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Economic Incentives to Blame for Clearcut Policies

by Ron Mueller

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At a session of the 25th Annual Public Law Conference held in Missoula at the University of Montana Law School from April 11 through 13, 2002, Randall O'Toole presented a paper entitled "Following the Money" in which he makes the case that the Forest Service bureaucracy has a self-serving "economic" incentive to clearcut National Forests and engage in other environmentally destructive practices. Randall O'Toole is Director and Senior Economist at the Thoreau Institute, a Bandon, Oregon-based think tank that concentrates on non-governmental means to protect the environment.

O'Toole states in his paper that he spent much of the 1980's in Forest Service offices reviewing forest plans, timber sales receipts, forest budgets and other planning data. He visited more than half of all forest supervisors' offices, talked with hundreds of Forest Service employees, and reviewed thousands of timber sales and other on-the-ground projects. From these

visits and interviews he came to several conclusions, two of which are:

"Nearly all national forest employees are good people who love the land and want to do the best possible job managing it. I never met a Forest Service employee who truly fit the stereotype of a timber beast."

"The prescription that these good people applied to the unique resources under their

care was invariably the same: build roads and clearcut the timber. It could be easily shown- and many of the employees admitted- that this prescription was expensive, posed huge environmental costs, and increasingly alienated the public against the Forest Service, yet the prescription never varied."

O'Toole notes that fifty years ago the Forest Service was proud of the fact that the agency used selection cutting

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Chapter Elections Process Begins

By Dick Boehmler

Members wishing to recommend **candidates for at-large positions** on the ExCom for the 2003-2005 term may send the name of the candidate with a statement of their willingness to serve to Kris Prinzing, Nominating Committee (NomCom) Chair at 925 Delphinium Drive, Billings MT 59102; (404) 255-0940; scottnkris@imt.net by **Oct. 18, 2002**. Members may also contact any other

members of the NomCom (Jim Curtis, Dick Boehmler, or Gene Johnson) with this information.

Member wishing to submit **issue petitions** must also submit those to Kris or other NomCom members by Oct. 18th.

The NomCom will submit its nominations to the ExCom

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Long-Time Chapter Treasurer Resigns by Ron Mueller

After serving as the Montana Chapter's treasurer for nine years and keeping the Chapter's finances in excellent order, Dick Boehmler has decided to resign his position. Dave Patterson has been appointed to replace Dick.

Dick continues to do good work for the Chapter and is

serving on several Chapter ExCom working committees.

Dick, on behalf of the Chapter Executive Committee, **thanks** for your skillful and diligent work for the Chapter and we look forward to benefiting from your continued service.

Photo by Scott Prinzing



Dick Boehmler, caught on camera in a fall 2000 ExCom meeting.

Economic Incentives (Continued from Page 1)

and that they knew that the public regarded clearcutting with revulsion. During the 1930's the Forest Service promoted its logging expansion plans by taking a series of photos comparing "improper forest practices," namely clearcutting of private lands, with "proper forest practices," namely selection or partial cutting on national forests. Yet, O'Toole concludes that by the mid 1960s, almost every national forest had switched to clearcutting. This clearcutting had high public relations costs. However, the managers who clearcut were rewarded with bigger budgets because clearcutting poses high reforestation costs, which allowed the agency to keep a larger share of timber receipts.

Under the Knutson-Vandenberg Act of 1930 and several similar laws, the Forest Service could keep an almost unlimited share of the remaining receipts from timber sales for post-sale activities such as prescribed burning, road maintenance, and reforestation. The rewards of these retained receipts were spread throughout the agency, much of it in the form of overhead. By the 1980s, a third of the Knutson-Vandenberg funds collected each year went into overhead. O'Toole believes that Congress passed these laws with the best of intentions. However these laws apparently produced significant perverse effects by rewarding forest managers for losing money on environmentally destructive activities and penalizing managers for earning a profit or for emphasizing environmentally

benign activities.

