

# Northwest Ecosystem News

Issue 55 Fall 2003



## The Endangered Species Act turns 30



Also: Evolving with fire, page 15

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## cover and inside art

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Bald eagle, saved from extinction. (NWEA photo files)

Art: Cartoons by Chad Crowe (p. 12) and Jack Ohman (p. 4).

Fisher by Consie Powell (p. 6).

Back cover, "Mystery" by Naomi Rose (please see p. 23 to order her artwork; 10% of proceeds go to NWEA)

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## 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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*From the director*

## Responsibility and optimism: The ESA shows the way

The Endangered Species Act was born 30 years ago, reflecting the dual philosophies of responsibility and optimism that existed then in Congress. Americans and their leaders agreed that extinction was morally wrong, and boldly believed we could do better.

When NWEA was founded in 1989 the ESA was still formidable in a political sense. Reauthorizations passed Congress with nearly unanimous votes. One of the visions we had for NWEA was to up the ante from giving life support for individual species, as mandated by the act, to protecting large, functioning ecosystems.

But since then the political pendulum has mostly swung the other way. I have little doubt this Congress or President would, if they could, pull the plug on even the ESA's life support function. Saving life has become controversial.

Opponents of the Endangered Species Act operate in the time scale of the immediate. They object to habitat protections that change plans for this season of operation. They want money for next month's mortgage payment, the government off their back, and scientists off their land. Intellectual attacks on the ESA share that foreshortened view. The ESA costs too much in this year's budget. The listed species haven't recovered by Tuesday, so it must not be working.

For a conservationist, the short term is generally filled with pain. Each clearcut, 'dozer track, trampled redd, or strip mall marks another wound. Each year the budget is slashed further and the "no-nothings" in Congress make another run at weakening the ESA.

But the long term is filled with hope. We hope for changes in the economy, laws, and general culture that will constitute a pendulum swing toward concern for the long term, a reversal that protects species and habitats.

What, I wonder, will be the endangered species controversies 100 years from now? A century ago grizzly bears were still abundant in most western states. Salmon were still teaming. Today, from a biodiversity standpoint, much of America lies in ruins. Though the worst impacts are aquatic—native fish have been widely eliminated by livestock, logging, and aggressive transplants—denizens of grasslands and forests are not much better off.

In 100 years, it just may be that spotted owls will be growing in population. Today they continue to decline in Washington at a rate of about 10 percent annually. The year 2100 might see enough low elevation old growth regrown in our Cascades to support a viable population of fisher. A habitat study just completed by the state Department of Fish and Wildlife (see page 14) indicates that while reintroduced fisher could thrive in the Olympics (thanks, Teddy Roosevelt!), too much may have already been cut from the Cascades.

By that time we might have cows off the arid grasslands of the West, so that western sage grouse won't be limited to places like the Army's bombing range near Yakima. I hope that the future will see expanded high elevation wildlands, so lynx won't be unduly impacted by summer fires that naturally burn vast acreages on occasion. Future anglers will perhaps reject hatchery fish, giving what's left of our streams back to the native stocks.

Hope may in time be fulfilled with changes in policy or behavior that reduce human impacts to climate and the spread of invasive species, two factors which truly threaten everything we work for.

NWEA has worked unflaggingly to protect woodland caribou, wolves, torrent salamanders, and western gray squirrels, as well as the species I've noted above. We're involved on the ground, in the courts, and in policy issues in a daily grind for survival. We must keep open the possibility of a brighter day. When it comes, we want these wildlife to reap the benefits.

 Mitch Friedman, executive director



Mitch Friedman. Photo Erin Moore

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## At last: A draft plan for Lake Whatcom forests

This month the Department of Natural Resources releases the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Lake Whatcom landscape plan. The plan examines the environmental impacts to water quality in Lake Whatcom of an alternative the DNR and the landscape committee selected this spring. Fifty percent of the lake's watershed is state land. By participating in this process we have the opportunity to dramatically improve forest practices in this region and protect the health of our water.

**September 22**, 6:30 p.m. at Bloedel-Donovan Park in Bellingham, the DNR will present the DEIS and take citizen comment. Please attend this important meeting!

Thursday, **September 25**, and Wednesday, **October 1**, 5:00-7 p.m. at NWEA's office, 1208 Bay Street, NWEA will host comment writing parties for the Lake Whatcom landscape plan. We'll provide all the materials you need to weigh in on protecting our lake and the people and wildlife who live near it.



Lake Whatcom, Bellingham's water supply.  
Photo Rose Oliver



Photo Friends of the Loomis Forest

## Wolverine wins

Under a legal settlement approved by a Montana federal court and won by conservationists including NWEA and Earth Justice, government biologists must determine whether the wolverine should be protected under the Endangered Species Act. The initial determination is due October 15, 2003.

Joe Scott, NWEA international conservation director, notes that the rarity of this bigger cousin to the fisher is reflective of its diminished habitat. "The wolverine is the embodiment of big, pristine wilderness. Without federal protection this wilderness icon may be squeezed out of existence."

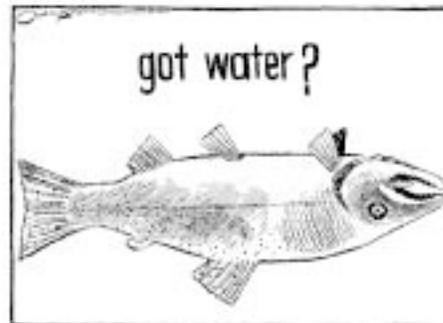
## Caribou limbo

In limbo are any further snowmobile closures in national forests to protect critically endangered woodland caribou in the Selkirks. Currently only one 25-square-mile area is closed, even though studies indicate that snowmobiles continue to be a problem for the threatened species. The Selkirk Mountains are habitat for the last herd of woodland caribou in the lower 48 states, a herd now down to just 41 animals. *Information thanks to the Spokane Spokesman-Review.*

## Columbian white-tailed deer on upswing

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife has removed ESA protection for the southernmost population of the Columbian white-tailed deer. Habitat protections helped rebuild the Douglas County population to 6,000 deer from a low of 300 in 1940. Protections included

local zoning restrictions on home building in lowland oak woodlands and the creation of a 6,500 acre habitat area on a former BLM cattle ranch, along with habitat restoration for salmon by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The deer's northern population on islands at the mouth of the Columbia River remains on the ESA list.



Courtesy Jack Ohman, The Oregonian

## Water rights for fish

This August, biologists discovered more dead sucker fish killed by poor water quality on the Klamath Basin's Lost River, a week after suckers died on Upper Klamath Lake.

The sucker deaths follow huge coho (34,000 fish) die-offs in the Klamath River earlier this year.

A federal judge this summer threw out the Bureau of Reclamation's 10-year plan for managing water in the basin, ruling that it violates the ESA and fails to protect threatened coho salmon. The judge found that the NOAA Fisheries biological opinion which determines how much water is provided for the salmon was "arbitrary and capricious" and ordered a new one to be drawn up. *Information thanks to the Endangered Species Coalition, www.stopextinction.org.*

## Forests: Who's healthy now?

Two administrative rule changes proposed by the administration last December are now in effect as of early June.



The first rule change exempts fuels reduction projects—logging projects that involve up to 1,000 acres and prescribed fire treatments planned on up to 4,500 acres in high risk areas—from the National Environmental Policy Act.

The second change affects the appeals process by reducing or eliminating the public's ability to request that the Forest Service reconsider a decision to implement a logging project. The change also exempts salvage logging projects from the appeals process, allowing timber corporations to quickly log and sell off our national forests without any say from a public who collectively own the forest.

NWEA thanks our members who spoke out against these harmful proposals. Note that these two environmental rollbacks are likely to wind up in the courts; the story's not over yet.

## Straw Devil trees live to see another day



Straw Devil timber sale, Willamette NF.  
*Photo Cascadia Wildlands Project*

An August ruling has temporarily suspended logging on the Pryor, Straw Devil, and East Devil timber sales in the Willamette National Forest in Oregon thanks to the Oregon Natural Resources Council (ONRC), Cascadia Wildlands Project, and Pete Frost and Heather

Brinton at Western Environmental Law Center.

U.S. District Judge Garr King halted cutting of the old growth in response to the charge that the Forest Service failed to adequately assess the impacts of logging on wildlife.

"It's a bittersweet moment," said Jay Ward, ONRC's conservation director, "this ruling just proves how important it is for Americans to be able to access the courts and force government agencies to obey the law."

*Information thanks to [www.nwoldgrowth.org](http://www.nwoldgrowth.org) and Scott Maben at the Eugene Register-Guard.*

## Better World Travel Club

NWEA members Gene and Marilyn Derig called to let us know about the Better World Travel Club out of Oregon. "What we like about them," say the Derigs, "is that unlike the American Automobile Association, they are not lobbyists for highway folks, and in fact quite the opposite: encouraging alternative fuel and forms of transportation." The Better World Travel Club also gives a percentage of proceeds to environmental and social causes and breaks to people who rent environmentally friendly hybrid vehicles. Want to know more? Go to [www.betterworldclub.com](http://www.betterworldclub.com).

## Grizzly bear in mind

The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission wants the few hundred bears of the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem delisted or removed from ESA protection, possibly by 2003. Grizzly bears in Greater Yellowstone are facing equal or greater threats to their habitat than when they were listed in 1975. Oil and gas development, and logging and roading in the Targhee and Gallatin National Forests has disturbed much of their habitat; and many of the bear's chief food sources are dwindling, including bison, native Yellowstone trout, and whitebark pine seeds.

