

Spring 2022

HighlandsNEWS

JOURNAL OF KETTLE RANGE CONSERVATION GROUP



**Kettle Range Conservation
Group**
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Since 1976

www.KettleRange.org

Mission

Our mission is to defend wilderness, protect biodiversity, and restore ecosystems of the Columbia River Basin.

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Note to you, Tim Coleman, Executive Director

In rural NE Washington we are lucky to live in a clean and healthy place and to dedicate our work to the environment intact for future generations. This necessitates time spent reading government documents, science research, doing field investigation and writing. Kettle Rangers home office is off-grid, solar powered, wood heated from forest within a wheelbarrows reach of the office and that retains its natural appearance even after 40 years of firewood cutting.

It's no surprise that the Columbia Highlands hosts diverse wildlife, fish and plants tied to healthy ecosystems found in the Cascade, Okanogan Highlands and Selkirks of northern and eastern Washington. The excellent conditions that grow inspiring forests in the Pacific Northwest are a combination of climate, geology & soils and connectivity of species habitat in the greater Rocky Mountain-Cascade ecoregion supporting a diverse assemblage of species that still exists (although barely in the case of woodland caribou) even after 120 years of human exploitation and habitat loss.

The Wild & Scenic Film Festival was a success again this year though we are uncertain about its future. Instead of a tedious volunteer effort invested each year, necessary to host this festival for the past nine years, coupled with increasing costs and declining ticket sales, we are considering other avenues for similar cultural events that are less costly but just as interesting and engaging. I'd appreciate hearing from you about this.

In October, KRCG was lucky to hire Chris Bachman as its Director of Wildlife & Wildlands. Chris is a biologist and former middle school science and math teacher, and is a fierce defender of gray wolf, bear and cougar. He also spearheads our organization's investment in nuisance beaver relocation and federal livestock grazing reform. Chris adds much needed capacity to KRCG ecosystem defense analyzing biological impacts of national forest timber projects that have increased to levels not seen since the 1990s.

Kettle Rangers are conservationists, dreamers and grassroots activists. We believe in a better future for all species. There is no reason to apologize for being activists defending wildlife and wildlands and fighting for forest management on our Public Lands that maintains its beauty, integrity and

Note to you, (cont'd)

diversity. Our federal lands should not be managed as corporate tree plantations – the priority as mandated in law, is to provide for multiple benefits: clean water & air, diverse native wildlife & fish, recreation, scenery, etc., with timber as a byproduct of careful management. Maximizing timber production and reconstructing forest ecosystem composition is the business of the timber corporations, who it turns out own most of the best tree growing regions in the U.S. And, incidentally, unlike the federal forest managers, the timber industry, with rare exception, does not allow livestock to graze its forest lands.

When collaboration with state and federal managers fails, KRCG relies on its many attorney friends to help safeguard ancient forests, wildlife and wildlands. Thanks to Animal & Earth Advocates, Wild Earth Guardians, Advocates for the West, Western Environmental Law Center and Western Watershed Project attorneys who are currently representing KRCG, et al – and the rest of the legal beagles who give of themselves and what otherwise could be a money making career to dedicate their lives and honor to protecting the health of this planet. Thank you!

We are lucky to live in such a special place as the Columbia Highlands and it is truly an honor to be a defender of wild places and wild-life. We receive 85% of our annual income from our membership. Black bear thanks you, gray wolf thanks you, beaver thanks you, Mother Tree thanks you. And I thank you for supporting our grassroots activism!

May the Forest be with you!

Remembering friends...

In 2022, we lost two inspiring figures who lived their lives supporting social and environmental justice.

Dave Gordon recently passed after six years of fighting cancer. Dave honored KRCG with his service as a board member from 2001 to 2013, including serving as board president from 2001-2005.



Dave Gordon in his beloved Kettle Range.



Barry Rosenberg was diagnosed with lung cancer in August and quit fighting it after treatments failed, passing

Barry Rosenberg quietly with family & friends in March. Barry used to quip that Tim was his “first student” in his many years as a Forest Watch instructor and activist.

We hold both warriors in the highest regard.

Forest Collaboration – Truth and Lies, by Tim Coleman

The signs are everywhere – climate change is real – atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations exceed levels in all of human history, resulting in sudden shifts in temperature, damaging storms, extended drought, and of course incessant winds. Forests are one of the largest carbon stores on Earth. But a national campaign to “restore healthy forests” in our national and state Public Lands actually appears to be more about a return to historic timber production.

