org





Bills sponsored by Washington state Sen. Morton attempt to prevent state agencies from purchasing land for ecosystem protection.

Mark Skatrud

Washington public lands on the defensive

New Chair of Senate Natural Resources Fires off a Barrage of Odd Bills

This last November Republicans took control of the Washington state senate and gave Senator Bob Morton a prominent position as chair of the senate natural resources committee.

Senator Morton represents the 7th legislative district in northeastern Washington. He sees his region as it was, in the early twentieth century—not as it is now in the twenty-first, and not with the vision of a leader seeking to improve the lives of his constituents in a meaningful way. He blames spotted owls, grizzlies, and salmon for many of the problems facing rural Washington. His actions demonstrate a disdain of public lands that is out of touch with Americans and their love for public lands: for recreation, open space, education, and wildlife; for clean watersheds and fresh air.

Senator Morton spent time in the minority and now, as chair, has an arsenal of kooky bills he sends forth daily: a bill to tear the state asunder along the Cascades; a memorial (that mentions Northwest Ecosystem Alliance by name) opposing grizzly bear re-introduction in British Columbia; a bill to outlaw the introduction of wolves into Washington; and two bills to prevent the purchase of private land by state agencies. He is the main sponsor of 38 bills to date—most of them odd bills that take time and resources from a state legislature strapped for both.

One bill in particular is of real concern: Senate Bill 5518. It states that any state agency that purchases land for the purpose of conservation or ecosystem protection must secure the consent of the county commission or council in which the land is located. In Okanogan County, the Department of Fish and Wildlife has been purchasing ranches that have gone out of business for wildlife habitat, and the county commission is eager to put a stop to it.

Call the legislative hotline (1.800.562.6000) to urge your state legislators to oppose Senate Bill 5518, a law that would benefit neither rural counties nor Washington state.

Senate Bill 5518 will allow county commissioners to insert themselves in private real estate transactions between willing sellers and an agency, would result in more ranches turning into ranchettes. It would reduce wildlife habitat and would bring irrevocable change to the landscape.

What this bill wouldn't do is breathe economic health into a declining ranch economy. Yet it's one of a string of bills by Senator Morton that seeks to cast blame, and misses, failing to responsibly address real problems faced by his constituents. The 7th legislative district is a beautiful area; the people and their lands deserve better.

Lisa McShane is community relations director at Northwest Ecosystem Alliance, lmcsane@ecosystem.org.



Go to www.ecosystem.org/projects_statelands for our overview of Washington state lands issues.



What will be the legacy of the Bush presidency in our public forests?

Environmental Laws on the Chopping Block

Before the moving men even left the White House, the Bush administration seized a number of environmental regulations carefully crafted over a number of years. At least half a dozen regulations were suspended on Inauguration Day. Discarded were rules that reduced arsenic levels in drinking water, regulations that phased out snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park, and rules that conserved roadless areas in national forests.

These actions were simply a preview of the administration's scaling back of scientifically sound management decisions. During the past two years, the Bush administration has flagrantly ignored public comments and manipulated scientific analysis to benefit extractive industries. To suit industry plans for drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, for example, top officials actually changed research that demonstrated negative impacts to polar bears from oil drilling.

Over the holiday season and into this new year, the Bush administration launched a number of new attacks on national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges. Time-tested environmental laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act, National Forest Management Act, Endangered Species Act, and Clean Water Act have all come under fire. Weakening of these important environmental safeguards puts at risk our ancient forests, their wildlife, and our natural heritage.

Yet amid the environmental rollback steamroller, there is hope. Public uproar and organized, principled opposition have caused some of the suspensions to fall. Relaxation of tougher arsenic standards was fought back by common sense, science, and public outcry; and a federal appeals court in December 2002 lifted a stay on implementation of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, a rule established by the U.S. Forest Service. Still, the situation looks grim, and grows grimmer. Now is the time to intensify the progressive movement to conserve our public lands.

Endangered: National Forest Management Act

One of the worst attacks on environmental law and public process came in a November 2002 proposal to undermine the National Forest Management Act (NFMA)—the centerpiece of U.S. national forest law. Enacted in 1976, NFMA was the Congressional response to decades of Forest Service mismanagement of public forests. With the act, Congress and the American people charged the Forest Service not only to protect the health of public forests but to “provide for the diversity of plant and animal communities.” Forest supervisors were required to develop 15-year management plans for all national forests and grasslands, as blueprints for forest planning decisions.

The Bush administration's proposal to modify NFMA would unravel these key provisions by declaring national forests “generally available” for commodity development—including logging of mature and old-growth trees, grazing, mining, drilling for oil and gas, and off-road vehicle use. The proposal undermines



Felled tree in Berry Patch, a recent timber sale in the Willamette National Forest in Oregon.
James Johnston, Cascadia Wildlands Project

Congress and the American people charged the Forest Service not only to protect the health of public forests but to “provide for the diversity of plant and animal communities.”



Tune into www.ecosystem.org to stay up to speed on the latest forest protection rollbacks and actions to stop the steamroller.

continued next page



Chopping block, *continued from page 9*

NEPA empowers people

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations that implement it demand that federal agencies involve the public in preparing and meeting NEPA procedures.

Federal agencies must give public notice of NEPA-related hearings, citizen meetings, and the availability of environmental documents.

The regulations also set up an **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** process for any project using federal funds. The EIS, written by an independent contractor, scopes issues and impacts, and offers alternatives regarding a project or decision.

Publication of the EIS is one of the best opportunities for public involvement and comment. The public EIS process includes opportunities for people to comment on draft (DEIS) and final (FEIS) impact statements, to offer alternatives, and to question missing data or scientific information. Federal agency decisions based on the EIS process are issued in a Record of Decision (ROD).

There may also be a public comment period for the Record of Decision, or the ROD may be released simultaneously with the FEIS; some federal agencies also have a public appeal process after the ROD is issued.

important wildlife conservation plans, such as the Northwest Forest Plan (see page 12); and eliminates opportunities for public participation in forest plan amendments and appeals.

A poison pill: "Healthy Forests Initiative"

Among the anti-environmental proposals unveiled by the Bush administration is the controversial Healthy Forests Initiative. Although Congress rejected President Bush's forest fire-prevention legislation last fall, the administration forged ahead. Using an administrative rule-making process they sidestepped lawmakers to propose, in a far-reaching series of rules, to cut more trees—and big, old trees—in a misguided attempt to reduce wildfire risk on millions of acres of public lands. By curtailing public input and eliminating environmental review, as required under the National Environmental Policy Act, this sweeping forest-policy revision would speed logging projects in national forests.

