

HighlandsNEWS

JOURNAL OF KETTLE RANGE CONSERVATION GROUP



Kettle Range Conservation Group
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We avoid using colored ink because it's mostly toxic. Email delivery is our only color version

Mission

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

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A note to you... by Captain Tim

A logger friend of mine once told me logging done correctly “looks good.” And in 40 years of working in forest management, I couldn’t agree more. Both good and ugly logging has been done over the past six months on Sherman Pass in the Kettle River Mountains – no, I’m not blaming the logger, but the Forest Service -- and it’s worthwhile to compare the good, adjacent wild forest and the bad – see if you can tell the difference - it’s not too difficult. Sherman Pass is (or was) one of the most beautiful passes in eastern Washington. During Forest Service-led collaborative meetings which proceeded project development, the agency promised to protect the area’s scenery. And in its project documents the Forest Service proclaimed there would be “no clearcuts.”



Apparently, presale didn't get the message.

Sherman Pass Project was supposed to “thin” the forests along State Road 20 to improve forest growth, reduce risk to people who might have to flee a wildfire, and also, to ostensibly protect the Bonneville Power Administration’s high voltage power line serving Ferry County.

As for people fleeing a wildfire, only a fool would try to drive over Sherman Pass if there was the threat of a wildfire there – they’d go the other way! “Hey honey, there’s a wildfire on Sherman Pass – wanna go on a hot date?”

And in fact during the 1988 White Mountain Fire, the pass was closed when wildfire was still a ways south of it. No homes are in the pass area though many miles distant. There are at least three major roads north, south and west out of Republic and many routes out of the eastern side of the forest. Forest Service, please take note: *mountains passes are windy all the time!*

BPA requested a 100 foot buffer along its power line – not huge clearcuts!

A Forest Service objective was stimulating tree growth to promote bigger trees – clearcutting the forest sure slows that process down. “Now son, that clearcut there will have 8 inch trees by the time you are 70 years old!” Wow!

Continued on next page

A note to you - continued

Seriously, Sherman Pass Project makes a mockery of collaboration, misinterpreted and an abuse of authority. In places its a butch-job! And there's more to come. Drivers speeding along SR 20 might not see it but the recreating public on Columbia Mountain, Wapaloosie, Sherman Peak and the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail, will.

The Colville National Forest couldn't stomach but one small wilderness recommendation in the Kettles but had no qualms about clearcutting the place. What does that say about *collaboration*??!! And after 17 years of working collaboratively with them!!! It's a crying shame!



The Singing Tree

*Oh, how my Mother loved her "Singing Tree."
It stands so tall, straight and free, 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 and on up and say,
"Mother, are you there?"
And something whispers back
with the rustling, sighing, singing,
"See you all next year."*

**17th Annual --Kettle Range Rendezvous
July 12, 13 & 14**

Make plans now to attend the 2019 Kettle Range Rendezvous this year at Lambert Creek Campground, located 6 miles east of the intersection of Lambert Creek Road and SR 21, nine miles north of intersection of SR 20 & 21. This year will be our 17th year organizing hikes in the Kettle River Mountains of various difficulties – easy to difficult. Enjoy the company of old friends and the chance to meet new ones. Relax, hike a new trail and enjoy good food and the company of outdoor enthusiasts. .

RSVP - So we can order enough supplies, please let us know if you or your group plan to attend. You can do this by visiting our Kettle Range Conservation Group Facebook page, Inland Northwest Hikers or by email: tcoleman@kettlerange.org

RENDEZVOUS SCHEDULE

Friday, July 12 – *Volunteer Project Day*, Arrive and Set up Your Camp

- 1) Whitebark Pine Restoration – meet at Lambert Creek Campground, 10 AM
- 2) Arrive and set up your camp – all day
- Friday Dinner: on your own

Saturday, July 13 – *Hikes Day*
-Breakfast – on your own

GUIDED HIKES MENU*

Hikes will depart 10 AM from Lambert Creek Campground

- 1) **Marcus Trail to Midnight Mountain Trail** – 10.3 miles, Difficult, 5 hours
- 2) **Old Stage Trail to Midnight Mt. Trail**, 10.6, Moderate, 5 hours
- 3) **Lambert Creek Trail to Midnight Mt. Trail**, 7 miles, Moderate, 4 hours
- 4) **Lambert Creek to Copper Butte r/t** – 10 miles, Difficult, 5 hours
- 5) **Lambert Creek to Midnight Mountain r/t**, 5 miles, Moderate, 3 hours

**Subject to change – hikes require 4 or more participants + hike leader*

Saturday Dinner & Potluck – Complimentary barbecue (meat / vegie) and beverages provided by KRCG. POTLUCK - please bring something to share – bring a mug, utensils, bowl or plate

Sunday, July 14 – Breakfast – Complimentary pancake, coffee/tea.