Timber sales that made a profit, that is returned more money to the Treasury than they cost taxpayers, were according to O'Toole, regarded with horror by forest managers because funds returned to the treasury were "lost" to the Forest Service. Managers developed many techniques to minimize such losses, the most important of which was the cross-subsidization of timber sales. Most national forests included some valuable timber and some worthless timber—that is, timber whose value was so low the Forest Service would have to pay purchasers to take

Since timber sales paid for both road construction and road maintenance, forest engineers routinely called for high-cost, high-impact roads when low-impact temporary roads would have sufficed.

it away. Selling just the valuable timber might earn profits for the Treasury, but a forest could enhance its own budget by combining the valuable timber in the same sales with worthless timber. The valuable timber would be sold for less than it was really worth as compensation to the purchasers for having to cut the worthless timber.

Such sales were so common that purchasers called the worthless timber units "punishment units" because cutting them was their punishment for getting the valuable timber at less than below-market prices. Cross-subsidies cost taxpayers millions and did nothing for purchasers. The only winner was the Forest Service, which

got to keep more money for reforesting more acres of land.

This funding system led to many other controversial practices. Managers of many national forests routinely sprayed herbicides on all their clearcuts at least two times – before and after tree planting – whether spraying was needed or not. Since overhead money was released to the bureaucracy only after money was spent on the ground, managers who didn't spray herbicides were pressured to do so by higher levels that expected their share of the take. O'Toole reports on a case in California in which

numerous on-the-ground managers reported that they often sprayed herbicides at the wrong time of the year, planted acres that didn't need it, or did other unnecessary practices to meet their targets and release overhead funds for the higher levels of the bureaucracy.

Since timber sales paid for both road construction and road maintenance, forest engineers routinely called for high-cost, high-impact roads when low-impact temporary roads would have sufficed. The decline of timber sales in the 1990s has led to consternation, as timber receipts are no longer available to maintain the huge surplus of roads that are no longer needed by the forests.

In 1976, Congress amended the Knutson-Vandenberg Act to allow the use of timber sale receipts for wildlife habitat improvements, trail construction, streamside rehabilitation, or other sale area improvements. Soon the managers of resources that nominally competed with timber found themselves supporting timber sales in order to get funds for their pet projects.

While overall timber sales have declined, salvage sales have not, according to O'Toole. Such sales are largely funded by a salvage sale fund created in 1976. Like the Knutson-Vandenberg fund, the salvage sale fund gives managers an incentive to lose money, cross-subsidize salvage sales, and ignore alternatives to salvage sales that may be more environmentally sound or ecologically appropriate.

Having described the perverse economic incentives that can apparently motivate Forest Service managers decisions, Randal O'Toole goes on to discuss four possible solutions for fixing or correcting these perverse incentives. In summary, these solutions are as follows:

- Ban clearcutting. Ban timber sales. Ban road construction, etc. O'Toole refers to these as the "ban-everything solution."
- Collaborative decision-making, in which the Forest Service, environmentalists and community users sit down and reason together and work out their differences with regard to timber harvest and other divisive issues.

(Continued on page 10)

Hello Coal Bed Methane? Goodbye Clean Water by Mary Wiper

In spring of 2002, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Montana Board of Oil and Gas released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on coal bed methane development in Montana. Citizens from across the state

commented on the plan, and a final plan will likely be released this fall.

The Sierra Club found the EIS to be completely inadequate, as none of the alternatives will prevent or even mitigate the devastating impacts that will result from the web of industrial development that will spread across the eastern two-thirds of Montana.

BLM estimates up to 26,000 coal bed methane wells will be developed in Montana. Development could occur from eastern Montana to as far west as Gallatin County.

Every coal bed methane well drilled in Montana would pump huge volumes of water out of the ground; as the area is "dewatered," methane gas is released from underground coal seams. The

salty water would then be released into rivers, threatening fisheries, wildlife, downstream irrigation, and drinking water.