The plan is not solution oriented, and in actuality has nothing to do with reducing fire risk to citizens and communities. Research clearly demonstrates that to protect people and communities from forest fires, homes, schools, and businesses must be "FIREWISED" and a quarter-mile defensible space created around communities within the Wildland Urban Interface—those lands where forests meet habitations.

Breaking the backbone of the National Environmental Protection Act

To implement a bad forest initiative and otherwise fast-track logging on national forests, the administration must also undermine another time-tested environmental law, the National Environmental Policy Act. Passed in 1969, NEPA is the backbone of America's environmental law. It recognizes humanity's impact on the biosphere and the importance of restoring and maintaining the overall quality of our natural environment. Its passage established a national policy to protect the environment, creating a strong decision-making process for implementing projects and programs that might adversely affect the environment. Because of NEPA, any project using federal funds must be analyzed for environmental impacts using a process that ensures public participation and analysis of alternatives. If you've ever commented on a project or proposal—such as the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which garnered more than two million citizen comments (the vast majority favoring protection)—you've used the NEPA process to make your voice heard.

The Bush administration has introduced a series of proposals that would circumvent NEPA by removing informed decision-making processes and environmental safeguards from forest management. Without a process for informed decision making and public oversight, our beautiful wild places and their unique species could incur great harm. Informed review by people intimate with forest landscapes is key to sound forest management.

At risk: Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was signed by President Nixon in 1973 to provide for the conservation of species in danger of extinction. Under the ESA, threatened and endangered species are identified, their critical habitat is designated, and a species recovery plan is prepared. It is the ESA that saved our nation's symbol, the bald eagle. Protecting endangered species helps maintain a healthy human environment, protects important medicine and food sources, and preserves their human enjoyment for many generations to come.

Under the guise of fire risk reduction, as part of the Healthy Forests Initiative, White House proposals would jeopardize habitat for threatened and endangered species such as salmon, spotted owl, grizzly bear, and lynx, to speed logging of



mature and old-growth forests far from the Wildland Urban Interface where forest lands meet communities. The proposal dictates that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—the agency responsible for ensuring the conservation and protection of species at risk of extinction—look the other way when these species will be adversely affected in the “short term” by logging for “fire risk reduction.”

Down the drain: Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act (CWA) is another of the American public’s key environmental laws, established to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity” of the country’s waters, setting water quality standards and making it illegal to dump toxins or otherwise degrade bodies of water. The act protects wetlands—which store floodwaters, provide habitat for fish and wildlife, and filter pollutants from drinking water before they enter our rivers, lakes, and streams. Along with forested watersheds, wetlands provide home to a diversity of wildlife, including imperiled amphibians.

In 2001, the administration approved new rules allowing the Army Corps of Engineers to permit companies to dump debris from mountaintop removal into rivers, streams, and wetlands. And in January 2003, officials unveiled a rule that excludes from the CWA intermittent and ephemeral streams, small tributaries, and wetlands adjacent to those waters. As a result, 20 million acres of wetlands—some of the last examples of this precious ecosystem—may lose protected status, a disaster for our nation’s bodies of water.

Reinserting our vision for a clean and healthy world

Attacks on the National Forest Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, and actions to bypass Congress to implement the highly controversial “Stealthy” Forests Initiative, put our natural resources at stake. The White House proposals work to undermine the framework of U.S. environmental policy and weaken the tools by which citizens and scientists have a voice in decisions and hold government accountable. The American people fought hard for these laws, and because of them our natural world still thrives in places.

The Bush administration’s proposed vision for our public lands is out of touch with both the people’s view and that of mainstream politicians. Its poor vision represents an abrupt change in philosophical direction in public lands management in America, and takes us back in time, to miles of clearcuts, spoiled streams and fishing holes, and roads through every forest. It’s a near-sighted and special interest view that can’t survive.

We can stop these regressive proposals: by being persistent and forthright, advocating for the common sense use of sound science and informed decision making when deciding how to manage our wealth of natural resources. By working together on a strong, common vision we can preserve the public’s voice in public land management and protect our public lands and national forests. These lands are our lands.

Barb Swanson is conservation associate and fire ecologist at Northwest Ecosystem Alliance. You can reach her at bswanson@ecosystem.org



Thick-barked fire survivor, old Douglas fir in eastern Washington. ©Gregory Mroz



Prescribed burns can benefit the forest.
Barb Swanson



NWEA is holding a series of public workshops on these proposed environmental rollbacks. Visit www.ecosystem.org/calendar for more on what you can do.



Administration plans to ditch Fish and Wildlife provisions

Ax Falls on North



A rare old-growth fungi, *Ramaria araiospora*. It grows in a symbiotic relationship with the roots of old-growth conifers. Dan Powell, USFS

Charting a different course: A letter from Congress

Below are excerpts from a January 16, 2003, letter sent by House of Representatives Members Jay Inslee, Rick Larsen, Jim McDermott, Earl Blumenauer, David Wu, and Adam Smith to President George W. Bush, Undersecretary Mark Rey, and Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth:

"We are writing to express our serious concern over the Administration's proposed changes to the management of public lands in the Northwest, notably the weakening of key components of the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP)....

"We are particularly concerned that a weakening of the basic environmental safeguards for old-growth forests, fish, and clean water of the NWFP represents a step backward in time for the people....

"We believe that a majority of our constituents support strong protection

continued page 13

As national environmental laws are weakened and public input excluded, our region of big trees—what remains—suffers particularly harmful administration attention. Late last year, the Bush administration moved to discard two key federal rules that protect salmon and rare wildlife in Pacific Northwest forests.

The rules—requiring that timber sales on national forests must “maintain or restore” aquatic conditions, and avoid killing rare plants, fungi, salamanders, and other wildlife—have halted over a hundred deadly sales in ancient forests of western Oregon and Washington. The administration’s plans would increase old forest logging across a million acres of federal land, and re-ignite “war in the woods.”

Gutting salmon protections

When the northern spotted owl was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, it was more than just owls that were disappearing. By 1994, over 100 of the region’s fish stocks (locally adapted populations of fish) had gone extinct and more than 300 stocks were considered to have a “moderate to high risk of extinction” because of low or declining numbers. Four stocks had been listed as threatened or endangered, and many others would soon follow.

To reverse the slide toward extinction, scientists crafted an “Aquatic Conservation Strategy” to retain and restore high quality habitat for fish and other aquatic species on federal lands. The strategy has four main components—key watersheds, riparian reserves, watershed analysis, and restoration—and explicit rules governing review of timber sales and other potentially harmful projects. The rules emphatically state that “actions that do not maintain the existing condition or lead to improved conditions in the long term would not meet the intent of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy and thus, should not be implemented.” The test is applied both at the logging site and at the watershed scale to factor in cumulative effects from other logging.