## For bears in Canada, one step forward...

The Canadian Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection has accepted the recommendations of the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Taskforce, clearing the way for grizzly augmentation in Manning Provincial Park in British Columbia in an attempt to increase the size of the Cascades sub-unit population. The population shared with the U.S. is at risk of becoming locally extinct.

## ...two steps back

A Non-Detriment Finding prepared by the Canadian government for the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) concludes that the export of grizzly bears hunted in British Columbia represents no conservation threat to the species or its populations.

## Downlisting could spell trouble for gray wolf

In March this year the gray wolf was downlisted from endangered to threatened on the endangered species list in most of the lower 48 states (wolves have no special status in Alaska).

In Idaho, Wyoming, and part of Montana, reintroduced wolves had already been designated as "experimental," which afforded them the same protection as wolves classified as "threatened." The immediate effect of the downlisting is that it is now easier for ranchers to kill wolves rather than waiting for the government to do it.

Wolves were shot out in Washington state in 1930, but over the last two decades, they've been seen roaming in the vicinity of Ross Lake in Washington and Canada. Wolves have also been sighted throughout the Cascade Range and in the Selkirk Mountains in the state's northeast corner.



*Photo NWEA files*



# news in brief

## Canada/U.S. softwood lumber dispute

A dispute settlement panel of the North American Free Trade Act recently confirmed that the U.S. Commerce Department can find that subsidies to Canadian lumber companies are subject to duties under U.S. and international trade laws. The NAFTA panel ruled that Canadian governments provide a financial contribution specific to timber by allowing companies access to public trees for a fraction of their true value. The ruling is similar to recent rulings by the World Trade Organization and continues for the present the 27% duty on Canadian lumber exported to the states. The duties have hurt B.C.'s heavily subsidized timber companies, creating enormous pressure on them to reform their destructive forest policies and practices.

## Fisher considered for ESA protection

From our inception, NWEA has fought to return a fierce, midsize carnivore to its rightful place in the low elevation forests of Washington. An original petition to list the Pacific fisher was turned down by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). A decade and dozens of studies later, NWEA joined with other conservation groups for a second round. This time we knew a lot more about the mustelid that trappers in the middle of the last century extirpated from the Cascades and coastal mountains.

The government sat on that petition for a year and a half, until this summer when a federal judge ordered them to take action. The Court ruled that the FWS must decide whether Pacific fisher in Washington, Oregon, and California constitute a distinct population segment under the Endangered Species Act and deserve protection. The agency now has one year from July to issue their decision.



## Building on three years of success: The Cascades Conservation Partnership

On June 30, in a major celebration at the Seattle Center that brought together 800 of its 16,000 supporters, The Cascades Conservation Partnership marked three years of success protecting Cascades forests. The party included dinner, live bluegrass music, and a program featuring one of The Partnership's champions in Congress, Representative Norm Dicks, as well as Pulitzer prize-winning editorial cartoonist David Horsey as emcee.

The date also marked the conclusion of the group's full-scale, private fundraising effort. On June 30 the group announced protection of Windy Pass in the Manastash Roadless Area.



The Cascades Conservation Partnership uses strategic land acquisition to protect and enhance key north-south wildlife corridors (see arrows) in the "checkerboard forests" between the Alpine Lakes and Mount Rainier. Map by Commenspace

The campaign is not over, however—not by a long shot. A public-private partnership, the campaign has raised \$15.5 million in private donations, but will continue to seek funds from Congress through 2004. The path is challenging. President Bush's budget proposal dramatically reduced monies in Land and Water Conservation Fund for acquisitions; the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee pared that number down even further, to a mere \$13 million nationwide for Forest Service land acquisitions. Thanks to Senator Patty Murray, however, the picture is brighter in the Senate. The Senate Appropriations Committee approved a total of \$6.5 million for Partnership acquisitions. The Partnership's goal now is to hang onto those funds when the Senate and House reconcile their spending bills this fall.

The Cascades Conservation Partnership continues to raise private donations for Sawmill Creek in the Green River Watershed, Tacoma's source of drinking water. Meetings in Tacoma, group hikes and trail work parties, and phone updates with foundations—these are some of the activities that have gone into the Sawmill Creek campaign.

For the latest news, visit [www.cascadespartners.org](http://www.cascadespartners.org).

## "Rewilding" with Dave Foreman

Dave Foreman visits the Northwest in November to talk about a vision of the future when wildlands on the continent are so broadly linked that wild creatures like grizzly bears and gray wolves roam from Mexico to Alaska.

Foreman, cofounder of Earth First! and The Wildlands Project, was named by *Audubon Magazine* as one of the 100 Champions of Conservation of the 20th Century. Come hear "Rewilding North America: Creating MegaLinkages to Link Roadless Areas" at Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle on Wednesday, November 5, 2003, at 7 p.m. Tickets are available online at [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org).



*"The legislature could have enacted legislation that protects the owl from the risk of extirpation [in Canada] caused it by the harvest of old-growth forest. In my opinion, it did not do so." —B.C. Supreme Court Justice James Shabbits*

## How long left for B.C. old growth and wildlife?

This past spring the B.C. Supreme Court gave the green light to logging in spotted owl habitat in southwestern British Columbia. Contrary to the recommendations of government and independent biologists, the provincial government and Cattermole Timber Co. have pressed for the logging to continue.

It is estimated that fewer than 25 pairs of the old-growth associated owls remain in the province, which is the northernmost extent of its range. The court was powerless to stop the logging despite the implications for the species survival.

Industrial scale clearcut logging continues unabated in caribou habitat, along with a surge in snowmobiling and heli-skiing, despite plummeting populations of endangered old-growth dependent mountain caribou—the so-called spotted owl of the B.C. interior. The mountain caribou, a unique type of woodland caribou, is one of the most endangered large mammals in the world. The story is the same for marbled murrelet on the B.C. coast and dozens of other species seriously impacted by habitat destruction. Common sense and current biology say one thing, while provincial forest policy says something entirely different.

Canada recently passed its Species at Risk Act (SARA), the Canadian version of the U.S. Endangered Species Act. However, as one Canadian conservationist put it, "a spotted owl would have to be living in the basement of a post office to be afforded any protection under SARA." The SARA simply doesn't protect habitat on federal lands which make up more than 90 percent of the land mass in the provinces.

To be perfectly candid, if Canada had a real endangered species law the prognosis for these animals would be different. As it is, the only hope for them is relentless international, citizen, and consumer pressure to protect their habitat.

This brings us to another point. It's clear that strong endangered species legislation is a hallmark of progressive societies and the last defense against the tragic extinction of our fellow species. But it's also clear that we need a new way of thinking, and planning, that relegates endangered species law to its intended status—as an emergency room treatment.

What if to maintain human health we relied on the hospital emergency room rather than on good diet and lifestyle, clean water, and safe communities? The same goes for other species and ecosystems. We can't batter them into submission with the expectation that the ESA will come to the rescue.

We need strong planning with built-in protection for all species and water quality. The Northwest Forest Plan is a good example of such regional planning. Also known as the Clinton Forest Plan, it was spawned at least partly to avoid having the ESA serve as a planning document—as well as to avoid species reaching the brink of oblivion before we give them a leg up.

However, like the ESA, the Northwest Forest Plan is under attack by an administration and Congress blinded by special interests and narrow ideology. Not a prescription for good health.



The caribou is prominently featured on Canadian coins, but sadly, the coins may last longer than some herds.

### Whose Home?!

The Carrier Sekani Tribal Council Chiefs recently took Home Depot to task about plans to open a retail outlet in Prince George, B.C., to sell wood harvested from tribal homelands. "The methods and rate of extraction are neither environmentally nor economically sustainable," say the tribes, who have never consented to the resource extraction. The bulk of forest companies in Canada operate on unceded tribal lands. The council chiefs repeated an earlier request that Home Depot purchase only wood certified through the Forest Stewardship Council process.

Currently there exists no revenue sharing agreement between First Nations and the companies that illegally operate in native territories. Unemployment in tribal communities is 80 percent while in the rest of B.C. it is 8.2 percent.

Joe Scott is NWEA's international conservation director, [jscott@ecosystem.org](mailto:jscott@ecosystem.org).



# Rollbacks roll over wildlife

*The Whitehouse has hijacked the 30th anniversary celebration for the Endangered Species Act (ESA), pushing a multitude of rule changes that harm wildlife. These initiatives shrink public input, limit authority from wildlife experts, and increase the number and scale of harmful projects, together dramatically reducing protection for sensitive wildlife, especially on public lands.*



## “Blue-Greens” Greet the President

On Friday, August 22, President Bush paid his first visit to Washington state since taking office. His only public appearance was in Pasco, where he made it clear to the hundreds of farmers and ranchers in attendance that his administration has no intention of removing the lower Snake River dams to help restore salmon runs. He then attended a closed-door meeting with local business leaders followed by an exclusive fundraising luncheon in Bellevue.

In protest of the President's policies that harm forests, salmon, and wildlife, about a dozen NWEA supporters joined hundreds of labor union members to line a busy intersection in suburban Bellevue where the President's motorcade was scheduled to pass by. There was ample media on hand to cover the latest example of grassroots “blue-green” (as in labor-enviro) coalitions in action.

NWEA supporters joined labor activists in chanting “Who's got the power? We've got the power! What kind of power? Union power!” while union folks signed postcards to the administration urging the protection of old-growth forests. NWEA volunteer Kevin Miller of Kirkland made it onto the KING TV news that evening, saying, “I am here because President Bush is slowly chipping away at the Northwest Forest Plan.”