Lambert Creek Campground is located on Lambert Creek Road 6 miles east of its intersection with SR 21 and nine miles north of the intersection of SR 20 & 21 three miles east of Republic.

RSVP - So we can order enough supplies - please let us know if you or your group plan to attend. You can do this by sending an email to: tcoleman@kettlerange.org or by calling 509 775 2667.



Saving Nature: We need the children

In 2005 Richard Louv coined the phrase “Nature-Deficit Disorder” in his bestselling book “Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder.” In the years since Louv’s book there have been numerous studies documenting the need to get our children out in nature. We know that it makes our kids, happier, healthier, more well balanced and it also makes them much happier adults, according to results published by Danish researchers in February of 2019.

If you wish to find out more about our children (and grandchildren) and Nature-Deficit Disorder, just look it up on any search engine. I would like to focus on the fun of getting the kids out and places to take young children who might not want or be able to hike very far.

Having fun and where to hike locally. First off have fun. You can even make the hike a small scavenger hunt. See if the can spot a certain color flower, a bird, animal tracks and even animal home such as nests, holes in the ground and even spider webs. Remember to make it fun and don’t forget things like snacks, drinks, sunscreen and bug repellent. A first aid kit is always a must.

Now where are some good places to take your children to hike, learn and have fun. The hikes I mention are not the only ones but it is a good start. In the Republic area there is Swan Lake and Curlew Lake. Swan Lake is a 3-mile hike around the lake with a short side trip to a nice viewpoint. Kids will enjoy the sounds of loons on the lake. There is also a nice place to swim after the hike.

Curlew Lake nature trail is a nice 1.6-mile hike where you have a good chance of spotting an osprey. Near the Colville and Kettle Falls area there are many good short hikes so I will list just three.

McDowell Lake, Big Meadow and the Log Flume site. The McDowell Lake Trail, located on the Little Pend Oreille NWR, is a barrier free trail that wanders through 5 different habitat types. The trail

Saving, continued

has 12 numbered stops with a trail brochure that coincides with the numbers. There are also an additional 4 interpretive signs along the trail. Possibly the best educational trail in the area.

Big Meadow located NE of Colville features a short barrier free trail leading to an old fire lookout with great views. There is also a 2.7-mile option which circle a nice wetlands area.

Lastly the Log Flume site along Sherman pass. A short historical trail which also has a longer option to follow Sherman Creek, for about a mile, to the Canyon creek campground.

Remember to get the kids out and interested in nature. They are the future generation that will need to carry on the environmental movement.

Dan Price
Board President



Special Appreciation to
Charlotte Y. Martin Foundation
for supporting our conservation work

A question of balance:
Working together on wolves

What happens when three people from different backgrounds and different ideologies come together to talk about wolves? If they listen to one another, they find common ground.

Cultural history often celebrates an integration of wildness and the unknown into our identity. There are multiple pervasive symbols of the wildness of the American West. For many wolves symbolize the spirit of the West, wild and untamed. For others, the symbol is the cowboy on horseback driving a herd of cattle or infinite herds of free ranging elk and deer. How we view recolonizing wolves often aligns with how we identify with the wildness of the West.

Wolves, once on the brink of extinction, are recolonizing the landscape following years without large predators. The return of this native carnivore is the result of natural migration from Canada, and from the reintroduced populations of Yellowstone and central Idaho. Supported by Endangered Species Act protections the gray wolf has reestablished itself throughout a portion of its historic range and is dispersing into areas that haven't seen wolves in almost a century.

The gray wolf is currently in danger of prematurely losing ESA protections. It remains functionally extinct in 85% of its historic range with 70% of suitable habitat remaining unoccupied. Protections must remain in place to allow wider dispersal.

Wolves need ESA protections. Hunters need assurance that elk and deer will continue to thrive. Ranchers need support to mitigate predator conflict. If we want wolves on the landscape, we have to understand the impact they are having on our neighbors and reach over the fences that divide us and support one another.