It is that language and the emphasis on maintaining and restoring aquatic environments that the Bush administration seeks to purge from the Forest Service rulebook. These rules stopped the destructive Limbo timber sale and eleven other timber sales on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest that were expected to harm endangered salmon and trout populations.

The Limbo timber sale, located northwest of Carson, Washington, in the upper headwaters of the Wind River (between Trapper Creek and Indian Heaven Wilderness Areas), would remove more than 13 million board feet (2,600 log trucks) from over 400 acres of mature and old-growth forests. According to the National Marine Fisheries Service, this aggressive logging would increase stream flows and sediment levels, and inflict a world of hurt on the Wind River’s struggling steelhead trout.

The steelhead trout and chinook salmon that reside in the Wind River are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife considers Wind River steelhead to be “the most critical of the listed stocks” in the Lower Columbia River. Over the last decade, the number of steelhead counted in annual surveys dropped from nearly 275 to 43—the lowest numbers on record for the Wind River. This prompted Forest Service fisheries biologist Brian Bair to proclaim that extinction is a real possibility for steelhead in the Wind River.

Northwest Old Growth

Without the Aquatic Conservation Strategy rules, logging projects like Limbo, Dark Canyon, Dry Jackpot, Iron Horse, Johnson, Lower Iron, Kirk, Silver Watch, Tower, and Willame would sail forward with little consideration for endangered salmon and trout. If we lose the “maintain and restore” standard, industrial logging and road construction will dump sediment into the Wind and other tributaries to the Columbia River, and these struggling runs of salmon and trout may not survive.

Hitting rare wildlife when they're down

The second prong of the rollbacks strikes at some of the Pacific Northwest's rarest and most sensitive wildlife. As part of a recent legal settlement with the timber industry, the Bush administration has agreed to scuttle federal rules that require the Forest Service to survey logging areas so that inhabited sites can be protected. These “Survey and Manage” provisions were enacted after Northwest Forest Plan scientists predicted dim prospects for certain species associated with mature and old-growth forests slated for logging.

If we lose Survey and Manage provisions, there will likely be dire consequences for at-risk wildlife such as the Larch Mountain salamander, a species endemic to the Cascade Mountains of southern Washington and northern Oregon. Fewer than 100 Larch Mountain salamander sites have been located in Washington, and many of these are on private lands in the Columbia River Gorge. Despite extensive surveys between 1993 and 1998, only 34 new salamander sites were located on federal forests.

Surveyors at the La Roux timber sale on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest found an unusual salamander bonanza—47 salamanders, including 38 in a single logging unit. Larch Mountain salamanders are highly sensitive to changes in their cool and moist forest habitat. According to salamander experts, logging the La Roux timber sale is expected to alter the temperature and humidity of salamander habitat, and could jeopardize the long-term viability of the Larch Mountain salamander population.

Surveys in Washington's numerous other old forest timber sales yielded a wealth of information about the region's rare bryophytes, fungi, lichens, and mollusks. For instance, the mycologists searching mature and old-growth forests in the Gifford Pinchot's Beta timber sale located a mycorrhizal fungus, *Ramaria cyaneigranosa*, known from less than ten other places in the Pacific Northwest. Another endemic fungi, *Ramaria amyloidea*, known from only a dozen other sites, was found in the Papa Bare and Page timber sales. Rare mollusks and bryophytes were found in more than half of the Swell timber sale logging units, and over forty sites of fungi were located in the Alpha timber sale.

There is no question that the Survey and Manage” program can effectively protect the most rare and sensitive wildlife. It is no mystery that these species are generally found in the last remaining mature and old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest. If the administration succeeds in killing the wildlife protection rules, we will lose many of our old forests and the wildlife they support.



Just outside the Limbo timber sale in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in southern Washington: old growth is under the ax again in the Northwest. *Dave Wertz*

Letter, continued from previous page

for older forests, clean water, and protection for endangered species such as salmon. In developing policy, we must work to solidify and strengthen—not eliminate—these basic protections. The Administration's proposals to modify the Survey and Manage and Aquatic Conservation Strategy functions of the NWFP, as well as to alter overarching environmental review procedures and standards for wildlife management under the National Forest Management Act, run contrary to these interests...

“It would be a tragic misstep of federal policy to send the Pacific Northwest back to the days before our fragile truce over forest policy...

“Although not a perfect management plan, the NWFP has brought us closer to consensus on divisive federal forestry issues than any other effort in this longstanding policy debate. We are confident that the citizens of Oregon and Washington, with our leadership and your cooperation, can chart a different course that leads all interests into the future.”

Dave Wertz is Northwest Ecosystem Alliance science director, dwertz@ecosystem.org



Can thinning help our forests or is it just a ruse for the timber industry?

Life after Clearcuts



Edge effect, Clark timber sale in the Willamette National Forest. James Johnston, Cascadia Wildlands Project

As management of our national forests slowly shifts from an emphasis on commercial production to one of ecological restoration and recreation, many are taking a second look at the land and asking: What do we do to repair watersheds damaged by decades of industrial-strength logging and road-building?

Road removal, culvert replacement, bank stabilization and riparian planting, and even careful logging to reduce the density of planted trees have proven to be effective tools for healing the land.

The thinning of tree plantations on the westside is today receiving closer scrutiny by conservationists. Despite a healthy skepticism of the practice, due to an inherent and historic mistrust of any activity involving a chainsaw, a scientific consensus is emerging that thinning can benefit densely grown, managed young forests in the wet, Douglas fir-dominated forests west of the Cascades.

Thinning: a healthy debate renewed

Several studies, including recent research by the U.S. Geological Survey, show that thinning young forests can encourage the development of old-growth characteristics and the diversity of plants and animals, but only if methods are used that protect and promote the development of shrubs, hardwoods, and large or old trees. Some activists are immediately skeptical, arguing that while ideal thinning in plantations can be beneficial, agency sloppiness in cutting is likely to lead to the cutting of big trees, to damaging road construction or reconstruction, to soil compaction and harm to streams, and to increased forest vulnerability to wind, insects, and disease.

The debate over whether or not thinning has a major role in comprehensive restoration is nothing new: activists, agency officials, foresters, and scientists have discussed it for years. Forest activists have generally adopted the position that thinning in certain young, previously-clearcut, stands could be beneficial if carefully conducted to avoid harmful impacts; if directed on a site-by-site analysis, as opposed to a one-size-fits-all, blanket prescription; and, if divorced from perverse economic incentives.