Conservation Associate **Seth Cool**,  
scool@ecosystem.org

### October 2002—Hazardous fuels treatment rollback

Exempts certain Healthy Forest Initiative hazardous fuels treatment projects from the ESA, allowing logging in endangered species habitat. Dictates that the Fish and Wildlife Service ignore short-term impacts in favor of “fire risk reduction.”

### December 2002—National Forest Management Act viability rules rollback

Eliminates the “viability rule” which requires national forest managers to maintain “viable” wildlife populations. The “viability rule” has stopped more bad logging, road-building, grazing, and drilling than any other law on the books. The rollback greatly reduces information available to and input from the public, other agencies, and scientists.

### January 2003—Clean Water Act rollback

Removed CWA protection from many wetlands and aquatic habitat, effectively removing ESA protection from these habitats, because many habitat-disturbing actions receive ESA review only because a developer has applied for a CWA permit.

### January 2003—Readiness and Range Preservation Initiative

Proposed to exempt Department of Defense actions from the Marine Mammal Act and critical habitat designations for threatened and endangered species. Passed in the House and a much less damaging version passed in the Senate—a joint committee will negotiate a compromise.

### July 2003—Northwest Forest Plan Aquatic Conservation Strategy rollback

Removed federal rules requiring that federal actions must “maintain or restore” fish habitat in Pacific Northwest watersheds. ACS regulations in the Northwest Forests Plan have halted over a hundred salmon-killing timber sales in Oregon and Washington.

### May 2003—Critical Habitat designation funding cut

After repeated refusal to provide sufficient funding to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bush administration announced that the “ESA is broken” and the agency could no longer afford to designate Critical Habitat. Critical Habitat is the specific area set aside for endangered and threatened species. New Critical Habitat designations will be avoided and prefaced by a Department of Interior disclaimer that questions the importance of Critical Habitat.

### May 2003—ESA consultation requirement rollback

Allows “action agencies” (such as the Forest Service) to determine, without outside agency consultation, whether a project (such as a timber sale) is likely to affect endangered species. The rollback removes a key requirement that agencies “consult” with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries experts to determine if a project will affect endangered species.

### August 2003—Northwest Forest Plan Survey and Manage rollback

Under the Northwest Forest Plan, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management must conduct surveys for identified plants and animals before logging in mature and old-growth forests. The administration has proposed to do away with the wildlife survey program, allowing timber sales to move forward in old growth without safeguarding wildlife.



# Endless pressure, endlessly applied

Yep. These are hard times now. The most hostile administration ever and the worst Congress in 50 years are mounting full scale assaults on all the wild places and ancient forests we have fought to protect for decades.

But these are not the first such times. It has never been easy. Yet we've faced similar challenges in the past, and we can do so again.

In the mid-1960s, a small band of us who loved the wilderness and ancient forests of the North Cascades had become angry at the logging destruction being encouraged by the Forest Service. It became clear that very little would be left if something wasn't done soon.

But what? There were no environmental laws then, and timber interests and their allies dominated the politics of our state. There was one tool available to us: take the land away from the agency that would not protect it (National Forest Service) and give it to an agency that would (National Park Service).

Now there was a hopeless lost cause back in those far-off times!

But we started out anyhow, our small band. Our goal was a national park in the Cascades north of Stevens Pass, and as much wilderness protection as we could get for the rest of it. Space does not permit a detailed recounting of the bitter struggles that followed, the petition drives and slide shows, my memories of getting hooted down in little logging towns.

We kept on, gained support. Bills were introduced, stormy hearings held across the state. In late 1968, Congress passed a bill creating a new North Cascades National Park, and a million acres of new protected wilderness in the Pasayten and Glacier Peak areas. Thousands of acres of ancient forests

were saved from the immediate chopping block. Just as important, the political stage was set for more forest protection victories of the future, because we had demonstrated that we had the political clout to do it.

Other "lost causes" fell into place in the following years: the Alpine Lakes Wilderness (400,000 acres) in 1976; a million acres more wilderness in 1984, and recently, the amazing achievements of the Loomis Campaign and The Cascades Conservation Partnership. Each of these accomplishments seemed to be impossible to us in the 1960s. But we learned a great lesson then: don't pay any attention to the common wisdom that such things are not doable—just do them anyway!

We didn't slow down after the 1968 victory; other beautiful places were under attack. There were struggles over dams in Hells Canyon, the Forest Service's drive to log Oregon's largest untouched Cascades valley, French Pete Creek, and over our effort to protect the magnificent Sawtooth region in Idaho from mining. Things weren't going well, and our outnumbered forces were falling back on all sides. Nationally, the timber industry had opened up a "counteroffensive"—a bill named the National Timber Supply Act (NTSA)—which would have converted all the national forests into tree farms, forever.

I despaired, wrote myself a gloomy memo in 1969: "It seems hopeless now, we are so outnumbered, I don't have any idea how we can prevail."

But somehow we did. We stood our ground, kept trying. Defeated the NTSA *twice* on the floor of the House the following winter. Hells Canyon dams



Still working to protect old growth: activists gather in Eugene, Oregon, in 2003, with a piece from a 440-year-old tree. Photo Jasmine Minbashian

were permanently forbidden by 1975 legislation, the Sawtooths were protected in 1972, and French Pete became a wilderness in 1978.

In 1988, appalled by the obscene overcutting of remaining Northwest ancient forests, more than 100 groups came together and formed the Ancient Forest Alliance, determined to slow the juggernaut. Another hopeless lost cause! Our opponents included revered Northwest politicians from both parties, organized labor, and much of the media.

But we got a legal injunction against the worst of it, then withstood a furious "yellow ribbon" counterattack of abuse and death threats and mass rallies by the other side, and an angry round of struggles in Congress. My diary of those beautiful and terrible times (1988-93) has many pages describing a sense of the overwhelming odds against us. But with the adoption of the President's Northwest Forest Plan in 1993, the logging was reduced by 90 to 95 percent—in my opinion the greatest victory of our whole movement.

Yes, we have been here before, faced many hard times—and yet prevailed. Out of the 1994 Congressional elections came the infamous "Logging Without Laws" rider to an obscure appropriations bill, ordering massive increases in logging and suspending environmental laws. Chainsaws snarled again across the Northwest ancient forests which we

*continued next page*





Mardon skipper. Photo Bill Leonard

# The ESA protects Washington's wildlife

Whether it's the powerful grizzly bear or the dainty Mardon skipper butterfly, plants and animals facing extinction in Washington state ultimately depend upon the Endangered Species Act, and activists' unbending resolve, to bring them back from the brink.

Casting the ESA's "safety net" might seem as straightforward as the language of the act: compile the scientific evidence and list species that are imperiled, protect their critical habitat from destruction, and prevent activities that stall recovery. But in practice, wildlife protection under the ESA is fraught with uncertainty and peril, and often requires lengthy courtroom battles.

Establishing that a species warrants protection under the ESA requires consideration of several factors. To list, evidence must be presented regarding current or pending destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; over-utilization for commercial, recreation, scientific, or educational purposes; and other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence. While some endangered species are well studied, most are not, and compiling the scientific record requires diligent sleuthing of often scarce materials.

Once a petition to list an endangered species has been submitted, the government is required to respond with a listing decision within 12 months. In recent years, this rarely happens. For example, it was only after a court order that the government moved forward on petitions to consider listing the Pacific fisher, the wolverine, and Washington's western gray squirrel populations. The threat of legal action was required to spur the government to respond to NWEA's petition to list Washington's populations of western sage grouse.

The ESA requires that habitat critical for endangered species recovery be designated at time of listing. Yet our government is reluctant to take this step. The woodland caribou was listed as endangered in 1984 and no critical habitat was designated. Since that time, logging and road construction has continued to fragment and destroy its prime habitat, and there is a good chance that the remaining 30 caribou will be gone from the Selkirk Mountains within 20 years.

Although it helps considerably, those imperiled species that have had critical habitat designated are not out of the woods. Projects within critical habitat require ongoing scrutiny to ensure that harmful development is prohibited. For example, the Forest Service recently made plans to log nearly 200 acres of spotted owl critical habitat in the Bug timber sale on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. They reasoned that existing spotted owl nesting habitat could be destroyed since new growth anticipated on adjacent lands in 50 to 70 years would provide for the endangered owls. This logic, and the government's complete failure to keep track of logging within owl critical habitat, landed them in court again.

The Endangered Species Act saves wildlife. It is, by nature, the last "safety net" for many species. This virtue is also its biggest challenge. It's only when everything else fails—state foresters plot to carve roads and clearcut through Washington's best remaining big wildlands habitat, federal foresters seek to lay down ancient forests, streamside forests are stripped until the waters run warm and brown, plants and animals that once occupied vast regions dwindle in number to a handful—that the Endangered Species Act kicks in. The journey to recovery and eventual "delisting" is long and arduous. —Dave Werntz

**Endless pressure** cont. from p. 9  
had just protected.

We took to the streets and logging roads in a series of demonstrations and arrests, creating great publicity and much embarrassment to politicians. The logging program was turned into a political defeat for the far right. I still remember the compliment I heard from a labor lobbyist then: "you environmentalists never quit, you stand up to the danger wherever it is, and that's how you always seem to win."

Yes. That is what we do, isn't it? We don't ever quit. We may feel that anxiety. But we still have to stand for what we believe in, don't we?

And when we do so, we can remember all those times in the past when we faced the same odds and the same fears—and just kept moving forward anyhow. And won!

That's why my heart is serene now, about the ultimate fate of the places we love, especially my beloved Northwest ancient forests. We know the secret to our success: endless pressure, endlessly applied. Never quit. We can do it.