Wolves are impacting our livestock industry. Practices can be adapted to their presence. Livestock cannot be left unprotected on private and public lands. Scare devices and human presence must become the standard and to mitigate carnivore risk, but will not prevent all loss.

Wolves play a key role in ecosystem health keeping deer and elk populations in check, benefiting plant species. Wolf kills redistribute nutrients providing food for a number of other species.

The wolf is “re-wilding” deer and elk contributing to the perception of fewer wild ungulates. A study released by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, demonstrates this is not the case. Research tells us that wolf populations do not require hunting or trapping seasons to “manage” their numbers. Wolves self regulate and will not outgrow the prey base they need to survive.

Working together we can have prosperous rural communities and thriving ecosystems. We recognize loss of livestock and healthy game populations can have dire economic impact. We must step up to help one another. We lose a piece of the “wild” when we kill predators. Conflict is likely to continue, we have an obligation to do everything we can to mitigate it.

Conflict mitigation strategies include radio-collaring cattle and wolves to track location and using herd riders to keep them separated. Herd riders observe herd health and behavior, reduce conflict with wildlife, and monitor forage use for better grazing management.. Night penning livestock allows observation and protection in a confined defensible space.

Humans have been hunting and gathering for 2 million years. Agriculture has been around for 5-10,000 years. Hunting, and agriculture, offer unique opportunities to be responsible for our food and the actions required to attain it. Hunting offers a chance to understand the true cost of eating meat and reawakens our connection to the land.

If we desire to live in a world with wild places and wildlife, we owe it to ourselves to be mindful of the consequences of our actions. If we have learned anything from the actions of our past, it is we have tinkered natural systems out of balance. Predators on the landscape help restore that balance.

We live in unprecedented times. Human population growth and conversion of natural habitats has led to environmental change unparalleled in history. Thanks to

the industrial revolution and modern agriculture, the sustenance humans have struggled to attain over thousands of generations now comes neatly wrapped on the grocery store shelf. This convenience has freed up time for innovation and growth, but disconnected us from the natural world.

We need to know the true cost of obtaining our sustenance from the grocery store shelf. Convenience comes with a price tag. Can we pay another one or two cents per pound of beef to compensate ranchers for the added work that goes into raising and maintaining a healthy herd in the presence of natural predators? To restore balance, we need to share the cost of responsible



stewardship of the land. We must do everything we can to maintain healthy populations of plants and animals in a time of rapid disappearance. Our very lives may depend on us paying our debts to the land and seeking balance between a growing human population and the diminishing resources of our planet.

Continued from previous page

Regardless of our cultural identity; rancher, hunter, wildlife advocate or a multicultural cross pollination of all; we must come together. We all care about the heritage of the West. Working together we can find common purpose and support one another as we adapt to our changing world.

The three of us are committed to an ongoing dialogue that can take us into the future, collaborating and making the case together that wildlife and wildlands need protection. We invite you to join the conversation.

Beth Robinette
Lazy R Ranch
Cheney, Washington

Bruce McGlenn
Human Nature Hunting School
Kettle Falls, Washington

Chris Bachman
Wildlife Program Director
The Lands Council
Spokane, Washington

This article was first printed in the May 12, 2019 edition of the Spokesman-Review



Sherman Pack Female - Kettle River Mountains

Forest Watch Update

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/colville/landmanagement/projects>

Sherman Pass Project

Three Rivers and Republic Ranger District, CNF Project is in implementation phase. See article in this newsletter further describing this project and its outcomes.

Trout Lake Disease and Insect Infestation

Restoration Project – Three Rivers RD, CNF

A decision memo for this project has been issued. This project is being done under a Categorical Exclusion (CE) allowing logging up to 3,000 acres of national forest with very limited public process and environmental analysis – a block of land 2.35 miles x 2.35 miles! If you're a fan of Sherman Pass scenery this is just another clearcut in your future. Forest Service is proposing to clearcut 800 acres west of Hoodoo Canyon. Kettle Rangers participated in field trips and pretty much said we didn't want to see clearcuts. Efforts continue to get the Forest Service to modify this project to protect scenic landscapes and wildlife habitat.