KRCG co-founded the highly successful Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (NEWFC) in July 2002 that helped end a protracted legal fight and promote collaborative-based forest management in the Colville National Forest (CNF). NEWFC’s mantra was “balance.” It took 4 years before NEWFC came up with a set of consensus agreements for its balance equation that included: 1) in Active Management areas - no clearcuts larger than 5 acres and most 3 acres or less, retain a minimum of the 20 largest trees/acre - over about 400,000 acres of forest, 2) restore 400,000 acres defined as “park out and back out ... thin from below” forest management, and 3) protect 400,000 acres of existing unroaded wildlands larger than 1,000 acres as Wilderness and other reserve designations.

What NEWFC accomplished helped make the CNF nationally famous – nearly 19 years of litigation-free collaboration of over 40 projects. Back in 2005, the CNF promised NEWFC if it participated in crafting a revised Forest Plan, what came out it would become the new plan.

In October 2019, revision of the old 1988 Forest Plan was done and the new plan, enacted. This plan allows clearcuts up to 1,000 acres or larger, increases logging to 25,000 acres/year and increases the timber cut beyond the 1988 Plan – which resulted in 15 years of legal challenges.

Four recent logging projects in just the Kettles of the CNF demonstrate what the future of healthy forests will look like: big clearcuts, demolished red cedar groves and big trees cut. Examples include Sherman Pass, Trout Lake, Deer-Jasper (at Boulder Pass) and Kettle Face projects provide stark examples of this new forest restoration.

There is an active national forest restoration campaign promoted locally by DNR, The Nature Conservancy and US Forest Service who allege it will bring back “historic” forest conditions and protect against wildfire. For a historic view check out the Washington Rural Heritage photo archive collection of the CNF <https://www.washingtonruralheritage.org/digital/collection/r6cnf> a photo archive documenting historic forest conditions. It is difficult to reconcile historic photos with recent logging. Is this about historic logging or natural appearing forests?

We are told restoration is needed to avoid catastrophic wildfire when it is fire exclusion and past logging practices that created forest health and fuel buildup. It is climate change that increases fire frequency, spread and severity. Fire is essential to healthy forest ecosystems, and there’s gobs of evidence that any fuel source, be it grass, shrub and even wheat fields burn at high intensity when hot, dry and windy conditions exist when a fire ignites.

In the 1990's the "Quincy Library Group" – named after the location of their frequent meetings – pioneered forest collaboration in the Plumas NF (CA) and was one of the earliest campaigns to build public support for extensive forest restoration and shaded fuel breaks to guard against wildfire. Despite being broadly applied, these fire prevention strategies did not stop last summer's Dixie Fire. Neither did logging prevent Washington's largest wildfire the Okanogan Complex Fire (2015) that burned southwest of Republic all the way to Okanogan, nor the Cold Springs Fire (2020) that burned from Okanogan all the way to Riverside, jumped across the Columbia River, in a single day, some 65 miles. Both fires were wind-driven.

The hyperbole inherent in the "restoration" ruse is that doing the same thing and expecting different results is rational. Timber management cut down the more fire resistant ancient forests, planting mono-culture of even-aged trees and resulting in a 97% reduction in older and mature treed forests. It's absurd that big and older trees are a risk – and are being cut today -- but young tree saplings whose branches are close to each other and the ground, are not. Trees cut down for restoration are just as dead as those killed by bug, disease and wildfire – except logged trees are hauled away – bye, bye carbon! What is called restoration is really in truth treatment based – as it was historically – on making money off our Public Lands.

“Maximize commercial treatment [logging] and economics: It is imperative that we make every attempt to maximize the treatment footprint of this restoration project and focus on the need for all treatment types.... Commercial treatments are also a valuable economic activity for local communities

and industry.” (Bulldog Project, Decision Notice, April 28, 2022)

Collaboration on the Rocks

May 2021, KRCG filed its first lawsuit of a CNF timber sale in 19 years, challenging the new Forest Plan, degradation of threatened lynx and other wildlife habitat. Sanpoil lawsuit exposed NEWFC weakness. The “balance” collaboration promised no longer exists and maybe never has.

My Resignation:

“In recent years, I fear NEWFC has lost the strength of its collaborative position with Colville National Forest management, and I also believe we have abandoned our commitment to balance. Over the past year, there have been multiple attempts to remove me from the board, which have included inaccurate and unwarranted attacks on my character and integrity.

