

Battle Started Over Wenatchee Plan

Thanks to your efforts, the Okanogan Forest Supervisor received sacks of mail responding to deficiencies in the Draft Okanogan Forest Management Plan. That's the good news.

The bad news is that the terrific response on this first forest plan for the state may make it tougher for us on upcoming plans. We have, in effect, served notice on the timber industry, ORV groups, and other developers that we care enough about our Forests to fight for them.

Repercussions are already showing up for the recently released Draft Wenatchee Forest Plan. The timber industry, backed by big corporate dollars and several timber company associations, launched an aggressive campaign pushing for the maximum harvest alternatives in the Forest Plan. The industry is widely circulating a slick flyer calculating the collapse of local economies if every available tree isn't slated for logging by the Forest Plan. They have also developed a multi-media slide show which explains how maximum timber harvest stimulates the economy, enhances scenery, promotes tourism -- in fact, does just about everything but cure cancer.

Off-road-vehicle groups are also well organized on the Wenatchee Plan. The ORV alternative listed in the plan allocates just about every trail outside of designated Wilderness to ORV use.

Your letters on the Draft Wenatchee Plan will be especially important to counter these efforts to cut, road and open the entire Forest to motors. Wildlife, fisheries, old-growth, primitive recreation, water quality and other non-commodities need your

support. Please use this opportunity to tell the Forest Service how you want your favorite places managed, write to the Wenatchee Forest Supervisor before Oct. 1.

WASHINGTON WILDFIRE

Journal of the WASHINGTON WILDERNESS COALITION

The Washington Wilderness Coalition is a non-profit, tax-exempt association of both organizations and individual members. The WWC provides assistance and information on Wilderness and Wild Rivers matters to its members and to Washington's citizens. The WWC is a publicly supported educational organization dependent upon private donations and citizen support. Contributions are tax-deductible.

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Washington Wildfire seeks manuscripts, black-and-white photographs, drawings, book reviews, poetry, etc. on Wilderness, Wild Rivers, and related conservation topics. Submissions should be sent to the WWC.

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Old Man's Beard (*geum triflorum*). Photo by Mark Egger



Chainsaws and Dirtbikes for the Wenatchee

Enjoy sitting on a stump while watching motorcycles roar past on a forest trail? If so, you'll be delighted with the Forest Service's "preferred alternative" (C) in the recently released draft Wenatchee Forest Plan!

Not surprisingly, the Forest Service chose a "business-as-usual" alternative. And that business means undeveloped areas scarred by roads and clearcuts, habitat for old-growth dependent species cut to minimum levels, increased sediments in fish spawning streams, and trail miles either lost under logging roads or given over to ORVs.

Specifically, alternative C would add 1700 miles of new roads to the 4700 miles of road currently on the Forest; 21,000 acres of old growth would be cut in the first decade; 51 miles of trails would be destroyed by logging and many more trail miles would be rerouted around clearcuts; 89 percent of the trails outside of Wilderness would be allocated to ORV use areas.

Over half of the remaining roadless acres would be roaded and logged. Designated Wilderness areas would be ringed by clearcuts -- 99 percent of the areas adjoining the Norse Peak, Goat Rocks and William O. Douglas Wilderness Areas are slated for development; logging would scar the hillsides along the Mather Memorial Parkway (Highway 410) marring this scenic entrance to the Mt. Rainier National Park.

Old growth habitat would be especially hard hit as roadless areas are opened up for development. Little will remain of the old growth Ponderosa Pine forests found in the dramatic sandstone canyons of Devil's Gulch; low elevation riparian forests along the primitive Chiwawa valley would be hauled away; and critical habitat for spotted owls and other old growth species would be destroyed in the Canyon Creek and Heather Lake Roadless Areas.