South Fork of Boulder (SFB) Creek Road Rebuild – Three Rivers RD, CNF

This project proposal to rebuild a roadway gouged out by a May 1998 flash flood on a small incised land form on Bulldog Mountain – not a creek. This road was built in a floodplain comprised of highly erodible soils. Rebuild it – and it will wash out again and the project is unnecessary. Cabin Creek Road services the same watershed and building a new road is estimated to cost \$1 million. So why do it? The project Proposed Action says it all: “The Forest Service developed four alternatives to address access needs for the Forest Service, range permittees and the public.” But it's all too political and the bottom line is ranchers don't like trucking their cows over a mountain pass. The public has access now to a 2.8 mile trail on the old closed SFB road along the beautiful rushing trout stream with camping. Good for the economy, good for fish, right?

I can't help but think about all the dirt roads in Republic or nearby that could be paved with a million dollars. Seriously, this is a waste of tax dollars.

What you can do:

Write to the Forest Service and in your own words tell them not to waste money rebuilding this road – put the money into fixing recreation trails and putting up natural barriers in S. Fk Boulder Creek to keep cows from pooping in this stream!

Send comments to: Lisa Larsen, Republic Ranger District, 650 East Delaware Ave., Republic, WA 99166 or online: comments-pacificnorthwest-colville-threerivers@fs.fed.us

San Poil Project – Republic RD, CNF

This project proposes a ton of logging north of Thirteenmile and Cougar Mountain Roadless Areas, in an area SE of Republic in this 48,000 acre planning area including what the Forest Service euphemistically calls a “shaded fuel break”. This term generally can mean light touch to total clearcut depending on how a timber sale is set up. Sherman Pass is an obvious example. This project proposes over 2,460 acres of fuel-breaks along road 2053 and road 600 to Hall Creek as wide as 1,000 feet. Kettle Rangers submitted Scoping comments. The project Environmental Assessment has been released and a decision is pending but pressure is being applied to change what at this point looks like some seriously bad outcomes.

Bulldog Project – Three Rivers RD, CNF

Proposes to do shaded fuel breaks along Albion Hill Road north to S. Fork Boulder Road and a bunch of logging in this 44,000 acre project area as well as significantly increase all-terrain motorized vehicle use. Collaboration was attempted by county commissioners but was not successful largely because they decided Tri-County Forest Group was not a collaborative group at all, but rather just an “advisory” group – after two years of meetings. The project area is in the central Kettle River Mountains and part of the largest wildlands complex in the Colville National Forest. Project scoping was done in May 2018 and Kettle Rangers submitted comments. No recent documents are currently available for this project. We will not go quietly on this one.

Whitebark Pine Restoration Continues

This will mark the 4th year Kettle Rangers have dedicated to help a struggling population of whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) in the Kettle Crest. Blister rust – a non-native fungus -- fire exclusion and bark beetles have combined to kill 90-95 percent of WBP over its North American range. Kettle Rangers have managed a cost-share program with the Colville National Forest since 2017 and last year we spent on average 3 days a week for 19 weeks from late May into mid-November. KRCG's cost-share match in 2018 was \$5,275.

There was a significant WBP cone crop produced throughout the Kettle Crest during summer 2018 and Clark's nutcracker (*Nucifraga Columbiana*) were frequently seen drilling into cones. Many wildlife species benefit from the nutcracker's focused precision, especially pregnant bear. The Forest Service hired contractors to “cage” cones with net bags to protect them from nutcrackers and if you hiked the Kettle Crest Trail or Wapaloosie Trail last summer you might have seen some of these cages. Contractors picked caged cones in October & November and those were then sent to a lab in Bend, Oregon to undergo rigorous testing.

Many of the Kettle Crest WBP have an “A” rating resistance to blister rust, the highest and one of just a few places on Earth where such occurs.

Special thanks to all who volunteered last year!

Please call 509 775 2667 if you'd like to volunteer!



Centuries-old whitebark before and after restoration



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43 Years Protecting Northeast Washington Wilderness & Wildlife



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.

PayPal donation information can be found on our website www.KettleRange.org

--PLEASE clip and send the form below-----

Please send us the names of those you think would like to receive our newsletter. Email or USPS is OK.

Kettle Range Conservation Group P.O. Box 150, Republic, WA 99166

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____ I prefer E-mail newsletter only

(We'll never share or sell your email address)

\$30 Basic membership \$50 Highlands Advocate

\$100 Wilderness Champion annual membership

Other amount: \$ _____ One time donation: \$ _____

I'm interested in volunteering (please circle) 1) whitebark pine rehab, 2) at the Wild & Scenic Film Festival, 3) Kettle Range Auction in October, 4) Kettle Rendezvous (July 12, 13 & 14)