I'm saddened that NEWFC collaboration has moved away from shared values that we worked so many years to build, together. The diversity of our coalition was its strength and we were always open to new members. Collaboration was our way forward and it worked incredibly well, but unfortunately that openness and lessons learned seem to have slipped from our grasp. The words are still there but their meaning has changed. Collaboration was to be a means to a shared vision. Balance meant focusing on abundance rather than scarcity, on our interests rather than our positions and to equitable outcomes.

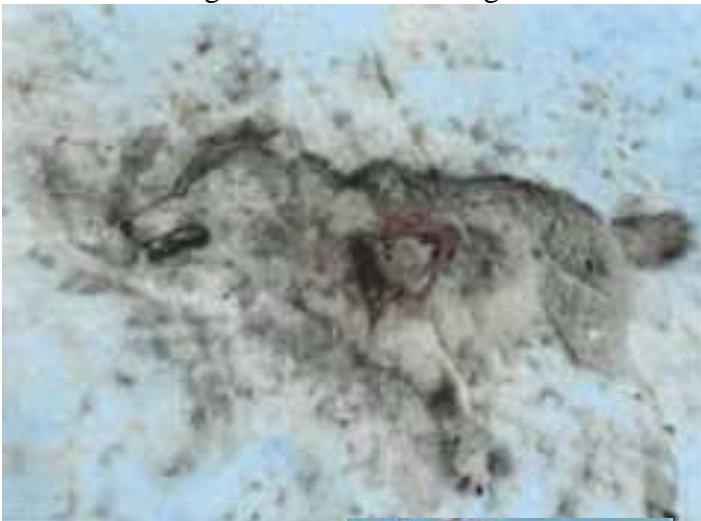
I gave 20 years of my life to this coalition and I walk away today shaking my head and wondering why. Perhaps my weakness was I believed in our agreements and that investment

in problem solving would yield lasting success. Perhaps it was all just wishful thinking? We were told to give 10 years of good behavior ... well, they got 20 years but there is still no Wilderness.



S. Fork Boulder Creek, most of the area in the middle of the picture will be logged in the Bulldog Project.

Four recolonizing gray wolves found dead in the Wedge area of NE Washington.



Four Wolf Poisonings in NE Washington Remain UnSolved

On February 18, 2022, two Stevens County Deputies on snowmobile patrol discovered a dead wolf on Churchill Road in area of NE Washington known as The Wedge, an inverted triangle bordered on the north by Canada and on the east and west by the Columbia and Kettle Rivers, respectively. The deputies' initial finding led to the discovery of three additional dead wolves. All were found on public lands with no sign of blood or bullet holes. They are believed to have been poisoned.

Unconfirmed rumors of poisoned wolves began circulating late in February, but nothing was reported in the news media. Instead, details of the wolf killings were obtained via a public records request submitted by the Kettle Range Conservation Group to the Stevens County Sheriff's Office. The records show the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) was notified the same day. But WDFW did not share any information about the incident or ask the public for assistance.

Illegal wolf killings are not to be taken lightly. Poaching is not a victimless crime. According to the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation (NAM), the management model Washington uses, wildlife belongs to the public. This means WDFW has a fiduciary responsibility to manage wildlife for the benefit of present and future generations. According to NAM, the killing of four wolves is a crime committed against every citizen of Washington.

Kettle Rangers Wolf Report

-Chris Bachman

Gray Wolf Rulemaking

WDFW was ordered to undertake [wolf management rulemaking](#) by Governor Jay Inslee in September of 2020. WDFW presented its proposed rule and the required Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) to the 2011 Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Plan at the April 8, 2022, WDFW Commission meeting with a proposed vote on the calendar for the May 2022, meeting. The vote has been postponed pending further discussion with a tentative vote scheduled for August of this year.

KRCG submitted [comment](#) on the proposed rule noting that none of the proposed Alternatives in the DSEIS met the purpose and need of, “...*instituting practices that will avoid the repeated loss of livestock to wolf depredation and wolves to subsequent agency removal in Washington.*”

The [CR-102](#) will be withdrawn if there is no decision by August 13, 2022. This will restart the entire process.

