

HighlandsNEWS

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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 - Timothy J. Coleman, Executive Director



Words and the definitions given to them describe our world creating a cognitive framework through which we view it. Economic and social biases can twist such frames such that reality is replaced by fiction. "There are no jobs on a dead planet" is an example of a frame that contains elements of each. In the world today we face such fictional reframing through all forms of communication (visual, print, speech).

Lest we live life as a perpetual skeptic, filtering out garbage from garbanzos is a necessary survival tool.

I have a pet peeve about labeling national forests as "Forest Service lands" often done when people refer to management of the National Forests. Okay, so we've all done it – chalk it up to colloquial (local) speech -- but not only is that incorrect, there is a danger in the naming. I've read and heard this misstatement as of late more than at any time in three decades of working on national forest issues. The cognitive frame embodied in that statement is the Forest Service is government and it fits within a frame of government is the problem championed by capitalist neo-conservative economic interests.

The National Forest System is accurately called public lands – and that's a frame few people disagree with. National Forests belong collectively to all citizens of the United States and managed for them by the U.S. Forest Service who despite their education and good intentions sometimes falls into a trap that because they are charged with managing the system – it's their prerogative alone to decide what goes on there. That's not true.

The irony is the loudest voices against government are often the government itself and the plutocrats who buy their elections.

You hear a lot about "forest health" and this issue of Highlands News digs into that subject. The media hype heaps forest diseases, insects and wildfire together as if they were the unholy trinity of Mordor. It's always the trees fault.

Be aware of social framing – what is said and written matters a lot. Our brains are hardwired for survival – which is why fear framing is used to sway our opinions from fashion to war.

This all reminds me of directions on a shampoo bottle: lather, rinse, repeat. History is repeating itself again. So you see, forest health can be about biology or it can be – and often is – about boards and cents.

And that's why the work of conservation is never ending.

"People have the power -- to dream, to rule, to wrestle the world from fools."

Patti Smith

Deer Jasper Project - New Collaboration Falts

According to NEPA documents released by the U.S. Forest Service, the Deer Jasper Project located in the western Colville National Forest, extending from Boulder Pass east almost to the Kettle River, would apply various forestry management strategies to “about 17,240 acres moving the forest vegetation towards its natural disturbance regime, reduce hazardous fuels and foster growth.”

Deer Jasper Project was first established as a collaborative forestry project during the winter of 2012. Kettle Range Conservation Group and other members of Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (NEWFC) participated in this collaboration together with representatives from ranching, motorized recreation and Commissioner Mike Blankenship. The group met monthly to discuss and debate project purpose & need, forest restoration and roads. In yet another exhaustive process that has characterized recent collaborative effort in NE Washington and political discourse across the country, this one failed to achieve an agreement among participants -- even within members of the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition.

Ferry County Commissioners have indicated they might challenge the final project decision because it does not include repair of South Fork Boulder Creek Road which has been closed from Boulder Creek Highway south about 2.5 miles for about sixteen years by a huge washout. Commissioner Blankenship demanded road reconstruction be part of the project area, storming out of two collaborative group meetings and threatening legal action. Ranchers and some ATV interests have pressed for the road's repair.

Deer Jasper Project could significantly alter scenic vistas and backcountry recreation experience in the Boulder Pass and the Kettle Crest area. Clearcuts as large as 40 acres and



Deer Jasper Project is located in the North Fork Boulder Creek watershed in NE Ferry County

logging up to the Kettle Crest National Scenic Trail north and south of the Pass are proposed.

KRCG submitted comments regarding project proposals, raising concerns about impacts to recreation, loss of natural vistas, degradation of clean water and forest ecosystems, and harm to wildlife.

If it is implemented as proposed this will be the first forestry project of such dimension in over a decade to occur in the Kettle River Range and harkens back to the dark days of old. Even timber industry members of NEWFC submitted comments separate from its conservation members that in some categories - such as forestry prescriptions -- were significantly different than what KRCG and other conservation groups can or will agree to support.

As with Recreation Travel Planning in the Colville National Forest - a long drawn-out collaborative process that got motor rec 750 miles of access routes and conservationists nothing but heaps of scorn from them -- this process was facilitated by the Forest Service and like those processes this one failed to bring disparate interests to agreement and could drive a social wedge between industry and conservationists that hasn't happened in twelve years.

A final decision is pending and likely due out in early summer.

15th Annual Kettle Range Rendezvous July 18, 19 & 20

Make plans now to attend the 2014 Kettle Range Rendezvous to be held at Swan Lake on July 18-19-20. Yes - this year's event will be three days and include Friday and Saturday hikes, Saturday barbecue and Sunday breakfast - free to KRCG members and \$25 for non-members includes a one-year membership.



This year will be our 15th annual celebration with children and adults of all ages enjoying the company of old friends and the chance to make new ones. The Rendezvous is your chance to relax, go for a hike, swim or whatever you choose to do. Last year's experiences at the Swan Lake group campground in the Colville National Forest were so fun we decided we should meet there again.