**Brock Evans** is executive director of the Endangered Species Coalition and has been a force of nature for protecting wildlife and wildlands for the last three decades.





Lynx in the Loomis, caught on remote camera. Photo Friends of Loomis Forest

## How citizen action protected Canada lynx

It was citizens who discovered that the Canada lynx qualified for listing and then who pushed to make that ESA protection real. The story begins in December 1990 when Friends of Loomis Forest discovered lynx tracks in

a proposed timber sale in the state forest. Immediately we called Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists, who verified the tracks. A follow-up scientific report on this population described the local lynx population as only 15 to 23 individuals with almost no successful reproduction.

In March of 1991, not long after finding the tracks and reading that report, I met Mitch Friedman when he came to visit activists in eastern Washington and we discussed the plight of the Cascade lynx population in the Cascades. The situation for the big cat wasn't good, and we decided to petition to get the lynx listed for protection under the ESA.

While I read every study done on lynx in North America, Mitch lined up an attorney to help submit the petition. I wrote the demographic part of the petition, Mitch penned the reasons for protecting the lynx, and Mark Tipperman, our pro bono lawyer, inserted the legal language and format needed for submission. Five months later, we'd cowritten petitions to list the lynx under the ESA, and in August 1991 we submitted the petitions to the state and federal governments.

The state responded quickly, honoring our petition by assembling a lynx working group. Their recommendation to the Wildlife Commission was recognized when lynx were listed as threatened in Washington state in October of 1993.

The federal government, however, dithered, and the process stretched into years. The original petition was initially turned down, appealed, and then included with other petitions across the former range of the lynx.

NWEA and I, as an individual, participated in all appeals by writing updates for the courts to consider listing lynx in the Cascades as well as signing on to all court actions.

In 2001, after a decade of action, numerous petitions, and court cases, the federal government finally listed lynx as threatened under the ESA. Today we are still challenging the federal government to list Midwest and Northeast lynx as endangered, as well as to get critical habitat designated as required by law.

The lesson? Private citizen action can and does protect species in peril, but it takes perseverance. If you find a plant or animal you feel deserves protection, be sure to make the contacts necessary to both verify your finding and help you seek protection. Call your local wildlife biologist, native plant society chapter, or local conservation organization if you wonder whether a species you have found needs protection.

NWEA board president **Mark Skatrud** can be reached at [skatrud@televar.com](mailto:skatrud@televar.com).

## NWEA's role in wildlife recovery

The Endangered Species Act is often the last hope for imperiled fish and wildlife. Over the years, Northwest Ecosystem Alliance has poured over obscure records and scientific reports; compiled evidence and submitted petitions and legal briefs; and alerted the public, government agencies, and Congress about the need to protect Washington's endangered fish and wildlife and their critical habitat.

NWEA, and often other conservation groups, have pushed for ESA listing of the Canada lynx, western sage grouse, Columbia basin pygmy rabbit, western gray squirrel, Mardon skipper butterfly, Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, island marble butterfly, streaked horned lark, Mazama pocket gopher, Pacific fisher, Queen Charlotte goshawk, and wolverine.

We have worked to keep recovery efforts on track for the mountain caribou, gray wolf, and grizzly bear. And we have fought and turned back ill-conceived and highly destructive logging plans that threaten endangered bull trout, steelhead trout, coho salmon, chum salmon, chinook salmon, northern spotted owl, and marbled murrelet.

Thanks to the Bush administration's environmental policies, many more species will likely require protection under the ESA, as fish and wildlife protections are stripped down so that logging interests can gain access to the nation's last remaining old forests. Torrent salamander, Larch Mountain salamander, Oregon spotted frog, and white-headed woodpecker, and hundreds of old-growth associated plants and animals all appear to be in dire trouble, and may not remain on the face of the Earth without the help of the ESA.

**Dave Wertz** is NWEA's science director, [dwerntz@ecosystem.org](mailto:dwerntz@ecosystem.org).



*People must take care of plants and animals*

# The ESA, an extraordinary



Canada lynx. Photo Gary Will

***The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant, "What good is it?" ... who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering. —Aldo Leopold***



For more on the ESA and NWEA's wildlife programs, please go to [www.ecosystem.org/wildlife/index.html](http://www.ecosystem.org/wildlife/index.html).

Thirty years ago, the United States Congress passed the Endangered Species Act, and it is no exaggeration to call the ESA an extraordinary law. Focused on habitats and ecosystems that species need to survive, and ac-

knowledging our own harmful impacts on those places, the ESA creates a system of protections to prevent animals, fish, and plants from going extinct. The Supreme Court has proclaimed it as "the most comprehensive legislation for the preservation of endangered species ever enacted by any nation." Greater still, the ESA does not protect only well-known species like the bald eagle, grizzly bear, and chinook salmon, it also protects critters as uncommon as the streaked horned lark and island marble butterfly.

The ESA currently protects over 1,250 species, and most of them have completely recovered, partially recovered, had their habitat protected, or had their populations stabilized or increased. Approximately 64 percent of the mammals and 68 percent of the bird species listed since 1973 (the year the ESA became law) were classified as "improving and stable" by 1994. At the same time, the ESA has protected millions of acres of forests, beaches, and wetlands from degradation and development.

In its 30-year history, the ESA has also been a lightning rod for anti-environmental forces precisely because it has been effective at making substantive change. Three specific areas of the ESA are currently under attack: getting species and their habitats protected, ensuring that federal actions

do not harm threatened and endangered species, and the vital role of citizens' petitions and lawsuits in the protection process.

## Getting species and habitat protected

Section 4 of the ESA provides the first two procedural steps of endangered species conservation. First, a species has to be listed as endangered or threatened, and the decision to list a species must be based solely on science, not politics. Second, and at the same time, its critical habitat must be designated. Because habitat loss is the primary threat to 85 percent of all threatened and endangered species, critical habitat provides protections for areas currently and *formerly* occupied by a species. This way, habitat needed for recovery of a threatened species can be preserved. Critical habitats have ranged from as little as 10 acres for a unique plant, to as much as 80 million acres for a marine mammal. Typical designations are between 10,000 and 2 million acres.

In May 2003, the Bush administration launched an attack on critical habitat by arguing that studying and protecting the places that are essential to species survival is unnecessary. Specifically, into all future critical habitat designations the Department of Interior now plans to insert language that states these protections have no value. This flies in the face of the fact that species with which have been provided critical habitat are less likely to be declining and twice as likely to be recovering as species without it. The Bush adminis-



Chad Crowe



# inary law

tration is the only presidency not to have designated a single critical habitat except under court order. And the Bush administration intentionally handcuffed itself by requesting only \$9 million this year for species protection, despite an estimated \$153 million needed to address the ESA backlog for listing species and protecting habitat.

Getting protections for species often takes

concerted, long-term effort on the part of groups such as Northwest Ecosystem Alliance.

In March 2000, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) listed the Canada lynx as threatened throughout the lower 48. The listing and protection came ten years after NWEA, Friends of

Loomis Forest, and others petitioned for its protection under the ESA. While lynx

critical habitat still remains to be designated and protected, lynx recovery efforts have finally begun.

## Preventing harm from federal actions

For federal actions, the heart of the ESA is section 7. Under section 7, before a federal action agency such as the Forest Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, or the Federal Highway Administration can authorize, fund, or carry out activities in an area home to threatened or endangered species, the agency must ensure that its actions

are not likely to jeopardize the protected species or destroy or adversely modify its critical habitat.

The action agency accomplishes this through consultation with a federal biological agency—FWS for terrestrial and freshwater animals and plants, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS, whose name recently changed to NOAA Fisheries) for marine and anadromous animals. Sometimes described as a “look before you leap” provision, section 7 requires that the biological checks and balances must be finished, and finished validly, before a proposed federal project can begin.

A major push by the Bush administration has been to replace the section 7 system of checks and balances with so-called “self-consultation.” In January 2003, the administration issued an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking calling for the Environmental Protection Agency alone, without the input of FWS or NMFS, to unilaterally decide which chemicals would be subject to biological agency scrutiny and which would escape ESA review. In June 2003, the Bush administration proposed to allow the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to make their own determinations for logging activities under the National Fire Plan. As with pesticides, FWS’s and NMFS’s ability to protect listed species and their habitats from threats posed by logging would be almost eliminated.

Of course, self-consultation is no consultation at all. These rollbacks of protection for species on federal lands are justified by the argument that EPA and the land management agencies have the expertise to make their own judgments about ESA compliance. Past experience shows this is untrue. EPA, the Forest Service, BLM, and other agencies frequently demonstrate a bias toward the status quo—toward the actions they have done in the past

and that they are already planning. Moreover, unlike the action agencies, the mission of FWS and NMFS is to protect and conserve fish, wildlife, plants, and their sustaining ecosystems; their scientific staff have the necessary background to review species impacts.

For example, in the mid-1990s, the Forest Service proposed grazing on public land surrounding Elk Creek in central Idaho—a stream providing important spawning grounds for threatened Snake River spring/summer chinook. The Forest Service found that the proposed grazing was unlikely to harm threatened salmon, but NMFS refused to concur in that conclusion. Instead of working with the biological agency through consultation, the Forest Service attempted an end-run around the ESA and asked a federal district court to allow grazing to commence before consultation was completed, based on the Forest Service’s own assessment that the grazing would not harm the salmon. In short, the Forest Service tried self-consultation. The court did not allow this shortcut, and it rejected the Forest Service’s attempt to unilaterally determine harm to a listed species. NMFS ultimately found that the proposed grazing would jeopardize the salmon, and the cows were never turned onto the pasture. If self-consultation had been legal, the jeopardizing damage to the fish and their habitat would have gone forward unchecked.