Collaborative work blossoms

Yet because of the Forest Service's continued focus on logging the last of our native and ancient forests, activists have understandably developed a serious lack of trust in the agency. This has limited opportunities for collaborative work—until now. Over the last year, some hope has emerged regionally that the Forest Service is finally ready to change its emphasis on old-growth logging to an emphasis on restoration and forest health. Northwest Ecosystem Alliance and others in the Northwest Old-Growth Campaign recognize the tremendous potential for this shift to bring together historically divided parties around a vision for restoration of our national forests. To facilitate that shift and to encourage dialogue among diverse stakeholders, the campaign sponsored four community field tours in 2002, to the Siuslaw and Umpqua National Forests in Oregon, and to the Olympic and Gifford Pinchot National Forests in Washington.

The results of the field tours were dramatic. Folks who only several years ago would never have been caught dead together, were now not only talking but finding that they have more in common than they ever before imagined. For example, most participants agree that it no longer makes sense to log the last of our old-growth forests. Such broad agreement was unlikely even five years ago. Even those who have been working with the timber industry for decades now recognize that it no longer makes sense to cut down the big old trees. "I think they should be looking elsewhere at this point in time," said Bob Guenther, president of the Thurston-Lewis Central Labor Council in Centralia. "These old-growth trees need to be protected, and we need to see if we can look elsewhere for our fiber."

Imagine communities invested in restoring the land, and the creation of family-wage jobs to revegetate degraded streambanks and to return diversity of structure to young plantation forests.

Vision for the future

Tremendous changes have taken place in the Pacific Northwest over the last decade. Federal timber is no longer a driving force in the economy. Today, only six mills in the Northwest depend on federal timber to any significant degree. The market for wood has also changed dramatically. Smaller trees actually fetch a higher price on the market today than larger ones. And with a glut of timber from global trade policies, many federal timber sales aren't even receiving bids. Public attitudes have also changed. In both rural and urban areas of Oregon and Washington, a strong majority, 67 to 70 percent, favor protecting remaining mature and old-growth forests, according to a 2002 poll by Davis, Hibbitts, and McCaig.

With the old debate over old growth largely behind us (though full protection for old forests is still to be achieved), the potential for a collaborative approach to restoring the land, while creating economic opportunities for depressed rural economies, is profound.

But wait! Let us not forget the critics. Opponents of this approach rightly point out that the head of the Forest Service in Washington, D.C., Mark Rey, is a former timber industry lobbyist with a history of putting other concerns above spotted owls and rural communities. Their fears lie in the thought that the Bush administration will use any consensus around restoration and thinning to create a blanket pass for business-as-usual logging with a new "green" label, meanwhile shutting citizens out of the public process.

While these fears have some merit, we must not let fear alone drive our actions. We will continue to fight to uphold citizen's rights to participate in public processes and to reject the outrageous rollbacks of our environmental laws that the Bush administration desires. But we must not lose sight of the progress we have made and of opportunities for local solutions. We must hold out our vision for the future.

Peace in the woods

Imagine a Forest Service with the funding necessary to carry out a comprehensive restoration program. Imagine communities invested in restoring the land, and the creation of family-wage jobs to revegetate degraded streambanks, to stabilize slopes above salmon habitat, and to return diversity, snags, and downed wood to young plantation forests. In some areas of the Pacific Northwest, this vision is close to reality. The Hayfork Watershed Research and Training Center in California is a nonprofit corporation promoting healthy communities through watershed restoration. The million dollars that the center pumps annually into the local economy has helped stave off the collapse of Hayfork's economy. It has created programs to retrain woods workers as ecosystem managers, developed a market for small logs that were previously considered junk, and launched a business incubator to help small companies get started.

Here in the wet, westside forests of the Cascades, the timber wars of the last decades are over. Rural Northwesterners and activists alike can unite in a desire to move forward, not backward. This means that despite all the nonsense in D.C. we can continue to rebuild our trust at the ground level—forest by forest, person by person. Our vision means sharing ideas and listening. It means being flexible and open to different points of view. But most of all it means believing in and articulating the need to unite not just the environmental community but Northwesterners from all walks of life who ultimately want the same thing: peace in the woods.



Above: Clearcutting near the Gifford Pinchot.
Jasmine Minbashian

Below: Herman thin, Umpqua National Forest, Oregon.
James Johnston, Cascadia Wildlands Project



"These old-growth trees need to be protected, and we need to see if we can look elsewhere for our fiber."—Bob Guenther, president, Thurston-Lewis Central Labor Council

Jasmine Minbashian is director of the Northwest Old-Growth Campaign. Her email is jasmine@nwoldgrowth.org



One Man's Dream for a Forest Future

Packwood's economy has been linked to the forest and I dream that this symbiotic relationship continues.



Little Fall Creek old growth
in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.
James Johnston, Cascadia Wildlands Project

I have a dream. I dream of a day when salmonids inhabit the Cispus and Cowlitz basin in numbers even greater than I remember as a young kid. I dream the forest we all love will have survived pollution and encroachment from nearby urban areas, and global warming. The forest will have intact, functioning ecosystems and support a wide variety species.

I dream there will be no need for a restoration economy but rather a maintenance economy for the forest. I dream of a day when a variety of products flow from the forest. Science will help guide us to management strategies that allow extraction of products at rates the forest won't even notice. The forested landscape will be one of mostly large diameter trees similar to the land before European settlement.

I dream that the huckleberry fields that Mary Kiona remembered will again provide the bounty they did in her youth. I envision science and Native American traditions concerning fire coming to the same conclusions and returning fire to the berry fields. Species like huckleberries that need disturbances to survive will be given equal treatment to those species that dislike disturbances.

Historically Packwood's economy has been linked to the forest and I dream that this symbiotic relationship continues. I dream that instead of relying on timber extraction alone that our economy will be diversified. Not only will we mill small and large diameter logs but we will add value to these products here, in Packwood. I dream that the extraction of logs will be done by those we used to call gypos. The Gifford Pinchot National Forest will be best served by local, small teams of loggers to harvest logs. Local gypos don't need large economies of scale, their footprint on the forest is small. Local gypos will return to Packwood nearly 100 percent of the revenue they generate by log harvest because they live here.

I dream that nearly all special forests products from the surrounding forest will come through Packwood for value-added labor. We will upgrade our infrastructure to attract non-forest light and medium industry, and in spite of our transportation issues, businesses will want to locate here to live near such a magnificent forest and in a community with a low crime rate and access to many outdoor activities.