WDFW Releases its Annual Gray Wolf Report

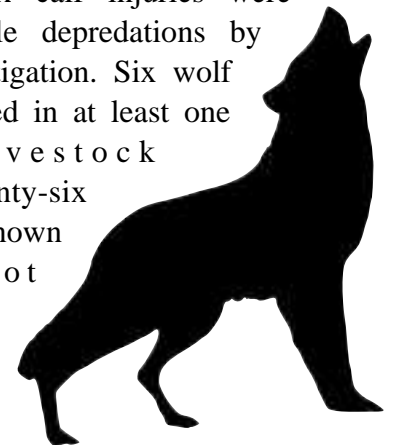
On April 9, 2022, WDFW released its [Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Report for 2021](#). According to the report, the gray wolf population grew by 16% in 2021. WDFW and Tribal partners report 206 wolves in 33 packs, up from 178 wolves and 29 packs reported in 2020. The department also reported 19 known breeding pairs in 2021, up from 16 in 2020, the majority, 15 breeding pairs, were in the Eastern Recovery Region, 13 in NE Washington.

The greatest threat to gray wolves remains human caused mortality. Thirty wolves were lost to human caused mortality in 2021. Two wolves in the

Grouse Flats pack were killed for preying on livestock, one by WDFW and one by a permitted livestock producer. Four wolves were lost to vehicle collisions and two wolf deaths are under investigation. Perhaps most alarming, 22 wolves were lost to “harvest” by Tribal partners. Fourteen were killed by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and 8 wolves, the entire Huckleberry Pack was killed by the Spokane Tribe.

Treaty rights allow Tribal members to hunt and trap wolves on the Reservation. The CTCR retain hunting and trapping rights not just within the current boundaries of the reservation, but between the eastern and western reservation boundaries north to the Canadian border in what is referred to as the North Half. These lands were ceded to the U.S. Government but hunting, trapping and fishing rights were retained. The CTCR allows year-round hunting on both the North Half and the South Half with no annual “harvest” limit. Trapping and snaring season runs from November 1-February 28 and allow “harvest” of either sex with no daily or season limit. The Spokane Tribe allows year-round hunting or until 10 wolves have been taken during the calendar year. Trapping and snaring season runs concurrent with the CTCR and is allowed with special permit.

WDFW investigators confirmed five cattle were killed by wolves during the year, eight additional cattle were confirmed injured by wolves. Two calf mortalities and six calf injuries were considered probable depredations by wolves after investigation. Six wolf packs were involved in at least one confirmed livestock depredation. Seventy-six percent of the known packs were not involved in any known livestock depredation.



No Spring Bear Hunt for 2022 in Washington

-Chris Bachman

At the December 2021 WDFW Commission meeting, four Commissioners questioned the science and population estimates supporting a spring bear hunt for the spring of 2022. The result, due to an unfilled commission seat, was a 4-4 tie vote. This resulted in the measure being neither approved or defeated. The four Commissioners voting in opposition were taking responsibility for failing to get answers to questions about spring bear hunting posed prior to the previous vote in December 2020, a vote that allowed a spring bear hunt in 2021. Maximizing hunting and fishing should not jeopardize or imperil a species.

The result of the tie vote was a paused spring bear hunt allowing the State to assess its currently unknown black bear population, erring on the side of caution to conserve a species following an extended 2021 fall black bear season and a doubling of the bag limit from 1 to 2 bears in eastern WA. The extended season and increased bag limit increased the harvest by 50% statewide, the highest in the past decade.

Following the December 2021, 4-4 vote, a petition was filed by pro hunting groups seeking reinstatement of the spring bear hunt.

On December 13, 2021, Commissioner Fred Koontz, a nay vote, resigned from the Commission. The combination of the petition and resignation had pro spring bear hunt commissioners scrambling to hear the petition and reinstate the hunt for the spring of 2022.

The petition had two problems, it asked for removal of the year from the title in the rule essentially approving a spring bear hunt in perpetuity and

which would likely result in these kills going unreported. Cubs are not always visible and it is nearly impossible to determine if a female is lactating prior to killing an animal.

Pro spring bear Commissioners moved the petition forward at a meeting held on January 21, 2022.

On Jan. 26, 2022, three new Commission appointments were announced. Melanie Rowland, of Twisp, John Lehmkuhl, of Wenatchee, and Timothy Ragen, of Skagit County, joined the nine-member panel.

A vote was held on whether to approve the petition and allow the spring bear hunt to proceed for spring of 2022. The three new commissioners were joined by Commissioner Lorna Smith of Port Townsend, and Commissioner Barbara Baker from Olympia in a 5-4 vote that denied the petition. While the spring bear hunt will not occur in spring of 2022, it is still possible the hunt will return in 2023.