## Citizen participation

Finally, the ability of any person or group to file petitions to list a species as threatened or endangered is central to the success of the ESA. Because of federal inaction, citizen petitions have been a major force in the protection of species and habitats. NWEA has filed numerous petitions

*continued next page*



seeking protection for species ranging from lynx to the western gray squirrel to delicate species of butterflies. Additionally, the ESA contains a provision that allows citizens or groups to bring litigation to make federal agencies follow the law. That's where Earthjustice comes in, to help citizens and conservation groups enforce our environmental laws. The ability to have this kind of direct input into federal decisions is fairly unique and is sometimes attacked as decision-making by court-order. Of course, as opposed to incorrect decisions or, more commonly, no decisions at all, citizen enforcement of the ESA is one of its strongest points.

In 2002, the Bush administration inserted a small paragraph, deep within the President's FY 2002 budget, known as the "Extinction Rider" that would have negated the rights of citizens to sue to protect endangered species, giving Gale Norton, the Secretary of the Interior, almost complete discretion over when and whether to list species as threatened or endangered. While that rider was defeated, calls to limit citizen involvement in ESA decisions sound repeatedly. Because almost all the species that have made it onto the ESA lists

have done so because of citizen participation, these attempts to limit involvement and legal rights attack the foundation of the ESA.

Among the species that NWEA has worked to protect are the Washington populations of western sage grouse that live in sagebrush desert east of the Cascades. NWEA first petitioned for the grouse to be listed in 1999. In May 2001, FWS found that the sage grouse warranted protection under the ESA, but that budgetary constraints prevented the service from giving those protections. NWEA is considering how to challenge that decision and get the western sage grouse the protection it deserves.

And these days, ESA protection must be defensive as well. In the early 1990s, northern spotted owls and marbled murrelets, bird species that need old-growth forests to survive, were protected as threatened under the ESA. In 2002, the timber industry sued over the ESA protections for those birds. Instead of defending the lawsuit, the Bush administration entered into a settlement agreement that may

ultimately throw the protected status of the owls and murrelets into dispute. Not only did NWEA join with Earthjustice and other environmental groups to defend the owls and murrelets, but NWEA is a primary organizing force in ensuring that any new review of the species' status is based on the best scientific evidence.

### A future tied to the ESA

When I talk to my young son Henry about wildlife and nature, I talk in children's terms. Be gentle, I say, people must take care of plants and animals. Simple, yes, but not any less true than the more complex statutory mandates of the ESA. Thirty years ago, we enacted a law that tells people to take care of plants and animals that are on the brink of disappearing. That's the kind of law we need to keep for at least another 30 years.



Salamander, John Applegarth. Salmon, Gregory Mroz

**Kristen Boyles** is an attorney with Earthjustice and a NWEA board member. She spends her free time hiking, skiing, kayaking, sailing, cheering for the Mariners, and generally playing in the Pacific Northwest with family and friends.

## Reintroduction update: Fisher habitat feasibility study points to Olympics

The Pacific fisher is another predator we now know to be a necessary part of healthy Washington forest ecosystems. In a joint effort with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), NWEA continues to work hard to bring this midsize carnivore back to its rightful place in our state.

This summer, state biologists completed their fisher habitat feasibility study (the formal feasibility report is due out in December) for the Cascade Mountains and the Olympic Peninsula. The study shows that the peninsula has

about four times the amount of fisher-friendly, continuous habitat than does the Cascades. It looks like the Olympic Peninsula is the place to be if you are a fisher.

Now that we know that suitable habitat for the fisher exists, there is much to be accomplished before fisher are freed in Washington. Together NWEA and WDFW have initiated talks with Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park personnel to understand National Environmental Policy Act considerations and requirements for release. We will also be involved in community meetings, bringing together

people potentially affected by the release of fishers as well as other supportive people to help in the reintroduction effort.

Fishers are a non-controversial species—good for our forests and natural history. Our efforts in the reintroduction of this impressive native species are a legacy we would like to leave to future generations. And who knows, maybe fishers will be roaming the Olympic Peninsula as early as fall of 2004.

**Mark Skatrud**, skatrud@televar.com



*We don't need to send our taxes up in smoke*

## Faux fire hits the Loomis

A fire that raged in the Pasayten Wilderness Area was predicted to hit the Loomis Forest within days or weeks. The fire never did reach the Loomis, but fire-fighting logging equipment made a mark that will last decades to come.

When predictions arose that fire would hit the Loomis State Forest wildlands along the Canadian border, we were concerned but not alarmed. After all, in 1999 we'd protected 25,000 acres of these lands with the help of 1,600 donors to let natural processes like fire hold sway on the landscape. For thousands of years fire has periodically brought to these lodgepole pine landscapes life, rejuvenation, and new opportunities for forests and wildlife.

But even though we'd worked hard to protect the Loomis Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA) from logging activities, logging and roading is what we got this summer. In anticipation of a possible fire burning into the forest from national forestland to the west, the Federal Fire Management Team clearcut a 100-foot-wide fireline along much of 14 Mile Road, an old logging road in the NRCA, and past the end of the road to Goodenough Park on the Pasayten border—ostensibly to serve as a line to light a back burn. The logging extended five miles into the heart of the northern Loomis Conservation Area for a fire that never came closer than 6 miles of the forest border.

Shortly after the damage was done, NWEA's Mitch Friedman, Barb Swanson, and Mark Skatrud toured the area with Department of Natural Resources representatives. No one was happy seeing heavy equipment in the NRCA. We were shocked and dismayed to see how quickly natural beauty was turned to manmade destruction.

Now that shifts in weather have contained the fire, DNR needs to restore the forest and redress the damage. NWEA is involved in the rehabilitation process by providing wildlife corridor information, including Friends of Loomis Forest tracking surveys, and we are monitoring DNR plans. The state agency will be paying the federal government millions for creating this line; it must also be committed to paying whatever it takes to make the NRCA right again.

This kind of fire fighting was no way to “protect” park lands in Canada or the inhabited valleys to the east of the forest. People and communities should be protected with defensible space and flame resistant building materials, a far better investment of dollars than fighting fires in conservation areas with low timber values.

To ensure that destructive fire fighting measures don't happen again, the DNR needs to revise the current NRCA fire plan to address fires originating from federal lands outside the resource area. We're also urging the DNR to conduct a formal review of state fire-fighting costs and plans, and to advise the state legislature on improving fire-fighting efficiency. At the state level a statute that requires fighting of all fires on state land needs overhaul. NWEA will work to ensure adequate changes that allow natural processes to work in these areas we've protected.

NWEA board member **Mark Skatrud** can be reached at [skatrud@televar.com](mailto:skatrud@televar.com).

***“The town of Loomis can be better protected with tactics like those used around Winthrop....A small investment in metal roofs and brush clearing would further protect residents from the improbability of strong westerly winds raining down embers from a distant fire.” –Mitch Friedman, August 26, Seattle Times***



In the Loomis, looking back to the recently clearcut 14 Mile Road. The fireline crosses Snowshoe Creek. Photo Mark Skatrud



## *A ray of hope amid the gloom* **National fire legislation**

On May 20 the U.S. House of Representatives passed the "Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003," an act modeled off the Bush administration's highly controversial "Healthy Forests Initiative." H.R. 1904, the McNinn bill, uses the guise of fire to do many things, few of which have anything to do with creating healthy forests.

The act excludes logging decisions from the Endangered Species Act and National Environmental Policy Act, reducing public participation in decision making on our national public lands, and interfering with the U.S. judicial system.

This bill has been roundly criticized by a broad constituency including civil liberties and workers rights advocates, local community leaders, and fire fighting groups.

Though it's an unpopular bill with the public, many Senators don't seem to care. A Senate counterpart to H.R. 1904, S. 1449, passed the agriculture committee in late July and is expected to go to the Senate floor for a vote in September. Should the bill pass in the Senate, it would move to the President to be signed into law.

### **Helping forests and communities**

Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) have recently introduced a ray of hope with their alternative fire bill, the "Forestry and Community Assistance Act of 2003" (S. 1453). The first priority of this problem-solving, science-based bill is to protect people, communities, and drinking water supplies from wildland fires.

The Leahy/Boxer bill protects communities by prioritizing funding to the Wildland Urban Interface and expediting the planning process for WUI projects. (WUI refers to the area directly around communities and municipal drinking water infrastructure.) The bill also provides funding for this work on state, tribal, and non-industrial private lands,  
*continued next page*



Fire in the high country. Photo Matt Carroll

# **Evolving with Fire**

What a hot, dry summer it's been! And that means fire. Summer thunderstorms bring with them the lightning that serves as the source of renewal to the landscape.

The plants and animals of fire-dependent ecosystems almost seem to encourage fire. Some plant species have evolved biological characteristics that actually increase their flammability, creating an ideal fire environment. The plants and the landscapes they live in are "fire adapted."

Take for example ponderosa pine forests. Deep needle litter layers and native grass species cover the forest floor, creating a highly combustible fuel conducive to frequent, low intensity fires. Many species in ponderosa pine forests have developed adaptations to fire, such as thick bark, the ability to resprout, or a large seed bank, that allow species to resist, evade, and endure most fires. The overarching structure and composition of ponderosa pine forests are shaped by fire. Natural stands are generally open and park like from frequent burning of the understory. Fire creates a mosaic of vegetation that in turn provides a diversity of habitats for a myriad of wildlife species.

In fire-adapted forests, specific fire events may cause the death of individual plants, but collectively and over the long term, the ecosystem depends on the fire process for its vitality and sustainability.