The other two legs of our economy will be tourism and education. I dream of low-elevation hiking trails looping through the federal late successional reserve forests surrounding Packwood. These trails would be used for interpretation and education as well as recreation. Packwood would become a mecca for those who wish to hike year round.

I dream that downtown Packwood will have sidewalks and new buildings. I dream of well maintained, clean bathrooms in each and every public building in Packwood. I never want to see a sani-can again here in Packwood. Numerous high quality businesses will provide for all the needs of our guests with superior customer service skills. The federal transportation system surrounding Packwood will be upgraded to reduce sedimentation while increasing ease of movement.

I dream of viewing areas for wildlife and fisheries where people can see nature in action. If you have never seen a salmon spawn or heard an elk bugle in the wild, you just haven't lived. I dream that building on my former biology teacher's work, the White Pass Panthers—students at my alma mater—will conduct research and collect data in the forest surrounding Packwood.

I dream of a science center in Packwood. Because Packwood is blessed to be surrounded with numerous unique features, it is a logical jumping off point to study and interpret forestry, geology, and fisheries. The knowledge gained by such hands-on learning can only benefit the children of the valley.

But mostly I just dream of the children of Packwood. I dream that they will grow up as I did playing in the back forty amongst 200 to 300 foot tall firs, and playing next to streams teeming with thousands of salmon. I dream of a day when my daughter's friend doesn't respond, "Mom didn't have enough money," when asked, "where is your snack for class?" I dream of Packwood kids in new clothes riding new bikes swarming noisily again through the streets. I dream that they again fill classrooms of Packwood elementary and that never again will there be only four children in first grade.

My dream for the children of Packwood can come true only if some of my other dreams come true. Dreams don't come true by just wishing for them; it takes hard work. We of Packwood have never been scared of hard work, so we embrace the challenge. I invite any of you who share any part of my dreams to work with me collaboratively to see these dreams come true.



John Squires with his daughter, Brook Elizabeth

Author **John Squires** is the third generation of his family in eastern Lewis County. He serves on the board of Destination Packwood, on the board of the Gifford Pinchot Provincial Advisory Committee, and most recently, as a member of the Gifford Pinchot Working Group Steering Committee. He was also a member of Friends of the Cowlitz when they led the successful effort to reintroduce salmon and steelhead back to that river. He lives in Tatoosh Meadows, Washington.

Unlikely alliances on a common path

"Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success." —Henry Ford

Who would have thought that environmentalists would borrow a quote from Henry Ford to guide their vision of forest management? But then again, who would have thought that loggers and conservationists would meet in the woods to discuss restoration jobs, and then find so much general agreement that they would choose to continue working together.

In February, 35 people including local loggers, community members, county commissioners, Forest Service officials, labor representatives, and conservationists met in Packwood to talk about forest restoration, in a dialogue initiated last October during a field tour on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

The day's agenda featured presentations from all involved on how best to fix damaged landscapes while providing jobs to area contractors, loggers, and mills, followed by an afternoon determining where the visions merge. People discussed ways to avoid controversial logging sales as well as ways to promote job creation around work that restores streams and young managed stands, and removes excess roads that damage public aquatic resources.

By the end of the day people agreed to work together to find a common path that leads us away from destructive timber sales and towards restorative forest management and projects that employ local contractors, to effectively involve those most intimately tied to our public lands.



Working together to provide jobs and protect forests: participants on the Gifford Pinchot field tour.

Jasmine Minbashian

Regan Smith is conservation and restoration associate at NWEA, rsmith@ecosystem.org.



Canada's environmental lawlessness becomes the U.S. ideal

Stand by Your Laws



West Fraser Timber Company cuts right up to the streambanks on Pooley Island, Great Bear Rainforest. *Ian McAllister, www.raincoast.org*

The Bush administration is stealing a page or two from the Canadian forest management playbook. It's a potent offense for timber companies—an end run around the public, a forward pass over science, even stalling the game while deftly changing the rules that have enabled the public interest to compete with the corporate on our public lands. Over the last decade or so laws and policies that protect water, fish, and wildlife have begun to work—and that doesn't work for President Bush's team.

The administration recognizes the political peril of head-on attacks on air, water, and forests, so his team has identified chinks in the legal armor in order to pursue its pro-industry agenda. The Healthy Forests initiative is a good example. Find a reason to cut more trees, in this case fire, dress it up in "Orwellian doublespeak," as *Salon* calls it, and

use it to bypass our most fundamental laws (see page 9). The aim is to limit democracy, scientific oversight, and government accountability, the powerful legal concepts captured by our interlocking environmental and species protection framework of the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, and others.

Within the context of those laws, progressive administrations can advance policy initiatives that promote the public good, initiatives like the Clinton Roadless Area Rule, or the Northwest Forest Plan. There are legal and ecological bases for these policies. It's not a perfect system; species are still falling through the cracks, development is still gobbling up habitat. But it's a pretty good foundation. Certainly it's worth defending—vigorously.

Which brings us back to Canada. Last year when logging companies were closing in on the last dozen or so spotted owl nest sites in all of British Columbia, conservation groups sued the government all the way to the B.C. Supreme Court. The judge was sympathetic but in the end couldn't stop the logging because nowhere in the B.C. Forest Practices Code was there a requirement that species be saved from extinction. *Endangered Species Act? What Endangered Species Act?*

In British Columbia the two-year-old government of Gordon Campbell, having taken all but two seats in Parliament from the beleaguered former NDP government, has determined that they also have a popular "mandate" to treat the land like a shish kabob.

In short order, the anything but "Liberal" government has removed the moratorium on open salmon net pens, the horribly destructive practice of raising Atlantic salmon in offshore pens; it has doubled logging levels over vast areas of the province and stymied multi-year initiatives on protected areas like the South Chilcotin and Southern Rockies. There are renewed efforts to punch a mining road down the wild Taku River. *NEPA review? What NEPA review?*

In government's biggest gifts to the timber industry since the tenure system, Campbell and friends have passed the Forest and Range Act, better known as the Results Based Forest Practices Code, which essentially allows timber companies to

SARA: too little, too late for Canadian wildlife

In December of 2002, after a decade of effort, Canada's first federal law protecting endangered species, the Species at Risk Act (SARA), became law. Unfortunately, unlike the U.S. Endangered Species Act, the Canadian law has no teeth. It provides a poor tool for government biologists or environmental groups to protect species such as spotted owls. The ultimate decision about whether to list a species or protect its habitat is still left to political discretion.