TIMBER — KEEPING THE CUT UP

Alternative C allows an annual timber harvest of 138.1 million board feet (mmbf). This level of harvest is 85 percent of the average amount actually sold on the Forest from 1974 thru 1984. These figures could lead the reviewer to believe the Forest Service

proposes a reduction of harvest levels. In fact, a good bit of the timber bought during these years was sold back to the Forest Service after the market went bust in the early 80's. Even after the buy-back sales the industry still owns an 850 mmbf backlog of timber that it has bought but not cut. **This is enough timber to keep mills running for the next five years.**

It is not merely by chance that the forests remaining roadless today have not yet fallen to the chainsaw. For the most part, these areas are uncut today because poor timber, steep slopes, fragile soils, short growing seasons, and difficult access rendered them unprofitable to log. The best lands have largely been cut over, and now the industry is asking us not only to allow them to devastate these environmentally sensitive lands, but in many cases to pay them for their efforts! On one recent Wenatchee sale taxpayers spent \$63,000 to subsidize logging within one mile of a nesting pair of spotted owls. In the Lake Creek roadless area the Forest Service did a site specific economic analysis in February, 1986, and determined that the agency would lose \$134,000 on roading and logging the area. Yet it is sacrificed for timber production in six of the nine alternatives presented in the draft *continued on page 3*



Forest Service economic analysis predicts the government will lose \$134,000 by roading and cutting the Lake Creek Basin. Photo by Doug Pauly.

environmental impact statement (DEIS).

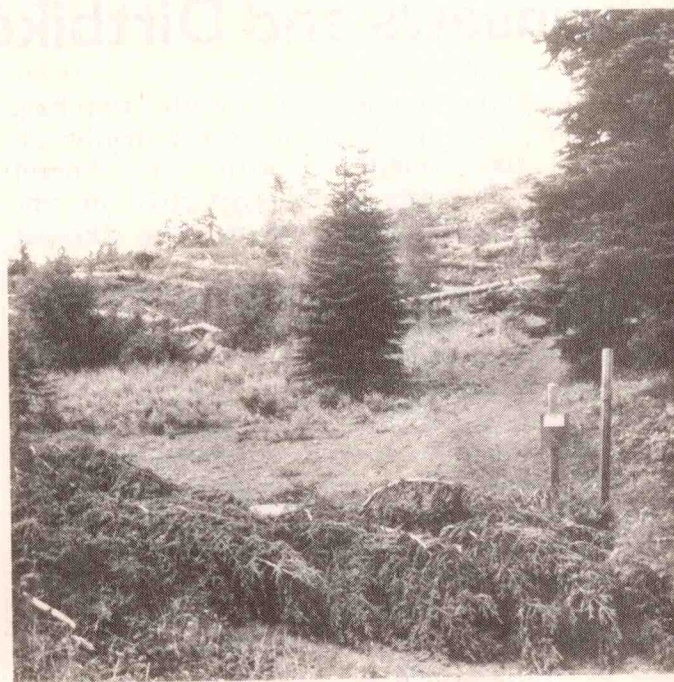
RECREATION AMIDST CLEARCUTS

The Wenatchee National Forest is one of the most heavily used recreational areas in the nation. Tourism and recreation play an increasingly important role in the economies of local communities, such as Leavenworth and Chelan, while at the same time the economic importance of timber production to these communities is decreasing. Despite these trends, the Draft Plan sacrifices large acreages to timber production at the expense of prime recreation lands, trails, and scenery.

Most of the trails outside designated Wilderness areas that happen to escape obliteration by logging will be opened to dirtbikes. The DEIS states that management under Alternative C would increase conflicts between motorized and non-motorized trail users. Despite this admission, the Forest Service plans to rebuild miles of backcountry hiking trails to dirtbike standards, virtually assuring high conflicts between users. 89



ORV mudhole on Trail #1385 to Shoestring Lake in the Manastash area. Photo by Denny O'Callaghan.



Remains of the Frost Mountain trailhead. The trail was recently obliterated by logging. Photo by Denny O'Callaghan.

percent of all non-Wilderness trails, including the Mad River, North Fork Entiat and North Shore of Lake Chelan would all be lost to motorcycles under the Draft Plan.

In response to this wholesale destruction of trails, hikers and conservationists are proposing designation of four hiking areas in the Wenatchee -- Mad River, North Fork Entiat, Teanaway/Negro Creek and Lake Chelan/Gold Creek. These areas are at low elevations than most designated Wilderness areas, providing longer seasons in less fragile areas for hikers, horseback riders, anglers, hunters, and other non-motorized recreationists.

WILDLIFE — HOME WRECKING ON THE WENATCHEE

Logging and roadbuilding has steadily degraded and reduced the habitat of over 40 species of animals on the Wenatchee. In many areas only small "islands" of natural habitat remain amidst the development. These islands must be maintained for those species dependent on old growth forest habitat.