### **Humans, fire, and common sense approaches**

While plants and animals have evolved and adapted to the fire environment within which they live, human communities continue to struggle with our relationship with fire.

Fires can be catastrophic when they threaten people's lives, homes, schools, and businesses. But simple measures can protect homes and communities from wildland fire. Preparing homes and communities for the inevitable fire event and creating fire-adapted human communities comprise the missing first step towards solving the wildfire dilemma. Creating defensible space before a fire threatens reduces the threat to lives and property, provides safer lines of defense for firefighters, and helps reduce mammoth fire suppression budgets.

### **Forest—or Fire—Service?**

Over the decades, the Forest Service has turned into more of a "fire service." Fire suppression costs have skyrocketed—last year's expenditures topped out at \$1.5 billion. The recent fire fighting bill for the Farewell Creek fire complex in northeastern Washington is \$35 million alone. This is money that could have been pegged for restoration and proactive fuel treatments.

Fire suppression also comes with severe impacts to the environment. Bulldozers damage soils and introduce noxious weeds, and bomber retardant drops kill fish when botched. The heat of the moment can also lead to bad decision making, for example the huge "contingency line" clearcut in the Loomis NRCA this summer (see page 15).

With good fire plans and community protection measures in place for high-risk homes and communities, forest cutting for needless firelines can be avoided.

Land managers would have the opportunity to manage natural fires less aggressively in remote locations, allowing fire to regain its natural place in the landscape.

### Natural fire regimes

Because of variations in climate, topography, and elevation, different forests have evolved under different fire regimes. Studying fire regimes provides insight on the role of fire in a particular ecosystem by examining the frequency, severity, and extent of burns.

While the ecology of fire is complex, humans tend to simplify distinct differences between forest types—or not understand them at all. For example, the ponderosa pine forest is the poster child used to tout logging forests far from communities. Certain low elevation ponderosa pine stands—which have mostly been mismanaged with decades of logging, grazing, and fire suppression—may benefit from thinning small trees and brush as a precursor to prescribed burning; but this approach should be unique to this forest type. Furthermore, the long-term effects at the landscape level of these types of treatments are still largely unknown and restoration work is in the experimental stages.

In other ecosystems—such as wet coastal rainforests of the Northwest—fires burn infrequently, but with high intensity and severity, and often under extreme weather conditions in times of drought. No manner of “fuels reduction” can help these forests; thinning can actually exacerbate fire danger by opening the canopy and allowing vegetation to turn tinder-dry.

### Moving toward fire-adapted human communities

Fire management strategies may differ across the diversity of ecosystems in the West, but when it comes to home and community protection, the scientifically justifiable, one-size-fits-all approach of “defensible space” does the trick. Such treatments operate independently of vegetation type and are based primarily on home flammability. Focusing work in the wildland urban interface protects people; and teaching people about natural and prescribed fire gives them the knowledge and comfort necessary to allow natural fires to burn in remote areas. It brings us one step closer to creating fire-adapted human communities.

Conservation associate and fire ecologist **Barb Swanson** can be reached at [bswanson@ecosystem.org](mailto:bswanson@ecosystem.org).

### Legislation cont. from p. 16

where one finds 85 percent of the communities that need protection from forest fire. The Leahy/Boxer bill preserves citizens' rights to engage in decisions that affect public lands, upholding bedrock environmental laws such as the ESA and NEPA.

S.1453 also protects our existing healthy tracts of fire resilient old-growth forests and roadless areas, providing money and technical support to maintain and create healthy forested watersheds across land ownerships. It even allows for private lands reserves to help recover threatened and endangered species and to reinvigorate biodiversity.

NWEA has worked hard to promote this type of common sense approach to forest fire. We argued for it at the Western Governors Association forest health summit in June, and we continue to reason for it with our legislators in Washington, D.C.



For the results of the Senate vote and to see how this suspenseful story ends, visit [www.ecosystem.org/fire/](http://www.ecosystem.org/fire/).



Photo BLM

## Wildlife and fire

The old Disney cliché of wildfire, with Bambi running scared through the forest, propels the myth that fire is bad. Yet fire is a natural disturbance, and many plants and animals are adapted to wildland fire.

During a fire, many small rodents such as mice and voles survive by seeking refuge in underground tunnels, rotten logs, and moist ground cover. Large mammals such as deer and bison are quite mobile and seem relatively unperturbed by fire. They can often be seen grazing within sight of flames.

Reptiles and amphibians suffer little mortality because of their specialized habitat. Amphibians live in moist, fire-resistant areas, and reptiles live in sparsely vegetated landscapes

with little fuel for burns. Birds usually take flight before fires approach—although the mortality rate during nesting season is high, and ground-nesting birds are especially at risk.

Fires naturally burn in a mosaic pattern; areas left unburned serve as refugia and wildlife may return in a matter of hours or days after the flames die down. Fire's aftermath creates the opportunity for an easy meal for many animals and insects. Bears, coyotes, and scavenging raptors feed on the few burned-over carcasses of the not-so-fortunate. Birds seek an easy meal of insects and rodents readily spotted in open, burned areas. The rebirth of grass and wildflower shoots on the forest floor provides a nutritious meal for many ungulates and rodents. The growing population of small rodents in turn provides a larger food source for predators.

—Intern **Aaron Edgington** works on fire and national forest issues



## Group gets support for restoration

# Collaborative effort pays off

Hard work and commitment has paid off in the sum of \$150,000 for restoration work on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. NWEA and other forest stakeholders involved with the Gifford Pinchot Collaborative Working Group sought and received funding for two restoration projects from a congressionally-sponsored resource advisory committee in southwestern Washington.

The collaborative group set out last October to demonstrate that restoration and forestry projects supported by timber workers, environmentalists, and local community members have the best chance of avoiding conflict and gridlock while creating jobs in economically depressed local communities.

“The goal of the collaborative group is to design projects that put jobs on the ground in an environmentally responsible manner,” says Bob Guenther, president of the Thurston-Lewis Central Labor Council, and Gifford Pinchot Collaborative Working Group member. “The money we were granted indicates that people believe in our ability to make this vision succeed.”

One project will selectively thin a 50-year-old plantation thick with young Douglas firs that monopolize the sunlight, water, and nutrients needed by other trees, shrubs, and forest floor plant species. The group will use this 45-acre pilot project to monitor how well thinning encourages biodiversity by increasing the abundance of plants that provide food for animals further up the food chain. They will also observe whether the small trees removed to improve wildlife habitat could generate revenue if sold as firewood or another commercially valuable product. Successful sale of these small logs could pave the way for similar restoration in other young plantations.

The second project will replace undersized culverts and make additional improvements on two roads in the Iron Creek watershed. These roads have been identified as primary culprits in feeding many tons of fish-killing sediments into the Cispus River drainage. The improvements will curb the amount of sediments delivered into streams inhabited by threatened chinook and coho salmon and steelhead trout. In addition, the project will provide a \$90,000 contract and a family-wage job for a local bidder as soon as next spring.

Red Rogers, a retired logger from Randle—a small community in the Cowlitz valley—summarizes the hours that group members have spent in the field working to identify projects that address the needs and concerns of all collaborative stakeholders. “After walking around in the forest together, it was pretty clear that we all agreed which sorts of areas are broken and need to be fixed, and also provide good, honest jobs.”

These two projects are just the beginning; the collaborative group plans to propose more projects for funding next year. In addition, the group will work closely with the Forest Service in upcoming months to redesign an environmentally damaging and controversial timber sale. By working together, the group plans to avoid old-growth and roadless areas and focus instead on restoring structural and species diversity to monoculture plantations.

While a political storm over forest management rages nationally, NWEA and the Gifford Pinchot Collaborative Working Group are quietly working to demonstrate that it is local environmental stewardship that will result in a truly “healthy forest”—a forest which can provide for the needs of wildlife and people.

Conservation associate **Regan Smith** works on forest restoration issues and collaboration, [rsmith@ecosystem.org](mailto:rsmith@ecosystem.org).

## Welcome “blue and green” Pete to NWEA

Please join us in welcoming Pete Nelson to NWEA. Pete recently joined NWEA's national forest staff and, until October, plans to apply his diverse skills and abilities to unite the “blue and green” elements of the progressive movement, promoting a federal forest policy that delivers for workers and for wildlife. Later this fall, Pete heads to graduate school to pursue dual masters degrees in forestry and public affairs. When he's not out wonkin' around in the woods, Pete loves to float rivers, take in fine bluegrass music, and deliberate the finer points of timber sale contracts, Congressional appropriations, collaboration, and non-traditional organizing.

**Dave Werntz**, NWEA science director, [dwerntz@ecosystem.org](mailto:dwerntz@ecosystem.org)



Pete in action with activists at Cispus Flats.  
*Photo Hudson Dodd*



## A date in the woods, September 26-28

# Campout with Grove Guardians

Whether you've already identified yourself as a Grove Guardian activist, or just want to get involved in working to protect old-growth forests, please join Northwest Ecosystem Alliance for a fun and informative campout in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Learn about old-growth forest ecology, our efforts to reform the Gifford Pinchot National Forest's timber sale program, and ways in which you can help protect threatened forest stands. You'd be hard-pressed to find a more entertaining and engaging group of folks!

The Grove Guardian program has a strong track record of effectively influencing agency projects. Earlier this year NWEA and other plaintiffs settled our suit with the Forest Service, canceling several proposed timber sales that would have cut majestic stands of remaining old growth, including the notorious Swell and Papa Bare timber sales. Citizen letters and phone calls were crucial to protecting these stands, and for now those trees will remain as habitat.