And SARA still does not protect transboundary species—those plants and animals that Canada shares with the United States and Mexico. Twenty percent of the species currently identified by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada as endangered, threatened, or of special concern are not included on the endangered species list. Among the 61 unprotected species are the blue whale, eastern spiny softshell turtle, screech owl, grey fox, wild hyacinth, bird's foot violet, and many others.



mind the public store. Public comments were virtually ignored. The provincial government has proposed the so-called Working Forest Initiative that will nearly double the operable logging land base from a paltry 24 million to a massive 45 million hectares, nearly half of the province.

In the words of Stan Hagen, Sustainable Resource Management Minister, "British Columbia is open for business." Indeed. At least they call their plan what it is, a "Working" Forest Initiative, as contrasted with the Bush administration's Orwellian "Healthy" Forests Initiative.

Our Canadian colleagues have a legal tool kit with the equivalent of some broken pliers and a couple old screwdrivers to stop the government from doing the bidding of industry. International pressure has become the most potent tool for protecting B.C. wild areas. While laws and policies evolve with changing societal values they must never be weakened at the expense of the public interest, yet that is the intent of the Bush administration and the Republican controlled Congress to achieve a mirror image of the forest practices to the North.

Free societies are entitled to strong laws that protect public assets for the benefit of all the people, present and future, Canadian or American.

Joe Scott is international conservation director at Northwest Ecosystem Alliance. You can reach him at jscott@ecosystem.org

Sweetheart deal, but not for forests

Heavily subsidized, under-regulated Canadian timber companies such as INTERFOR and Weyerhaeuser are in the process of liquidating Canadian old-growth forests. The Canadian cut is heavily subsidized and the flood of unsustainably produced Canadian wood products has huge consequences for U.S. mills and mill workers. This has led to a long-running dispute between the U.S. and Canada over softwood lumber trade.

Weyerhaeuser is now promoting a sweetheart deal to "end" the trade dispute. But the idea fails to address underlying causes of the massive subsidies received by Canadian companies.

Weyerhaeuser's proposal:

- 1) leaves Canadian subsidies intact,
- 2) does nothing to reduce the monopoly that giant corporations hold in Canada under forest tenures,
- 3) does not correct environmental abuses in Canadian forests,
- 4) lines Weyerhaeuser's pockets with below-market cost timber at the expense of Canadian taxpayers,
- 5) will lead to more U.S. mill closures as Weyerhaeuser gains even more cost advantage in their Canadian operations.

Today, Weyerhaeuser's interests lie predominately in Canada. With the 1999 acquisition of MacMillan Bloedel, Weyerhaeuser became a "Canadian" company with 32 million acres owned and leased in Canada and 7 million in the U.S. Since the Willamette takeover, Weyerhaeuser has closed eleven U.S. mills and laid off workers in many other mills. U.S. workers are paying a heavy price for Weyerhaeuser's global reach.

—Information thanks to Council of Industrial Workers, www.ciw.org/fromtheheart.html. You can use Weyerhaeuser's own "direct letter" page at www.weyerhaeuser.com or www.softwoodlumberissue.com to send your comments opposing the proposal.

Good news: But will they listen? NWEA calls on WTO to recognize environmental subsidies

The World Trade Organization recently accepted a third party brief from a coalition of U.S. and Canadian conservation groups, including NWEA, regarding the softwood lumber dispute between the two countries.

The conservationists' submission, formally known as an *amicus curiae* brief, presents strong evidence in support of the U.S. claim that Canada's timber industry is unfairly subsidized and has an unfair competitive advantage over U.S. mills.

The brief goes one step further, calling on the WTO to recognize the subsidies to the Canadian industry that result from the lax enforcement of environmental laws such as those that are meant to protect streamside vegetation.



Spawning salmon in a British Columbia stream, where streamside protections from logging are few and far between.
Ian McAllister, www.raincoast.org



NWEA 2002 Volunteer Awards

October 2001 – December 2002

Volunteer of the Year

Runners-up were Kevin Miller, Northwest Old-Growth Campaign's "Restoring Our Roots" rally coordination; and Derek Jordan, rare carnivore remote camera project coordination, Blanchard Mountain outreach
Winner: John Barnard, Northwest Old-Growth Campaign outreach, Blanchard to Baker Benefit coordination, Blanchard Mountain outreach

Intern

Runners-up were Hannah Anderson, endangered species research; and Tennyson Ketcham, website development
Winners: Corina Logan, Northwest Old-Growth Campaign fundraising house-party program; Sara Thompson, Blanchard Mountain outreach program and materials; and Megan Poole, endangered species research

Administration/Office

Runners-up were Doris Ferm, office support; Tom McNeely: computer network support; Henry Lagergren, office support; and Michael Hinkel, office archives
Winners: Alan & Susan Rhodes, office support

Outreach

Runners-up were Marna Marteeny, Northwest Old-Growth Campaign outreach, rally, house-party; Chris Beamis, Northwest Old-Growth Campaign outreach, rally, house-party; and Michelle Murphy, Skagit Valley outreach
Winner: Rose Oliver, Northwest Old-Growth Campaign outreach

Fieldwork

Runners-up were Libby Kottkamp, Rare carnivore remote camera project; and Steve & Helene Irving, wilderness organizing, hike leading, ground-truthing
Winner: Scott Fields, rare carnivore remote camera project coordination

Special Projects

Runners-up were Brett Lovins, HTML email alerts; and Jonah Keith, sustainable wood products advocacy in Whatcom County
Winner: Andy Bishop, Blanchard Mountain trailhead outreach

New Year's Eve Benefit

For the second year in a row, NWEA teamed up with Bellingham's favorite bluegrass band, The Barbed Wire Cutters, for a fundraising event that was Bellingham's best bash for New Year's Eve. Nearly 600 folks turned out to support the cause and enjoy the festivities. The music was fabulous, with excellent performances by the Cutters and by the opening act, Bellingham's hot new roots music contingent called Off the Farm.

What a way it was to ring in the new year for forests and wildlife: lots of new members and supporters, lots of information about NWEA's programs, and \$2,000 netted for NWEA's conservation work. The dinner menu and margarita bar provided by Casa Que Pasa restaurant were a hit, as was the tasty beer donated by Orchard Street Brewery.

Other highlights of the event included a series of raffle drawings, with prizes donated by local businesses and artists. Top prize was a snowboard donated by Option Snowboards and accompanying bindings donated by Fairhaven Bike & Mountain Sports. Jessica Shea, a Bellingham resident and snowboarding enthusiast, was the joyful winner. NWEA would like to thank all the businesses and artists who contributed to this year's event.