Ninety-three million gallons of water a day could be pumped out of Montana's groundwater and dumped into rivers and streams. The discharge water leads to increased salinity and higher stream temperatures, adversely affecting fisheries. The increased erosion of soils, high level of water pollutants and added sedimentation from coal bed methane destroy spawning grounds and habitat for fish.

Wildlife, such as deer, pronghorn, and the endangered mountain plover and sage grouse, would also be threatened by loss of habitat from industrial development. Access roads, drill pads, pipe-

lines, power lines, transmission stations, compressors, and increased traffic that come along with development could break-up home and winter ranges and migration routes.

Each well would disturb an estimated three to four acres of land, leaving immense potential habitat destruction. More than one million acres could be disturbed by this development.

The Final EIS should come out soon.

For more information check the following website <http://www.sierraclub.org/cbmethane> or contact: Sierra Club—Billings Office 2822 3rd Ave N #208 Billings, MT 59101 Phone: 406-248-4339



A pipe drains high saline wastewater from Coal Bed Methane drilling. Photo courtesy of Northern Plains Resource Council.

POLITICAL UPDATE

By Sherm Janke, Political Chair

As of press time, the Chapter ExCom has approved the Political Committee's recommendations that we support the candidacies of the following persons who are running for the Montana House of Representatives:

In the Missoula area:
Ron Erickson and Gail Gutsche.

In the Bozeman area:
Art Carlson, Chris Harris, Larry Jent and Brady Wiseman.

Of this list, all are incumbents except Carlson and

Wiseman. However it is worth noting that Brady is running in HD 28 against incumbent Cindy Younkin, who, as you will likely recall,

was the sponsor and "shepherd" of legislation in the last session that essentially gutted MEPA, the Montana Environmental

Policy Act.

Her contention was that EPA should be procedural" in place of "substantive" and that notion succeeded in the 2001 legislature.

We strongly disagreed!

We encourage Montana Sierrans who live in these candidates' districts to do more than vote for them: encourage your friends to do likewise, and contact their campaigns with a view towards helping them with lit drops, monetary contributions and yard signs.

Chapter Political Committee

The Montana Chapter maintains a Political Committee, which sets positions and priorities for our lobbyist during Montana legislative sessions. If you have interest in serving on that committee, please contact its chair: **Sherm Janke (406-543-9782).**

ANWR WALK EVENTS SPONSORED BY LOCAL GROUPS

by Ben Kappelman with additional information from Billings Sierra Club activists

During the week of September 5 – 12, a family traveling to Washington D.C. to promote public awareness of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) in Alaska visited Montana cities including Missoula and Billings. The "Walk to Washington" is an activism-oriented trip led by ANWR activist Ken Madsen, accompanied by Wendy Boothroyd and her ten-year-old son, Malcolm. All are residents of Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada. The group will arrive in Washington D.C. on November 16. They will bike except when in town and are driving a support vehicle to help them along the way. The van, painted with information about the cause, runs on biodiesel fuel and carries the group's materials for events like the ones held in Missoula and Billings.

The Sierra Club sponsored and helped to publicize events in Missoula and in Billings. In Missoula, Sierra Club President Jennifer Ferenstein attended the walk and the show. She described the protection of the Arctic Refuge as one of the highest priorities of the organization. Ferenstein also commented that small scale events like this traveling show

are really important as they encourage Congressional representatives from other states to become involved in the cause when their constituents hear about the issue.

While on the trip, the family will visit 39 towns and cities on its way to the nation's capital. The group hopes to speak to Congressional leaders and feels their chances of a meeting will improve if there is substantial publicity surrounding the trip. Once the group enters North Dakota they will be accompanied by a delegation of the



Gwich'in elder, Norma Kassi.

The Gwich'in are a Native Alaskan tribe that depends on the animals in the Refuge for the survival of their culture. The Gwich'in and many environmentalists and biologists

believe that oil drilling in the refuge will cause damage to caribou populations in the area and harm other animal species.