Not all old-growth timber sales are off the books in the Gifford Pinchot, however, and Grove Guardians are stepping up the pressure to make sure more ancient forest doesn't fall in the GPNF, like the devastating losses happening in the Mt. Hood, Willamette, and Umpqua National Forests in Oregon this summer.

At the September 26-28 campout, we'll visit "Acci," a 227-acre timber sale straddling Skamania and Klickitat Counties in the southeast portion of the Gifford Pinchot, in an area where successful reforestation after a cut will be difficult. This sale would also establish roads in the Monte Cristo Roadless Area.

Join us for a delightful weekend at a Forest Service campground; we'll explore the area's natural beauty, and share good food to fuel a satisfying strategy brainstorm around the campfire on Saturday evening. Come feed your soul! RSVP for agenda and directions to Hudson Dodd.



NWEA activists in the Cispus Flats timber sale, Gifford Pinchot National Forest.  
Photo by Roddy Scheer, <http://roddyscheer.com>



For more about Grove Guardians and the Acci timber sale campout, visit [www.ecosystem.org/calendar.html](http://www.ecosystem.org/calendar.html) and [www.nwoldgrowth.org/getinvolved/groveguardian.html](http://www.nwoldgrowth.org/getinvolved/groveguardian.html).

## "Meet NWEA"

# Ecosystem Action Team events

NWEA is thankful to have supporters all around this beautiful region, but the geographic scope of the Pacific Northwest makes it challenging for these members and volunteers to meet face-to-face. Many members have never met a NWEA staffer or any other NWEA supporter. We aim to change that. The idea is to provide far-flung NWEA members with a forum to meet one another and NWEA staff, learn about NWEA's latest work, and get more involved in protecting wildlands in their locality.

A committee of volunteers—the Ecosystem Action Team—is forming to plan workshops and coffee klatches around the state—and we need your help. Starting this fall, we'll be putting on a series of events in diverse parts of Washington state—from the Olympic Peninsula to the Okanogan Valley, and from the I-5 corridor to the Tri-Cities—to bring folks together around the issues we all care about.

Each event will feature a presentation by a NWEA staff member, including our leaders and luminaries, giving members the chance to ask questions about programs you're most interested in. But we need your input! What issues are you most concerned about? Where would be a good venue in your community? What local group could help publicize an event? Please contact Hudson Dodd with your suggestions.

**Hudson Dodd** is NWEA's outreach and volunteer coordinator. If you are interested in participating in an event, contact him at [hdodd@ecosystem.org](mailto:hdodd@ecosystem.org), 800.878.9950 x 26.



# VIP: Volunteers Instrumental in Progress

Northwest Ecosystem Alliance is lucky to attract volunteers from all walks of life—folks concerned about wildlife and forests. This fall we'd like to give you a picture of the range of volunteers who help NWEA protect and restore wildlands in the Pacific Northwest. We are grateful to have them, as they are invaluable to our work.

## Dana Nalbandian

Dana is a professional photographer with a special penchant for big trees. She grew up in Seattle, and remembers when the Smith Tower and the Space Needle were the city's tallest buildings—and that there used to be many more old-growth forests in western Washington. Dana is a Grove Guardian, working to protect remaining native stands in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. When she's not photographing rock'n'roll stars the likes of Carlos Santana and Lindsey Buckingham at the Gorge at George or the Tacoma Dome, she might be at her forest retreat home near Packwood. There she spends time in nature with her husband, Tim, and her daughter, Jessica, and photographs threatened groves of national forestland (see the accompanying photo of the Cispus Flats timber sale).

## Roddy Scheer

Roddy is a freelance photojournalist and web designer, whose work has appeared in various print publications and websites. Notable magazines featuring Roddy's writing and design include *E/The Environmental Magazine* and *Native Plants Magazine*. He lives in Seattle with his wife, Alex, and young daughter Eliza. Initially Roddy got involved with us by doing some volunteer work with The Cascades Conservation Partnership. Since the end of The Partnership's private fundraising campaign, Roddy has become a Grove Guardian, and is working to halt timber sales in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest that threaten roadless areas and stands of old growth. Roddy took the photo on page 19 in the Cispus Flats timber sale at a Grove Guardian campout earlier this summer.

## Corina Logan

Corina is a former NWEA intern who has stayed involved with the organization after her internship ended—despite living in a yurt in rural Snohomish County. During her Summer 2002 internship for the Northwest Old-Growth Campaign, she organized house fundraising parties all around western Washington. These days, she's a student at Evergreen State College, charting her own field of study: biomimicry (seeking models of sustainability by looking to other species for examples). Corina is also a professional actress and spokesmodel, whose clients include General Motors, for their fuel cell automobile program. Most recently, Corina helped NWEA generate letters and postcards in opposition to the administration's proposal to weaken the Northwest Forest Plan. Her husband, Amal Graaf, has volunteered for NWEA as well, helping out at events and consulting on our website.

## Roger Iverson

Roger has recently joined the ranks of retired firefighters in Whatcom County. After years of battling blazes in Bellingham, he's enjoying having time to spend with his wife, Lynn, and to travel. Between trips to the North Cascades, Roger helps out NWEA in various ways. He's been an on-call volunteer for office mailing parties, tabling outreach, and fundraising events for years—often there for us when we've most needed someone. This summer, he's been helping with the rare carnivore remote camera project, on a team with other volunteers, placing cameras in the backcountry to capture photos of shy carnivores.



Cispus Flats timber sale, Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Photo by Dana Nalbandian



Corina Logan



Roger and Lynn Iverson in the Cascades



# Interns in Action

## Keeping the “public” in public lands

As a Forest Watch intern my work at NWEA consists of keeping track of Forest Service projects within the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. No small task! I follow projects on grazing, mining, logging, fuels reduction, trail relocation, noxious weed control, and culvert and bridge replacements.

It all starts with the SOPA (Schedule Of Proposed Actions), which the Forest Service puts out every three months. This is a list of proposed projects within each ranger district in the east side forests. I spend many hours speaking with forest service personnel (when I can catch them!), gathering details on the projects and monitoring their NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) status. I have spoken with many wonderful Forest Service folks, some of whom are doing great work, are eager to help, and have extended invitations to visit their project sites.

I keep Barb Swanson, NWEA’s fire ecologist, informed so she can further evaluate the projects and make decisions on what action we may take. Keeping all of the information well synthesized has been a somewhat daunting task, but it is key to our ability to comment and participate effectively in the public process guaranteed under NEPA.

Working for NWEA I’ve had the chance to peer into the processes in place to protect the lands that belong to us all. Previous to my experience here I had a limited idea about what goes on within national forests. Having now seen what actually occurs, I have a greater understanding of the crucial role NWEA plays in keeping the “public” in public lands. —Jen Weeks

## Saying “no” to noxious weeds

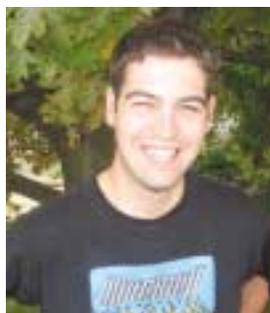
This summer most of my time at NWEA has been spent working with conservation associate Regan Smith, reviewing and commenting on Forest Service projects. Most notably, proposed noxious weed management treatments for the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and a proposal to reissue grazing permits in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest have been my focus.

Over 70 weed infestations including Japanese knotweed, herb Robert, and Himalayan blackberry have been identified in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie. In response, the Forest Service has outlined weed control measures, some of which include use of the herbicide glyphosate. Glyphosate residues can persist in soils for one year; however, the effects of persistent exposure to this chemical are unknown. While we support the Forest Service’s approach to use Rodeo, a less toxic glyphosate formulation, but not Roundup, a more toxic formulation, we are concerned about the health of aquatic and terrestrial organisms that may be chronically exposed to this chemical. Hand pulling, a great alternative to herbicide use, will be used to control a portion of

the infestations.

The Ice Caves Grazing Allotment, if reissued, will allow cattle to graze on more than 31,000 acres of the 33,000-acre Cave Bear Creeks Watershed in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. This project is of special concern because grazing near streams can result in bank erosion and riparian vegetation loss, which can degrade water quality necessary for aquatic organisms. Furthermore, pale blue-eyed grass, a Washington state-listed sensitive species, can be found in two prairies within the allotment. The impacts of grazing, trampling, and ground compaction may have devastating effects on this and other native plant species.

—Carolyn Johnson



## Putting tough questions to the DNR

As a new policy intern at NWEA I have been working with Lisa McShane on legislative and policy matters. In my first two weeks I have attended legislative strategy meetings with regional environmental groups and the Board of Natural Resources retreat at Lake Whatcom. I have also

asked questions of candidates for local office at public forums.

In addition, I’ve begun research on several important issues that will appear during the next legislative session. These issues include protecting the ability of neighbors adversely affected by proposed DNR timber sales to add their input to the sales processes. I am also researching a bill that was introduced during the last legislative session and is likely to reappear this upcoming session, which would prevent the state government from buying more than five acres for conservation purposes in specific counties.

The short time I have worked for NWEA has already proven very exciting. I am looking forward to what the next months bring. —Jordan Norris

## Reforming the U.S. Forest Service, one timber sale at a time

My work with conservation associate Barb Swanson focuses on tracking timber sales proposed within the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. If trees are being cut, I know about it: when the stands are being appraised, advertised, sold, and harvested. I also take an active part in the Forest Service’s project proposals by engaging in the National Environmental Policy Act process: writing comments, lending advice, and generally making sure the Forest Service uses the best science to manage our public lands. Through my work, I serve to back up key environmental

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laws, including the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act. For example, I found that the Old Town Mining project was a malignant proposal with the potential to harm drinking water, imperil the endangered Columbia River steelhead, and disrupt northern spotted owl habitat. Through research and comments, I've helped influence the agency to change this mining project so that it is less disruptive to water and wildlife.