Day hikes, BBQ and entertainment on Saturday. Saturday hikes will include Thirteenmile, Clackamas, Fir Mountain and Gibraltar Trail. Be at the Swan Lake Shelter parking area by 9:30 AM,

Camping is limited and requires advanced reservation. Please call 509 775 2667 or email tcoleman@kettlerange.org to reserve your spot.



Recreation has Big Impact on Local Economy

In February, Governor Jay Inslee heralded outdoor recreation as an economic powerhouse that generates billions of dollars in business and tax revenue throughout the state of Washington. The Governor announced a new initiative to promote the outdoor recreation and tourism sectors and to get more young people and families involved in outdoor activities.

A recent study concluded that \$22.5 billion is spent annually in Washington on outdoor recreation, supporting 227,600 jobs and generating \$1.6 billion in state and local tax revenue. Outdoor advocates said the impact is actually greater, since the study did not include equestrian, sailing and diving activities, all of which generate significant economic activity in the state. Jobs in the outdoor recreation sector include outdoor gear and apparel design and sales; lodging and transportation; guiding and outfitting services; and many more.

The recreation economic report and fact sheets are available on the Outdoor Industry Association's website at: www.outdoorindustry.org/recreationeconomy



Enjoying a bit of exercise and good company -
Clackamas Mountain Roadless Area
Colville / Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge Turns 75

by Daniel Price, KRCG President

On May 2nd 1939 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8104 creating the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge was established “as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife . . .” The 42,000 acres of the Refuge is the only land in Northeast Washington that has a “wildlife first” mission.

There are many different habitats to explore on the Refuge. These include dry open ponderosa pine forest, moist mixed conifer forests, and higher altitude cold forests. There are also many small lakes, ponds, marshes, streams and open meadows and fields and aspens stands. The aspen stands health has improved greatly since the ending of cattle grazing (less than ten years ago) and by some selective thinning to remove some large shade blocking conifers. One of the management reasons for improving the health of aspens stands and meadows is that the Refuge is a wintering ground for white tailed deer.

A big reason for the Little Pend Oreille NWR celebrating its 75th is to show case many improvements on the Refuge to help improve visitors experience and appreciation of the Refuge. Most of these have happened in the past decade. They include three new trails, a new auto tour and improved ADA accessible sites.

The three new trails are Mill Butte, The Big Pines/ Beaver ponds Overlook trail and the McDowell Marsh Environmental Education Trail. The McDowell trail is barrier free for the first half mile to the Marsh and Lake McDowell. In this short distance you will go through five different habitats. The trail also features new interpretive signs, a numbered educational brochure (corresponding numbers along the trail) an almost 300 foot boardwalk over the marsh and a wildlife observation sign.

Other barrier free trails are located at the headquarters. This trail circles a small pond and has a short spur to an overlook of the Little Pend Oreille River. There is also a short trail at Potters Pond that goes to a fishing

and observation platform. The new auto tour also features many barrier free sites and overlooks.

The new auto tour (due to be completed in June) is a 12.5 mile loop that features 12 stops and 24 interpretation signs informing visitors about the wildlife, history and management of the Refuge. There are also many places to get out of your car to look around, take a hike, observe the wildlife or just enjoy the scenery.

There are many other ways to enjoy the Refuge. Allowed activities include hiking, camping (in the designated campgrounds), fishing, hunting, biking and horseback riding. Make sure to check out brochures or the Refuge website for regulations and where activities are allowed.



Events Planned

Friends and the Refuge have numerous *free* activities planned during the summer to celebrate the 75th Anniversary:

- > **June 7** -- Birding hike with refuge biologist
- > **June 21** -- Hike Blacktail Mountain Loop
- > **July 12** -- Third annual butterfly count. Finally on
- > **July 26** -- 75th Anniversary celebration and Blue Goose Chase and Family Bike Ride.

For more information go to the Friends of the Little Pend Oreille NWR website: refugefriends.com, the Refuge website: fws.gov/littlependoreille or call at 509-684-8384.

Farm Bill Threatens National Forests and Collaboration

by Timothy Coleman

The Farm Bill that was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in February contained a nasty provision that has forest conservation groups asking why now? In particular a provision in the bill potentially opens tens of millions of acres of national forests across the country to logging at a scale not seen in 30 years and with little public oversight. Essentially Congress eviscerated the public process, gutting the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) purportedly to cut costs and speed up forest ecosystem restoration.

Section 8204 of the Farm Bill allows the Secretary of Agriculture on his own or upon request from a state governor, to designate areas of national forest lands “experiencing declining forest health.” Projects can be as large as 3,000 acres in size – about 5 square miles – and can be Categorically Excluded (CE) from detailed environmental effects analysis and no right of citizens to challenge a project administratively. Up to now projects of such a magnitude would require an environmental assessment or impact statement with the right of citizens to challenge them.