The group began its visit to Missoula by walking down one of Missoula's main streets joined by 17 people. The group held signs promoting the ban on oil exploration in the area. One sign described how the amount of oil in the Refuge would only be enough for the United States to use for 200 days.

In Billings, about two dozen local activists joined with Madsen and the others for a similar event, holding signs and walking down a main street during the noon hour. Local television stations covered the event and included interviews with Mr. Madsen and Billings Sierra Club organizer Mary Wiper in their broadcasts.

Mr. Madsen presented a well-attended evening slide show in both cities. The show featured pictures of the Refuge, music written for the trip and narration by a Gwich'in woman, Norma Kassi. Ms. Kassi described her people's close ties to the land, stressing that "The refuge is not only critical for our needs but also critical for many animals and migratory birds." In the

recording, Ms. Kassi also described the damage oil exploration could do to caribou calving grounds, explaining "If they are going to open up the Arctic Refuge it would be like me and my people going into a hospital nursery and tearing it apart."

Two other branches of the walk will begin in Saratoga Springs, NY and Kansas City, MO on September 14 and October 20, respectively. All three routes will reach Washington D.C. on November 16.

The Bozeman
Office of the Sierra
Club invites you to
a Halloween
Open House
Wednesday,
October 30,
5:30-8:30 p.m.

Come see our new
office, enjoy some
great food and drinks
and celebrate
Halloween
Prizes for best
costumes !!

222 East Main,
Suite 201



Boo!



Caribou in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Photos: <http://www.cariboucommons.com>

TAKE ACTION: THE ROADLESS YAAK NEEDS PROTECTION by Rick Bass and the YVFC

Montana author and activist Rick Bass is at it again. In August, The Lyons Press published an amazing anthology, **THE ROADLESS YAAK**, which contains essays by 36 of the country's leading essayists, poets, and scientists, all testifying on behalf of protecting the Yaak's last remaining roadless areas. Ex-Forest Service Mike Dombeck has written an introduction for the book, and the anthology also contains original work by writers such as Terry Tempest Williams, David James Duncan, Steve Thompson, Doug Peacock, and many others. One hundred percent of the proceeds from this book will support the Yaak Valley Forest Council's (YVFC) campaign to protect the Yaak's last roadless areas.

Bass is also encouraging conservation-minded people from across the state to get

involved in the fledgling Forest Plan revision process that is just underway for the Kootenai National Forest. The Kootenai National Forest, in which the Yaak is located (nearly a million acres of Yaak-country lie north of the Kootenai River, stretching all the way up to the Canadian border, and to the Idaho state line), is presently preparing the plan to govern how this rare and imperiled valley is managed for the next ten to fifteen years.

Bass and the YVFC have been continuing to work on protecting the last fifteen roadless areas in the Yaak Valley of northwestern Montana for the past fifteen years, and the new management plan may provide an opportunity to make progress.

Because the valley is 97% public land, your voice matters; this is our land. The Yaak is a magical, lush,

diverse mix of the Pacific Northwest and the northern Rockies and is home to a Noah's Ark of threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. Chief among them is the grizzly, though at least twelve grizzlies have been lost to human causes in this ecosystem in the last three years alone. There might be as few as a dozen

grizzlies remaining in the Yaak.

The single most helpful thing folks can do right now is to send a letter to the Forest Service commenting on what you'd like to see addressed in the new Forest Plan. Be firm, reminding the agency that this is your land—that you are a fully vested stakeholder, and that you intend for your views to be heard and addressed. The more specific and detailed the letter, the better, but even if you send only a postcard saying "Protect all of the Yaak's last roadless areas," that will be a big help. Send your notes, cards, letters to:

**USDA Forest Service
Attn: KIPZ Revision Team
1101 U.S. Highway 2 West
Libby, Montana 59923**

Up-to-date information on the forest planning process is available from the Kootenai National Forest at (<http://www.fs.fed.us/kipz>). Other sources, if you're interested in researching this issue further, include:

<http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/5054> or
http://www.wildrockies.org/teci/forest_fraud/index.html

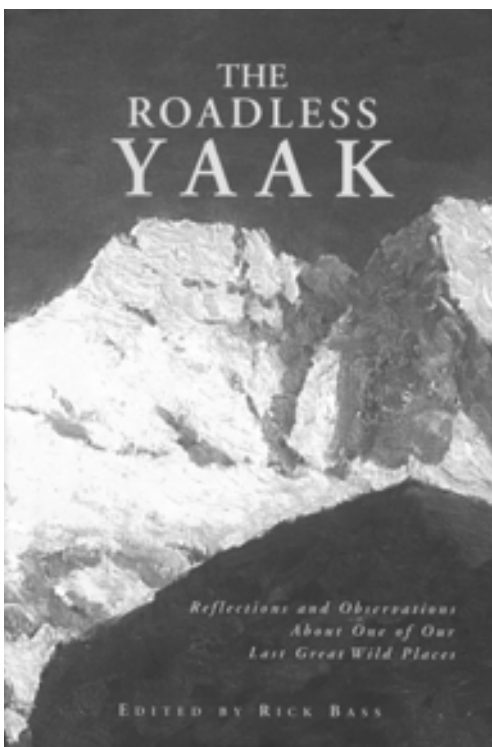
Within the Forest Plan, there are several issues you may address in further detail, if you wish. These include:

Roadless areas: There are fifteen remaining—fourteen inventoried, one uninventoried. They are small, ranging in size from Roderick Butte's 1000 acres to Roderick Mountain', a little less than 40,000 acres. They are still thinly connected, though, a tattered archipelago of wildness. All of the Yaak's

last remaining roadless areas should be managed to preserve wilderness options in the next Forest Plan. The Yaak has gone too long without any wilderness, and has a lot of catching up to do. This issue, more than any other, has been ignored decade after decade on the Kootenai. These fifteen little roadless cores in the Yaak are like pearls on a necklace, and comprise about 180,000 acres, cumulatively, among the nearly million acres that lies north of must be managed for wilderness. The Yaak is long overdue in this regard: perhaps the most-ignored valley in the National Forest System, from a wilderness standpoint.

Old growth: Historically, as much as half of the Yaak might have once been old growth. Now, Forest Service statistics show that two-thirds of the region has been turned upside down. The new Forest Plan protects the last of the best - the ancient giants, so rare now. These larger trees are much more resistant to wildfire, as well.

Grizzly bears: The Cabinet-Yaak grizzly population is the most imperiled in the world. These last dozen bears are super-survivors, having endured everything the twentieth century had to throw at them. Preserving them must be the agency's highest priority. For once, the agency must learn how to err on the side of caution, with these magnificent creatures, the second-slowest-reproducing land mammal in the United States. If the bald eagle is the symbol of the United States, surely the grizzly is the symbol of the West. And what does it mean



Elections Process

(Continued from p.1)

members by October 19th.

Members wishing to nominate **candidates by petition for at-large positions** on the ExCom need to submit said petitions to Kris or others with signatures from at least 15 Chapter members by November 1st.

Ballots will be mailed by November 14th and must be returned to the elections committee by December 14th.

Eligible chapter members for voting in this election will be based on October 1st membership lists.

The ballots will be counted on December 15th in Helena. See page 9 of this issue for details.

Bozeman Tire Burning Issue Still Hot by Margot Zell

As many of you know, the multinational corporation, Holcim has applied for a permit to burn approximately 1800 tires a day at their cement plant in Trident. They initially submitted an application almost a year ago this fall and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has sent the application back incomplete on several occasions. Holcim's next deadline for submission is October 3. It is not known whether the application will be complete this time or not.

If the application is complete, it will take the DEQ ten days to issue a draft permit. After

that, the official comment period begins but lasts only 15 days. There will also be at least one public hearing during that time. Mark Peterson,

comments, particularly with information he is not already aware of (for example, how a local business may be affected).