—Aaron Edgington

## Grassroots Organizing 101

I've still got my Chicago accent, but the Northwest certainly has my heart. It would be impossible for me to live in Bellingham and not be a part of NWEA. I've been spending time this summer working with NWEA's outreach and volunteer coordinator, Hudson Dodd, on a range of organizing activities.



getting out: we're going to change things for our planet.

—Laura Vitale



Learn how you can put your special talents to work for NWEA, go to [www.ecosystem.org/getinvolved.html](http://www.ecosystem.org/getinvolved.html).

## Volunteer appreciation

Northwest Ecosystem Alliance is an alliance of diverse people acting in a wide variety of capacities to protect wildlands and wildlife. Volunteers are individuals—most NWEA members, some not—who offer their time to do whatever they can to help our efforts. NWEA staff is appreciative of everything these volunteers do. And NWEA membership is the fertile ground from which volunteer activists spring. Many of our members take action on a range of issues each month—writing letters to elected officials to support positive policies and oppose negative ones. **Thanks so much to each of you who take the time to respond to our calls to action!** And many thanks to the following folks, who have volunteered this summer.

### Special thanks:

—Darcy Ottey's Outward Bound team who are participating in the Rare Carnivore Remote Camera project this summer!

—Ray Dunn for his generous sailboat donation for the raffle at our annual fundraiser, Jammin' for Salmon!

—Kulshan Cartography for their generous donation of Green Trails maps being used by volunteers this summer!

—Randy Walcott for helping coordinate the first Grove Guardian campout of the summer, at Walupt Lake!

—Gear for Good for donating outdoor equipment to the Rare Carnivore Remote Camera Project (see [www.gearforgood.org](http://www.gearforgood.org))!

—All those who made donations to sponsor the NWEA team racing in September's Bellingham Traverse!

Barbara Allen	Michael Eisenstein	Corina Logan	Martha Silano
Austin Anderson	Cris Feringer	Jim Malin	Sasha Savoian
Kiko Anderson	Doris Ferm	Halley Manion	Roddy Scheer
Lindsey Antof	Scott Fields	Johnny McConnell	Asta Sestrap
John Barnard	Kelly Flynn	Tom McNeely	Mark Skatrud
Emily Barnett	Ann Gibson	Kevin Miller	Fred Spadero
Alex Baxter	Jim Harmon	Jasmine Minbashian	Julia Spencer
Clayton Bliss	Courtney Harris	Dave Moskowitz	Arielle Stein
Kenan Block	Michael Hinkel	Christine Nasser	Donny Stevens
Jeffrey Jon Bodé	Eric Hirst	Scott Newton	Maggie Sullivan
Kristin Boyles	Greg Hughes	Emily Nichols	Will Taygan
Tom Campion	Helene Irving	Jordan Norris	Ted Ullman
Colby Chester	Steve Irving	Jules Opton-Himmel	Renetta Van Diest
Evelyn Chia	Roger Iverson	Darcy Ottey	Laura Vitale
Mark Christiansen	Carolyn Johnson	Ian Parker-Renga	Daria Vyaersi
April Claxton	Nicole Johnson	Albert Postema	Randy Walcott
Roger Cole	Derek Jordan	Peggy Printz	Steve Walker
Langdon Cook	Bob Kelly Jr.	Bay Renaud	Jennifer Weeks
Ben Davis	Leslie Koch	Nancy Ritzenthaler	Molly Westring
Chris Dillard	Cinnamon Kou	Alan Rhodes	Luca Williams
William Donnelly	Henry Lagergren	Susan Rhodes	Jim Withee
Ray Dunn	Marc Lampe	Maryse Sagewynd	Tim Wood
Aaron Edgington	Alex Loeb	Terradan Sagewynd	Brook Zscheile

To volunteer, contact volunteer coordinator **Hudson Dodd**, [hdodd@ecosystem.org](mailto:hdodd@ecosystem.org), 800-878-9950 x 26.



Welcome to Paul Balle and Joseph Losi  
**Old friends in new positions**

NWEA is excited to welcome The Cascades Conservation Partnership's Paul Balle and Joseph Losi to our fundraising and development team. You may be hearing from one of them soon to tell you more about our dynamic program work.

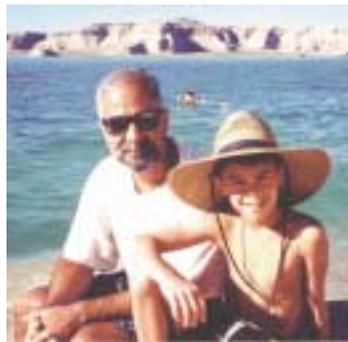
**Paul Balle** joins NWEA as our Corporate Fundraising Director. The flat, heavily populated Chicago suburbs where he was born and raised gave him a great appreciation for the natural beauty of our Pacific Northwest landscape.



Paul, his wife Donna, and their dog Zoe at Lake Louise

Paul worked for 10 years at Microsoft and left in 1999 to work in the nonprofit world. He began that career volunteering for NWEA, before joining the paid staff of The Cascades Conservation Partnership in fall of 2000. Since then he's raised over \$1.6 million to protect Central Cascades forestland.

Paul enjoys music, playing guitar, hiking, and looking for wildlife (including snakes, lizards, and salamanders!).



Joseph and Jake at the Coves on Lake Powell in Utah

**Joseph Losi** was raised in Buffalo, New York, and his experience in Scouting introduced him to his love for nature. He moved to the West in 1975, and now resides in Seattle where he does his best at co-parenting his two boys, Nick and Jake.

After 10 years raising money for KPLU public radio, Joseph thought it

was time to apply some of his hard-learned lessons to doing something good for the planet. He joined The Partnership staff in 2000 and was a jack-of-all-trades for the fundraising team, responsible for major donor requests, grant writing, radio promotions, and corporate sponsorships for *The Lord of the Rings* premier event.

He is an active practitioner of Qi Gong and Tai Chi and enjoys jazz, photography, and travel.

Development Director **Jodi Broughton** can be reached at [jodi@ecosystem.org](mailto:jodi@ecosystem.org), 800.878.9950 x 15.

**Join Northwest Ecosystem Alliance**

As members, you and your participation are our best gift to the land. And your membership donations make all the difference to our work. This year we need you more than ever—so please share news of our work with friends and family by encouraging them to join NWEA.

**Memberships:**

- I'd like to join NWEA for \$\_\_\_\_\_ (minimum \$15, larger donation greatly appreciated!).
- I'd like to make a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (city, state, zip)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (email)

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

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expires \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Other gifts:**

- Artwork by Naomi Rose. Please visit [www.naomicrose.com](http://www.naomicrose.com) for examples of these original old-growth forest images. 10% of sales goes directly to NWEA.



- 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. Explore lands protected by The Cascades Conservation Partnership. (\$20)

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



## Melding of the minds: Biodiversity Northwest joins NWEA

As a board officer of Biodiversity Northwest (BNW), I'm pleased to announce that BNW recently merged most of our programs with NWEA and extended NWEA memberships to all BNW members.

It's a great match, one that helps BNW members continue to engage in issues and campaigns affecting our national forests—and to learn about NWEA's other dynamic program work, including protection of state lands through management reform and protecting Canadian forests and transborder wildlife.

I'm very pleased that Peter Nelson, formerly BNW's policy director, has been able to continue his work advancing a dialogue with rural communities as a NWEA employee (see inside, p. 18). Pete, Jasmine Minbashian (now director of the Northwest Old-Growth Campaign), Demis Foster (now outreach director for The Cascades Conservation Partnership), and I all got our start in Northwest forest advocacy with BNW.

Dave Atcheson is Biodiversity Northwest board secretary, and campaign director of The Cascades Conservation Partnership, [datcheson@ecosystem.org](mailto:datcheson@ecosystem.org).



Naomi Rose, [www.naomicrose.com](http://www.naomicrose.com)

## Cedar River Watershed update

Biodiversity Northwest members have long been engaged in protecting Seattle's Cedar River Watershed. There is some news to report on that front: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has begun construction on a new powerline traversing the watershed, adjacent to an existing line. With a new 150-foot-wide swath going through a protected, municipal watershed, we can't exactly claim victory. But because Biodiversity Northwest and other groups like the Sierra Club and Seattle Audubon mounted strong challenges to initial proposals, the project was delayed by a year and substantially improved. Among the mitigation measures in the final BPA-Seattle agreement are:

- Flying in towers by helicopter and using one set of towers where the lines cross the Cedar River itself
- New protection for about 1,000 acres of land in the Cedar and Raging River Watersheds
- A \$6 million compensation fund for new restoration projects in the Cedar River Watershed
- A commitment by BPA not to seek additional right-of-way in the watershed in the future

It would have been better if the BPA had recognized the crisis created by their powerline proposal as an opportunity to promote a "nonwires" alternative. Such an alternative would have used a combination of conservation, new transmission technologies, load management, and distributed generation to obviate the need for the line. But the extensive mitigation package was enough for BNW and other groups to drop our opposition to the project.



For a look back at highlights of BNW's nearly 10-year history or for more information on the powerline, see [www.biodiversitynw.org](http://www.biodiversitynw.org). For NWEA programs, see [www.ecosystem.org/projects.html](http://www.ecosystem.org/projects.html).



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