Guests were treated to an inspirational talk by Mitch Friedman, as well as the second annual NWEA Volunteer Awards ceremony. Each year hundreds of individuals volunteer their time and energy to protect wildlands and wildlife with NWEA. Each person's contribution is important and much appreciated. A few people, however, donate so much of their time and make such a difference in our work, that we seek to recognize their volunteerism through awards. This year, we chose to present the awards in front of the broader community at the event.

NWEA's Bellingham staff took turns awarding each winner with a handsome certificate and a special prize as a token of our appreciation, as well as a joke or two. On behalf of all the NWEA staff and board, a sincere "thank you" to all who volunteered with us in 2002, and extra-special thanks to the award nominees.

Hudson Dodd is outreach and volunteer coordinator, hdodd@ecosystem.org.



Barbed Wire Cutters' Josh Brahinsky on bass fiddle at the New Year's Eve benefit for NWEA. *Dana Nalbandian*

Goodbye to a Beloved Friend

Our conservation community and native ecosystems have lost a beloved friend. A NWEA member since 1990, Marvin Hoover was known for his efforts to protect forests, wildlife, and watersheds, serving on the Loomis State Forest Advisory Committee and the Entiat Watershed Planning Unit, and working to improve countless timber sales, the 1990 Wenatchee National Forest Plan, and other public land projects. For the last 20 years, he and his wife Sue have been conservation and environmental education leaders with the North Central Washington Audubon Society.

Marvin worked for the Forest Service for 33 years, researching the relationships between forest management, soils, precipitation, and watersheds, and then as a consultant for seven years before retiring to the Wenatchee area. His extensive experience from all across the country, along with his keen observation skills, made him an extraordinary naturalist, able to share the wonders of nature with eager students or to critique a timber sale.

Countless conservationists and agency staff have benefited from his unique perspective on forest management which spanned over 60 years. Always working to prevent oversimplification of nature's complexities, he questioned generalizations and brash assumptions about forest development and management, the most recent being the need for extensive logging to prevent wildfires. Though considered by many to be the wisest of the wise, Marvin revealed his humility by stating, "The older I get, the less I know."

Marvin gained the respect of Forest Service employees, timber company representatives, and ranchers by listening to and valuing people on all sides of an issue. But most of all, he glowed with the joy that comes from being intimate with nature and treasuring every little blossom, bird song, and bear track.

Following in Marvin's footsteps, we will question the need to tinker with nature's creations. We will share with others our love for wild things, and speak up for wild things which have no voice.

Liz Tanke served as NWEA's eastside field representative for the last eight years. She lives in Chelan, liztanke@crcwnet.com.

ecosystem e-news

An informal, upbeat look into NWEA, laid out for web-style viewing. To subscribe, email Christie at craschke@ecosystem.org.

WildNW

Between newsletters, stay alert on urgent issues through our simple text-based action list, Wild Northwest. To subscribe, send a blank email to: wildnw-subscribe@onenw.org.

Mark your calendars now for the 5th annual
Jammin' for Salmon
 Friday, April 25, The Majestic in Bellingham!

To our many volunteers, many thanks

The staff at Northwest Ecosystem Alliance thanks the many volunteers who make us who we are, a hard-working group protecting and restoring the Pacific Northwest's wildlands. We appreciate and admire your dedication to keeping the Northwest wild! Winter of 2002-2003 volunteers below, thank you.

| | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Adam Argento | Corina Logan |
| Karey Baker | Brett Lovins |
| John Barnard | Patrick Mahoney |
| Emily Barnett | Megan McGinty |
| Kenan Block | Karen McMains |
| Andy Bishop | Tom McNeely |
| Jeffrey Jon Bodé | Jasmine Minbashian |
| Kristen Boyles | Dave Moskowitz |
| Doug Brown | Mary Mureau |
| Walt Burkett | Michelle Murphy |
| Anna Cammon | Dana Nalbandian |
| Anthony Cammon | Christine Nasser |
| Tom Champion | Ryan O'Connell |
| Amy Dameron | Crystal Mary Pankowski |
| Doris Fern | Chris Peterson |
| Kelly Flynn | Bill Raflowski |
| Dawn Gauthier | Alan Rhodes |
| Jeff Gehling | Susan Rhodes |
| Amal Graafstra | Greg Seeligson |
| Annie Hankins | John Siehl |
| Courtney Harris | Mark Skatrud |
| Eric Hartstein | Gail Smith |
| Brian Hindman | Fred Spadero |
| Michael Hinkel | Darek Staab |
| Helene Irving | Korie Tomlinson |
| Jeff Irving | Ted Ullman |
| Steve Irving | Ryan Vancil |
| Roger Iverson | Renetta Van Diest |
| Cindy Jackson | Joy Van Diest |
| Frank James | Jeannine Wallach |
| Derek Jordan | Anita White |
| Lisa Kaufman | Andy Wickstrand |
| Katie Keener | Tanja Wilcox |
| Jessica Knox | Luca Williams |
| Leslie Koch | Jim Withee |
| Michael Koenen | Tim Wood |
| Henry Lagergren | |



NWEA Bids Fond Farewell to Eastside Field Representative Liz Tanke

For the last eight years, Liz Tanke has worked out of her home as NWEA's eastside field representative. After growing up in Illinois and Wisconsin, she and Mark moved to Seattle in 1981 to work for Boeing. Liz analyzed airplane vibration and enjoyed bird's-eye views during flight tests. "Flying over the lower slopes of the Olympics and Cascades made it perfectly clear that the landscape was being shredded to pieces." Mark and she also hiked or cross-country skied every weekend, witnessing the rapid decimation of habitat and connectivity along I-90.

"After a most satisfying backpack trip in 1987, I noticed fresh stumps in a roadless area and felt particularly violated. I was determined to find out how to get advance notice of Forest Service logging plans. I got involved in the Sierra Club National Forest Committee and the Ancient Forest Campaign, and soon met Mitch Friedman and other conservation leaders.

"Pretty quickly I became the focal person for protecting the Wenatchee National Forest. In the early '90s, I made friends in Chelan while helping them stop a timber sale in the Slide Ridge Roadless Area. Mark and I were captivated by their simpler and slower pace of life and realized we could live that way, too. I left Boeing in 1992, and within a few years had my forest watch job. Mark quit in 1998, and we moved to First Creek, the site of the defeated timber sale."

Her favorite personal activist victory began years ago while exploring wild ground in the Mad River trail system in the Entiat Roadless Area, where a dense, motorized trail network chews up wildlife habitat. A map showed an abandoned trail in Three Creek in the largest untrailed part of the area. The fresh motorbike tracks she discovered there were "disheartening," and revealed Forest Service plans to reopen the trail. "My attention to the project forced them to do a more thorough analysis. Years later, the Forest Service decided against putting a trail through this refugia."