Responding to Section 8502, Montana’s governor recommended 5.1 million acres and Idaho’s governor nominated 8 million acres of national forest be treated with CEs. In Washington, Governor Inslee was heavily lobbied to nominate all “suitable” acres but he declined to do so, instead opting for recommendations made through collaborative processes.

What constitutes declining forest health? As happened with the Salvage Rider of 1995 – which also denied citizens the right to challenge national forest projects -- it becomes all to political and the U.S. Forest Service arm twisted by Congress budget cutters and special interests will be pressured for maximum amounts of logging.

Since 2001, the U.S. Forest Service budget has been cut on almost a yearly basis, driven largely by

congressional Republican's demands for less government.

During this same timeframe collaborative groups of local stakeholders formed across the country primarily to open lines of communication, solve problems, learn and agree on principles & guidelines for restoring forest ecosystems on public lands damaged by logging, road construction, livestock grazing, fire exclusion and illegal off-road motor vehicle abuses. But with passage of Section 8502, Congress gave a special treat to timber lobbyists while cutting the legs out from underneath collaborative groups – pouring \$250 million annually into the CE process with little public stakeholder involvement. This appropriation’s pork got the Forest Service’s attention and budget starved as they are they displayed an eagerness to apply for it.

Even with all the goodwill generated by collaborative groups and their many on-the-ground success stories, Congress has done paltry little to help group initiatives succeed. In the case of the Colville National Forest – named a “Model Forest” by the Forest Service Chief, was Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers there to help? No, but she was aggressive in supporting 8502 provisions.

Where there is money there is a voice of need. But will any of this really stop the bugs? British Columbia - where the pine beetle grew to epidemic proportions and which has lax laws compared to the National Forest -- could not stop the beetle even with miles long clearcuts. But Congress wasn’t paying attention to those outcomes or listening to scientists that logging won’t work.

NEPA is a federal law that gives all citizens the ability to influence government decisions affecting the environment and government expenditures on development projects. The Farm Bill Section 8204 takes citizens out of the equation and it throws \$250 million at a problem it can’t hope to correct.

**"The Wonders of Wilderness"
Film Festival
Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of
The Wilderness Act**

Public events celebrating the 50th Anniversary of The Wilderness Act are being planned this spring, summer and fall across the Inland Northwest, including a wilderness film festival. Events are being co-organized by the Colville National Forest, The Lands Council and Kettle Range Conservation Group.

Signed into law on September 3, 1964 by President Lyndon Johnson, The Wilderness Act established a legal precedent that remains unique across the world. The fundamental and guiding principles of Wilderness are the preservation of wild landscapes, free-willed and evolving as nature has always been. Today, 110 million acres of wilderness areas have been designated on federally managed lands, over half of which is located in Alaska.

As with the legislation itself, introduced in 1956 by Rep. John P. Saylor of Pennsylvania and revised 66 times over nine years before it was signed into law, designating new wilderness areas is often an exhaustive political process. In northeast Washington only the 40,000 acre Salmo-Priest Wilderness has been designated – and that was 30 years ago - which is less than three percent of the forest preserved for future generations.

Wilderness designation provides durable multi-generational protection of clean water and free-willed nature. Getting Congress to act takes time but even after 39 years of working to preserve the Kettle Crest – that's worth waiting for.

50th Anniversary Film Festival Events

- Newport: June 19, Roxy Theatre, 7:30 PM
- Spokane: June 26, Mountain Gear, 6:30 PM
- Metaline Falls: June 27, Cutter Theatre, 7:30 PM
- Colville: September 25, Rendezvous Theatre, 7 PM
- Republic: To be Announced

SAVE THE DATE

**Kettle Range Conservation Group's
Annual Auction & Banquet Dinner**



November 15, 5-9 PM

Carousel Building, Republic Fairgrounds

Cost \$15 – including full course meal, dessert, drinks and entertainment

Don't miss the fun – last year the event was sold out.

In Memory – Warrior's Corner

You were special....your spirit walks among us

-Dee Hokum

Dee was a tireless advocate for social and environmental justice in Northeast Washington.

-Timothy Lillebo

For forty years Tim Lillebo dedicated his life to preserving wilderness and old growth forests of the Pacific Northwest.



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Help support community collaboration work. Your annual membership supports Project Scholarship and our work to protect special places while promoting healthy forests in the Colville 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.

Please use the secure PayPal form on our website or fill out this form, include your check and mail to:

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

We're rebuilding our member list. Please send us the names of those you think would like to receive our newsletter. Email or USPS is OK.

Name: _____

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

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

\$25 Basic annual membership \$50 Wilderness supporter annual membership

\$75 Wilderness Defender annual membership \$100 Wilderness Champion annual membership

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I'd like to volunteer doing: _____