The Draft Plan's treatment of old growth is, at best, incomplete and, at worst, deceptive. The proposed plan pays lip service to the need to protect old growth, but in fact over 21,000 acres (about 33 square miles)

the little old growth remaining would fall in the first decade alone. The DEIS projects an increase in old-growth habitat in ten years for all alternatives, ignoring the fact that old growth forests are complex ecosystems which took hundreds of years to evolve, not a crop such as hybrid wheat that humans can grow and regrow at will.

Roading and timber cutting programs would devastate the nesting habitats of the Spotted Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Goshawk, and a wide range of other old growth associated creatures. The DEIS states: "The Forest does not have the distribution of large old growth stands in the roaded portion of the Forest to meet minimum management requirements..." for old growth adapted species. This underscores the need to preserve the irreplaceable old growth forests.

FISHERIES — INADEQUATE DATA AND BLAND REASSURANCES

The casual attitude toward fisheries taken in the Draft Plan threatens to choke this beleaguered resource with the residues of logging and roadbuilding. The Forest Service admits that it lacks the most basic studies on fisheries, identifying as its future "information needs" questions such as where the fish bearing streams are located and to what extent they are damaged by clearcutting and roadbuilding. The DEIS then goes blithely on, making the assumption that 1,700 miles of new roads and logging a quarter of a million acres of currently undisturbed natural watershed will have no adverse effect on fisheries.

Studies in other national forests indicate that roads and logging directly and cumulatively degrade fisheries. Habitat may be reduced by increased siltation from roading, faster stream flows, increased erosion in streambeds and higher water temperatures. The Wenatchee should complete its own studies to assess the effects of its management alternative on fisheries. Without such studies included in the DEIS neither the Forest Service nor the Forest Plan reviewer has enough information to judge the effects of the management plan.

One immediate impact of roading in roadless areas is that backcountry streams and rivers, where populations of native trout have successfully bred and survived for centuries, are suddenly opened to much greater access.

The increased fishing pressure steadily reduces the native species, and soon they have to be replaced by poorly adapted hatchery fish. The North Fork Entiat, Mad River, and Cougar Creek are among the many streams where new roading access can be expected to impact native trout.

The Wenatchee National Forest has over 200 miles of rivers and streams that provide habitat and spawning grounds for anadromous salmon and steelhead. Columbia River dams and other factors, including logging, have decimated anadromous runs, so that many species are at less than 10% of their historical levels. Recent mitigation plans on Columbia River dams should greatly increase the anadromous runs in the future. Full protection of existing spawning grounds is essential for helping to enhance this important resource.

FLOODS AND DROUGHTS

The Draft Plan predicts that timber harvest within roadless areas will increase
continued on page 7



The headwaters of Tronsen Creek. Photo by Doug Pauly.

runoff, supposedly benefiting the domestic and irrigation water users of Chelan, Kittitas and Yakima Counties. It fails to mention that the increase will likely come during spring, compounding flooding and highwater problems. Water shortages may subsequently occur during dry summer months, aggravating the current competition for water, needed both for irrigation and to maintain minimum instream flows for fisheries habitat (see page 8).

Alternative C plans substantial degradation for many watersheds, including the Mad River, Mission Creek and Little Naches River, each will have over 60 percent of their lands roaded and logged. Water quality and quantity will suffer unless the Forest Service regards water as a priority resource -- avoiding logging on steep hillsides, minimizing road mileage, and preserving roadless areas.

GRAZING

Despite will documented evidence to the contrary, the DEIS claims that livestock grazing actually improves the habitat for native plants and wildlife. This rationale is used, along with highly questionable "forage demand" data, to justify a 50 percent increase in livestock grazing over present levels. In fact, livestock devastate the structure and composition of native plant communities, degrade water quality, introduce noxious weeds, and transmit disease and parasite organisms which infect wildlife. Grazing levels on the Forest should be reduced in order to renew the vigor of native plant communities and prevent conflicts between livestock and wildlife.

THERE IS A CHOICE!

Conservationists support a better balance between the needs of the timber industry and the needs of the public to protect its natural heritage, which is embodied in management Alternative F. Alternative F presents the best mix of land management allocations for wildlife, timber, fisheries, watershed protection, and recreation.