On the heels of 15 years of conservation work, Liz says, "The task of convincing agencies to protect public resources requires skills I didn't learn in school. You don't get very far by telling them what NOT to do. Fortunately, there can be common ground in the effort to restore eastside forests. I have had the most constructive discussions with agency staff after taking time in the field to study their proposals carefully." She adds, "Looking back on many different approaches to conservation, I believe what's most important is to convey our understanding of the complexity and beauty of nature to the people managing our public lands."

Liz says that fires have burned nearby every year she has lived in Chelan. Her house has a metal roof, metal supports, and concrete decks. "Deal with vegetation close to the house first, not the trees far away," she advises. "In fire-prone areas, if every home were made fire resistant—forests, wildlife, and communities would all benefit. Less damage would occur during firefighting, and people would feel more comfortable about prescribed burns."

As to her immediate future, Liz says, "I don't have definite plans, but I do hope I can help people take better care of the earth, whether it's by doing more forest watch work, or advocating for sensitive forest restoration, or promoting native plants. We need to look at the whole picture—not just trees and fuel loading, but wildlife and native plants and communities. Anytime we focus on only one piece, we don't do justice to the rest."

NWEA has been highly fortunate to have Liz Tanke on staff. We wish her good health and great happiness!

Erin Moore is communications coordinator at NWEA, emoore@ecosystem.org.



Liz and her husband Mark. She joined Greater Ecosystem Alliance in 1994, "drawn by its bold vision for protecting and restoring habitat across the border."

Regan Smith joins conservation staff

Regan worked first as an intern at NWEA, commenting on national forest projects and working closely with Science Director Dave Werntz. She then joined the old-growth campaign to coordinate a series of restoration field tours—a novel, community-level approach to working together to restore forests (see page 17). Her warm wit, keen spirit, and strong communication skills were big factors behind the success of these tours. This year Regan joined NWEA's science staff as conservation assistant and will focus on westside national forest issues.

Regan grew up in the Midwest and graduated from UC Santa Cruz where she majored in environmental studies and was a certified scuba dive master. She loves to snowboard, asks lots of questions, and never leaves home without long-underwear and wool scarves.

Welcome, Regan!



Regan with her father Jack



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You, our members, contribute 65 percent of our funding. Without you we could not protect Northwest wildlands and wildlife.

One of the best ways to support us is by joining our **Wildland Partners program** and contributing through monthly, automatic bank or credit card transfers.

Easy for you, and wonderful for us, automatic donations lend us stable and reliable funding. We won't send you any renewal letters—saving paper and postage—meaning more of your donation goes directly to Northwest Ecosystem Alliance programs listed on the back cover of this newsletter.

To join Wildland Partners or for more information about the program, contact membership associate Christie Raschke. Email her at craschke@ecosystem.org, or call 800.878.9950 ext. 12.

Join Northwest Ecosystem Alliance, your gift to the land

As members, you are our best gift to the land. And your membership donations make all the difference to the work of NWEA. This year we need our members more than ever—so please share our work with friends and family by sending them a gift membership to NWEA. We'll include a gift card in your name, four issues of *Northwest Ecosystem News*, a Keeping the Northwest Wild magnet—and no other solicitations until we ask gift recipients to renew their memberships next year.

Memberships:

- I'd like to donate a gift NWEA membership in the amount of \$ _____ (minimum \$15; list gift recipient's name below).
- I'd like to join NWEA for \$ _____ (minimum \$15, larger donation greatly appreciated!).

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(city, state, zip)

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Other gifts:

- The Tree*, beautifully written by Dana Lyons and illustrated by David Danioth. Forewords by Julia Butterfly Hill and Pete Seeger. A book for children and adults (\$18).
- 1,001 Washington Hikes* CD-ROM, published by TOPICS Entertainment (hikes copyright The Mountaineers Books) (\$20)
- 15 Hikes in Washington's Central Cascades* color trail guide (\$20). A tool for exploring lands protected by The Cascades Conservation Partnership.
- 1-liter Nalgene water bottle (wide-mouth) with The Cascades Conservation Partnership logo (\$10)

Send check payable to NWEA or provide VISA/MC information.

Card # _____

Expires _____ Phone _____

*All contributions to Northwest Ecosystem Alliance
are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.*

Jennifer Martin



Northwest Ecosystem Alliance
Since 1988, Northwest Ecosystem Alliance (NWEA) has fought relentlessly to protect the Northwest's wildlands and wildlife. Our strength lies in mobilizing people to demonstrate support for science-based solutions. You, our members, are our partners in the truest sense of the word. Along with protecting countless acres of forestland, we have worked diligently to protect threatened species such as the lynx, gray wolf, and salmon.

NWEA has remained at the forefront of regional conservation issues and sought new solutions to old problems. In 1999, we led the successful campaign to protect 25,000 acres in the Loomis State Forest, the best lynx habitat in the lower 48. Raising nearly \$17 million in little more than a year for this effort inspired new momentum for conservation in the Northwest.

We are proud to be leaders in coalition efforts such as The Cascades Conservation Partnership and the Northwest Old-Growth Campaign, along with our ongoing dynamic program work.



1208 Bay Street, Suite 201
Bellingham, WA 98225-4301

Protecting Canadian wildlands and transboundary wildlife

We work with a coalition of environmental groups, First Nations, and labor organizations to reform forest practices in Canada and to protect dwindling old-growth forests and wildlife species on both sides of the border.

Safeguarding our national forests

We seek to protect the most threatened and biologically diverse areas of Washington's national forests by ensuring that these lands are managed using sound science. We've successfully eliminated or mitigated hundreds of bad timber sales and protected thousands of acres of forestland.

Reforming management of our state trust lands

Washington's 2.1 million acres of public lands are managed to generate revenue, mostly through timber harvest. Our goal is to ensure that trust lands are also managed to protect salmon streams, drinking water reservoirs, and places to recreate, by pressing for management reform.

Saving the missing link between Washington's North and South Cascades

The thread connecting two wildlife havens—the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area and Mount Rainier National Park—is threatened with deforestation. The Cascades Conservation Partnership, a collaborative campaign led by NWEA, is purchasing and protecting thousands of critical acres with private and federal funds.

Protecting old-growth forests once and for all

NWEA is leading the Northwest Old-Growth Campaign, a coalition of 13 conservation groups working to protect our remaining federal mature and old-growth forests in western Washington and Oregon. The campaign works with scientists, rural communities, land management agencies, and members of Congress to permanently protect our ancient forests.



For details on our programs, see:
www.ecosystem.org/projects.html

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