**Comments should be sent to:
Dave Klemp, Permitting and Compliance Division of Air and Waste Management Bureau,
MDEQ, PO Box 200901,
Helena, MT 59620-0901**

the DEQ Air Quality Specialist working on this permit has stated that he is willing to take comments at any time even before the official comment period begins. He is most interested in fact-based

A meeting date will be set soon to put plans in place for gathering comments. Your help will be needed! If you are interested in helping with this campaign, please call Margot Zell at 406-587-1985.

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<http://montana.sierradub.org>

Remember the Montana Sierra Club in your holiday giving. Be an Angel and send a donation to The Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club, c/o Treasurer 222 East Main, Suite 201, Bozeman, MT 59715

Take Action on the Yaak

(Continued from page 5)

to us as a people and a culture, when despite the force of law, we cannot maintain such an astounding creature?

Clearcuts: The Kootenai National Forest is the most cut-over, fragmented forest in the state. It must move away from the large clearcuts that characterize its past and ongoing management. It must be more sensitive to viewsheds, erosion, weed dispersal and soil compaction. Clearcuts do not serve the same function as wildfires, as the Kootenai has been claiming for decades. No more clearcuts!

Watershed restoration: This is an area of opportunity and job creation that has traditionally been overlooked almost completely on the Kootenai,

which has long preferred to busy itself with a timber sales program. Insist that the Forest Service conduct more watershed restoration analyses, then implement those prescriptions.

Weeds: Hawkweed is the worst, but knapweed, thistle, and tansy ragwort are right behind it, taking over vital wetlands, following the plume of thousands of miles of logging roads, spreading into wetlands, displacing the Yaak's unique and time-crafted blend of native plants. Big game forage and pasturage is being destroyed by this explosion of weeds, as well. Increasingly, the Forest Service's answer is to spray the forests with pesticides, though this application--in addition to

(continued from page 5)

being a hazard to humans--is being challenged in court for its effects upon smaller creatures, particularly endangered fish populations, and is largely ineffective and cost-prohibitive.

Corridors: Protecting the last 15 roadless areas is a start toward preserving the heart of the Yaak's wild nature, but the Forest Service also needs to begin taking a look - for the first time - at issues of habitat connectivity: how species can travel from one little "island" or "garden" of one roadless area to another.

Monitoring: The Kootenai must keep up with its activities - must gauge on whether it is accomplishing its goals - rather than simply galloping roughshod

through the forest, and the Forest Plan. It must be monitored, to see how well (or poorly) it succeeds in following its plan, once established.

Year after year, the wild Yaak has given up more timber than any other valley in the state of Montana. It's time, finally, for us to give back to this jewel of a landscape.

Please weigh in with comments on these matters during this critical forest planning process.

The Forest Service has indicated that it would like as much input as possible, so feel free to be as detailed or brief as you wish, and write as often as you wish.

Supreme Court Race: Too Important To Overlook by Drusha Mayhue

The race for the Montana Supreme Court may perhaps be the most important race of the 2002 election season. The Supreme Court is the only branch of government in Montana that has consistently respected our constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment. However, that could change if Justice Bill Leaphart is not re-elected.

Stillwater County Attorney Bob Eddleman is running against Justice Bill Leaphart for the nonpartisan seat. Mr.

Eddleman has accused the Montana Supreme Court of "erratic behavior." Bob Eddleman, a native of Nevada, is supported by the Chamber of Commerce, the Montana Family Coalition (formerly the Christian Coalition), and Montana Conservatives, a group founded by University of Montana Law Professor Rob Natelson.

Bob Eddleman is also personally supported by Rob Natelson, a fiscal conservative who ran for governor of Montana

in 2000 but lost to Judy Martz in the primary elections. After his loss, Natelson threw his support to Ms. Martz in the gubernatorial election.

Justice Leaphart has consistently ruled that Montanans have a "right to a clean and healthful environment." Along with Justice Terry Trieweiler, Justice Leaphart's rulings have been more protective of Montana's environment.