Bears are large mammals that reproduce slowly; over harvest is a concern in such species, especially in areas where other forms of human-caused mortality are poorly understood. For example, to prudently set harvest goals we need to know levels of bear mortality caused by poaching, conflict removals, unreported hunts, unreported bears killed due to wounding loss, and bears lost to vehicle collision.

At Kettle Range we don't oppose subsistence hunting. We do support conserving species and allowing ecosystems to function holistically. This requires having all of the functional parts of an ecosystem present and wildlife populations present at appropriate levels. We oppose hunting black bear in the spring. There are only two other species hunted in the spring in Washington, cougar due to a season extension from January 1-April 30, put in

place when hound hunting was prohibited; and non native wild turkeys, where only males, much more easily identified in the spring, or bearded female birds, are allowed to be taken in the spring hunt.

Spring is a time when life renews itself. For that reason we have historically set hunting seasons for the fall when young of the year are weaned and no longer dependent on maternal supplemental nutrition. We simply do not hunt animals in the spring to allow an opportunity to secure the next generation.

Humans are omnivores. We evolved as hunter gatherers and have been hunting and gathering for 2 million years. Subsistence hunting and foraging offer unique opportunities to be responsible for our food and the actions required to attain it. Hunting is a chance to understand the true cost of eating meat that cannot be found in the grocery aisle.



Photo: Chris Bachman

Healthy Public Lands Project

KRCG is a founding member of the newly formed [Healthy Public Lands Project](https://www.healthypubliclands.org) (<https://www.healthypubliclands.org>). The Healthy Public Lands Project (HPLP) is a network of groups and organizations working to improve the way livestock grazing is managed on our public lands so that watersheds and wildlife habitat are healthy and thriving.

HPLP envisions public lands being managed to prioritize healthy ecosystems for wildlife and present and future generations.

Registration is now open for the first annual [conference](#) of the Healthy Public Lands Project! There is a very affordable virtual attendance option. Please consider supporting

Join HPLP in Utah from June 1-3, 2022 to take part in a conversation about our collective vision to ensure that public lands are managed to prioritize healthy ecosystems for wildlife and present and future generations.

20th Annual Kettle Range Rendezvous July 9-10, 2022

Make plans now to attend the 2022 Kettle Rendezvous this year at Jungle Hill Campground, located one mile north of SR 20 of Albion Hill Road and east of Sherman Pass in the Kettle River Range. This annual celebration is suitable for all ages. Enjoy the company of friends and a chance to meet new ones. Relax, hike a new trail or just hang out and enjoy good food and the company of outdoor enthusiasts.

RSVP - So we can order enough supplies, please let us know how many in your group are coming. You can do this by visiting our Kettle Range Conservation Group Facebook page, Inland Northwest Hikers or email Chris: cbachman@kettlerange.org



KETTLE RENDEZVOUS SCHEDULE

Friday, July 8 – Volunteer Project Day

Miscellaneous trail tread work, tree and brush clearing. Contact Tim if you can help.
tcoleman@kettlerange.org

Arrive and set up your camp.

Friday Dinner :on your own

Saturday, July 9 – Hikes Day

-Breakfast – on your own – Arrive and set up camp

GUIDED HIKES MENU*

Hikes will depart 10 AM from Jungle Hill Campground

- 1) Wapaloosie to Jungle Hill Trail: Difficulty 4, distance 8 miles.
- 2) Copper Butte to Wapaloosie: Difficulty 4, distance 12 miles
- 3) Stickpin to Ryan’s Cabin Trail: Difficulty 3, distance 6.4 miles
- 4) Sherman Peak Loop Trail: Difficulty 3, distance 6 miles
- 5) Hoodoo Canyon to Emerald Lake – Difficulty 3, Distance 4.5 miles r/t

*All hikes are optional and contingent on at least 4 hikers + hike leader

Saturday Dinner & Potluck – Complimentary barbecue (meat / veggie options) and beverages provided by KRCG. POTLUCK - please bring something to share – Please bring your cup,

utensils, bowl or plate

Evening music by Mark Rhodes

Sunday, July 10 –

Complimentary coffee & tea. Breakfast on your own.

Goodbyes and departure times are up to you.