Alternative F should be modified to add the Entiat, North Fork Entiat and Mad rivers for Wild & Scenic river recommendation (see page 6). It should also prohibit construction of



Logging on steep slopes in the Mad River area. Photo by Doug Pauly.

a major log haul road over Naches Pass which if built would sever Government Meadows from the adjacent Norse Peak Wilderness, allow logging of the old-growth stand along the crest of the Cascades, disturb elk habitat, and cut the Pacific Crest Trail. Livestock grazing must be held at or below present levels.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

WRITE! The Forest Service will improve their draft Plan only if letters from you and others caring about our wild resources specify your priorities. Send your letter before the **OCTOBER 1, 1986 DEADLINE**. Urge the Forest Service to:

-- Preserve all roadless areas, old growth forests and other wildlife habitat.

-- Designate the Mad River, Teanaway/Negro Creek, North Fork Entiat and Chelan/Gold Creek hiking areas. State your objections to conversion of hiking trails to ORV highways.

-- Recommend the Entiat, North Fork Entiat, Mad, Chiwawa, White, and upper Wenatchee for Wild & Scenic status.

-- Oppose road construction over Naches Pass, logging along the Mather Parkway, and increased grazing.

-- Endorse Alternative F.

Send your comments to:

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Wenatchee Recommends Some Rivers; Overlooks Others

by Doug North

The draft Wenatchee National Forest Plan recommends the Chiwawa, White and upper Wenatchee (above Leavenworth) rivers for Wild and Scenic protection. The plan fails to recommend the Entiat, North Fork Entiat and Mad rivers which were reviewed at the request of Friends of Whitewater.

The draft plan repeats the mistake of many of the plans reviewed earlier in recommending the rivers for further study rather than for designation. The final plan should rectify this problem though, since the Regional Forester recently agreed with FOW that rivers should be recommended for designation rather than for further study. The draft also fails to address the sections of these rivers located in designated Wilderness, which should be recommended for Wild status. Wild river designation would close the loophole which allows the President to authorize a dam on a river within a Wilderness area.

The draft Forest Plan mistakenly miss-classifies several stretches of the rivers that it reviewed. It found the North Fork of the Entiat eligible for Wild status only above Crow Creek because of the proximity of roads. These roads do not disqualify the lower part of the North Fork for Wild status, however, since they are on the neighboring ridges, not right in the river valley, and do not interfere with the natural qualities of the river.

Similarly, the draft plan concludes that the Mad river is only eligible for Wild status down to the vicinity of the Windy Ridge road. The road does not prevent the Mad from qualifying for Wild status down to Pine Flat Campground, however, since it is on the ridge above the river rather than next to it and does not interfere with the natural qualities of the river.

The draft Forest Plan also mistakenly classifies the Entiat below Cottonwood Camp as Recreational. The planners seem to have had the same misunderstanding about the eligibility of river segments paralleled by roads for Scenic status as the Okanogan and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests did. Our correspondence with the Regional Forester

establishes that these river segments are eligible for Scenic status.

All of these rivers have outstanding scenic and recreational qualities which make them good candidates for Wild and Scenic protection. The Chiwawa has an exciting class 2 to 3 whitewater run through pristine eastern Washington forests. The Chiwawa, Entiat, Mad and White are important spawning rivers for steelhead and salmon. There is also good fishing for Rainbow and Brown trout in the Chiwawa and White, while the Entiat and Mad have Rainbow, Cutthroat, Eastern Brook and Dolly Varden. The North Fork Entiat hosts Rainbow and Eastern Brook trout.

The Chiwawa provides sites for many of the Wenatchee's forest camps and offers beautiful views of the North Cascades. The Mad River is in a spectacular narrow canyon with the longest (over 20 miles) low elevation hiking trail in the Forest. The Entiat has gorgeous scenery including the fascinating sheer-walled Box Canyon. The White and Wenatchee rivers both provide habitat for many rare and interesting plants.

The Draft Wenatchee Forest Plan should have recommended the Entiat, North Fork Entiat and Mad for Wild and Scenic protection as well as the White, Chiwawa and upper Wenatchee. Write to the Forest and help protect these rivers. □



Most of the slopes above the Mad River are slated for logging in the Draft Wenatchee Forest Plan. Photo by Doug Pauly.