Montana Conservation Voters

has endorsed Bill Leaphart for re-election to Montana's Supreme Court.

Vote!

Make sure your conservation voice is heard loud and clear.



November 5

Local Forest Assesses Public Comments By Jim Mann, Reprinted from The Daily Inter Lake.

Road closures, roadless areas and more or less timber salvage. Those are the main themes in about 1,400 public comments on a draft environmental impact statement proposing different ways to manage federal land burned by last summer's Moose fire. Since the draft was released in June, the Hungry Horse Ranger District has been collecting and sifting through public comments on the Moose Post-Fire Project. Planning leader Michelle Draggoo said most of the comments came as form letters or were derived from action alerts posted by Montanans for Multiple Use and the Sierra Club.

The Moose fire romped over 71,000 acres, but the Forest Service's proposal applies to roughly 35,000 acres that

were burned on the Flathead National Forest. The 500-page draft EIS includes alternatives that call for decommissioning between 56 and 87 miles of road. Four alternatives lay out varying degrees of salvage



Shadow lines in the snow in a recently burned forest. Photo by Scott Prinzing

logging, covering between 3,024 and 3,721 acres. Estimated timber volumes range from 13.5 million to 27 million board feet, and some of the alternatives involve logging in inventoried roadless areas.

"The majority of comments seemed to come from the multiple use point of view," Draggoo said.

And from that point of view, most comments object to

closing and destroying forest roads. Some questioned why an emergency timber salvage project would involve road closures at all.

The Forest Service contends that it cannot proceed with

any work in the burned area unless it makes an effort to meet forest-plan road standards that are aimed at improving grizzly bear habitat security.

"We've told them then and we're telling them now, that we have no choice," Draggoo said. "Forest-plan requirements have not been met. We are in consultation with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and we would not be able to continue with this project unless we made some attempt to meet our forest-plan requirements for grizzly bear security."

Some comments from the environmental community called for closing as many roads as possible and limiting

salvage logging as much as possible.

"They were the same exact issues we heard during scoping," she said, referring to the initial public involvement process that led to the draft. "There were people that want us to salvage more timber, to salvage in riparian areas. There were folks who didn't want us salvaging roadless areas."

Draggoo said a final environmental impact statement will be published in mid-October. The Flathead Forest is requesting a "stay of appeal" that would allow salvage logging to proceed while any appeals are pending. If Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth grants that request, a "record of decision" on the selected alternative would be issued in mid-November. If the request is denied, the record of decision will be issued along with the final EIS in mid-October.

Reporter Jim Mann may be reached at 758-4407 or by e-mail at jmann@dailyinterlake.com

See the Montana Chapter's cool website at <http://montana.sierraclub.org/>

And get contact info for Executive Committee members at <http://montana.sierraclub.org/contacts.html>

Headwaters Group Update—Bozeman By Katie Craig

Outings

By the time you receive this newsletter, the Headwaters Group will have kicked off its Outings Program with a hike in the Taylor Fork drainage on Sunday, September 29. Not only will hikers have enjoyed this incredibly beautiful area, they will also have learned about the importance of the land acquisition in progress which will eliminate checkerboarding in the Taylor Fork. This area in the Madison Range south of Big Sky has long been regarded as one of the most valuable wildlife areas in the Yellowstone region. It provides critical habitat for grizzly bear, wolverine and lynx and is home to a large wintering moose population. It also serves as an important wintering ground, calving area and migration route for the Gallatin elk herd. The trip leader was Jason Matthews from Livingston.

For more information about

upcoming outings, to be on the outings planning committee, or to be a trip leader call our enthusiastic Outings Coordinator Andy Tuller at 595-0334.