Executive Order May Benefit Local Forests

President Biden signed an Earth Day [Executive Order](#) to Inventory and Protect America’s Forests Map, catalog and conserve mature and old-growth forests on our public lands

The Problem

The impacts of climate change are becoming more dire globally. Scientists are recording an alarming loss of sea ice, rapid sea-level rise, and longer and more intense heat waves. In the western U.S., we are seeing more wildfires as a result of hotter and drier conditions, costing people their lives and livelihoods. We are also facing a [biodiversity crisis](#) with the rates of extinction increasing, more than 1 million plant and animal species are threatened.

Old forests are crucial for addressing the climate and biodiversity crises we face today. The longer trees grow, the more time a fully mature, interconnected forest ecosystem has to develop. Trees store far more carbon standing than felled and provide irreplaceable habitat to many vulnerable species. These complex mature ecosystems provide vital and unique habitat for birds above, critters below and everything in between. Intact forested watersheds produce high quality water vital for aquatic life and downstream uses.

Logging mature and old-growth trees and forests on federal lands should be a practice of the past. Both individual trees and stands store the vast majority of the above ground carbon in a forest. Nationally, carbon losses from clearcut and other logging have increased at a rate ten times higher than emissions from fire and other natural forest disturbances combined.

The root cause is logging that immediately releases decades, if not centuries, of bio-accumulated carbon back into the atmosphere with only a fraction of live-tree carbon being stored in long-lived wood products. The emitted carbon is [irrecoverable on the time scale](#) relevant to avoiding the worst impacts of climate change.

Old-growth forests and trees are also far more adaptable to the impacts of climate change, especially compared to industrial tree plantations that are more susceptible to uncharacteristically severe wildfires, impaired water quality, decreased summer streamflow, landslides, floods, and outbreaks of insects and disease than are natural forests.

Our forests are our planet's lungs, absorbing carbon dioxide and emitting oxygen – oceans and forests are the two largest producers of oxygen on the Earth. Scientists estimate that the restoration and protection of our natural lands and waters can provide more than 1/3 of the solution to climate change.

[If you compare the map of North America in 1620...with America today](#) you'll see how much we've devastated our forests, upwards of 97% of ancient forests have been cut down – this is true in Canada, too. In NE Washington, average tree age is <80 years. We simple must stop logging mature and primary (wild) forests on our federal and state managed lands. The 4 percent of America's timber supply that comes from national forests can be easily replaced by other federal, industrial, private and state lands.

The Solution-Let the Trees Grow

President Biden's Executive Order is a huge step in the right direction, it recognizes the value of both mature and old-growth forests for clean air, clean water, fighting the climate crisis, fighting

the biodiversity crisis and their importance to Tribal Nations. It also recognizes the value of recreation and of nature.

But the Executive Order does not guarantee that the administration will enact durable protections for old-growth and mature trees and forests on federal land, and specifically it does not identify logging as a threat.

We have our work cut out for us - we'll need to demonstrate growing public support for strong action and we'll want to emphasize the two following points:

- The need for forest protection is urgent and needs to move as quickly as possible. Trees are being logged, climate change is getting worse.
- Our forests face many threats, logging is a significant threat and one that *we have total control over – we can choose whether or not and where to log.*

For More Information
Please take time to watch [YouTube webinar](#):
“Advancing a North American Framework for Protecting Climate-Critical Forests.”

Panelists, Dr. Dominick DellaSala and Graham Saul, for share their insights on the importance of protecting North American forests. Link to this webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eD93rSTlt58>



The Singing Tree

Oh, how my Mother loved her "Singing Tree."

It stands so tall, straight and free.

Surrounded by stately firs,
hemlocks and cedars.

That old cottonwood, with its rustling,
sighing, singing leaves,
still sways with the mountain breeze.

The Love affair between those two
went on for many years, so near the cabin
dear.

Now the cool winds of fall and winter begin.

Before the early snows blanket all,
yellow leaves float slowly down as I stand,
and look up on up and say,

"Mother, are you there?"

And something whispers back
with the rustling, sighing, singing,
"See you all next year."

....Cece Griswold



Kettle Range Conservation Group
 POB 150
 Republic, WA 99166

46 Years Protecting Northeast Washington Forests



Help support our rural conservation work. Your membership supports our work to protect forests, wildlife, clean water, and wilderness in the Colville and Okanogan National Forest.

All contact information is strictly confidential and is never shared or published.

Kettle Range Conservation Group is a 501(c)3 non-profit, community charity founded by a concerned group of citizens in Republic, WA in 1976. Your membership dues are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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