Gallatin Forest Travel Plan

The Forest Service has recently released its “benchmark” report as the first step in the process of revising its travel management plan for the Gallatin National Forest. Their goal over the next 2 years is to arrive at a management plan addressing public recreational use of every road and trail on the Forest. With the help of the public they will determine which trails should be open or closed to hiking, biking, ORV use, horseback riding, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and other uses. The public comment period is in progress until November 22. After the comments have been tallied a series of options will be published, again with a public comment period,

followed by a draft Environmental Impact Statement on the effects of its implementation. The entire process will take over 2 years. To view the complete plan go to www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/travel_planning.

Lots of help will be needed to study the plan, write comments, table, do field monitoring and write letters to the editor. If you are interested in helping call Drusha Mayhue at 585-0816.

Big Sky Open House

The Headwater's Group, in conjunction with the Bozeman Sierra Club Office hosted an open house in Big Sky on September 24. The goals of the open house were to increase awareness about bear safety issues in Big Sky as well as inform people about the Sierra Club and recruit new members. Kevin Frey from Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks did an excellent slide show and

presentation on the importance of bear-proofing your home and yard if you live in bear country. There was also discussion about the recent changeover to bear proof dumpsters in Big Sky. This change was made possible in part by the work of the Sierra Club and the garbage carrier, BFI. An award was given to Big Sky resident, Kristen Ramirez for her work in instigating the change to bear-proofed dumpsters. There was also plenty of time for connecting with other Big Sky Sierra Club members and talking with others who are interested in working on local conservation issues.

We are looking forward to connecting with our Big Sky members on a regular basis. If anyone from Big Sky who wasn't at the open house is interested in getting involved in local conservation issues call Monica Fella in the Bozeman Office at 582-8365, ext. 3005.

Bitterroot-Mission Group Update—Missoula by Ron Mueller

The Bitterroot-Mission Group Executive Committee normally meets on the second Wednesday of the month in the public meeting room at the east end of the City of Missoula East Pine Fire Station at East Pine and Madison Street. These meetings are open to Group members. Sierra Club members wishing to attend a meeting should contact the Group Chair or other Committee member to confirm the meeting time and date and to inform the member or Chair if they wish to make a presentation to the Committee.

The Group's elected Executive Committee membership is as follows:

Beth Peluso, Chair, 549-7268

Bruce Koerner, Vice Chair and Treasurer

Jenny Marangelo, Secretary and Group's State Chapter Representative

Jim Curtis, Membership Chair

Ron Mueller, Conservation Chair, rlmuelle@initco.net

You can send mail to the Committee at P.O. Box 231, Missoula, MT 59806

Missoula Roadless Area Citizen Inventory Project by Bob Clark

Being implemented out of the Missoula, MT. Sierra Club office, the Inventory Project focuses on un-inventoried Roadless Areas, particularly those under 5,000 acres. The project seeks to identify, ground-truth, and eventually secure protection for these areas through citizen field surveys, comprehensive GIS mapping, and oversight of agency management. The effort is currently focused on the Lolo National Forest with some additional work being carried out on the Flathead and Kootenai National

Forest of northwest Montana.

As of September 2002, the project is in full swing. Local Club volunteers are the cornerstone of this effort, generously donating hundreds of

(Continued on page 10)



This road is being reclaimed by nature. Lolo National Forest Photo by Bob Clark

Upper Missouri Update—Helena/Great Falls

The Upper Missouri Group, which mainly includes members along the Rocky Mountain Front plus the Butte area, has been inactive for several years. In the past, leadership for the group has come primarily from the Great Falls area. The membership in that area has insufficient numbers to sustain the leadership needed to maintain a group indefinitely. The Chapter ExCom Committee has decided to try reorganizing the group primarily from members in the Helena area. At least 246 of the 420 group members live in Helena.

Lynn Fairbanks (phone 449-6127) has agreed to serve as **Contact Person** during the reorganization process. If you have any interest in helping reorganize the group or ideas

Ballot Counting/ Holiday Party In Helena December 15!!

on what issues the group needs to address; please contact Lynn Fairbanks.

Ballots for the 2003 Montana Chapter election will be counted in Helena this year in a Ballot Counting/Holiday Party.

Watch for details in an upcoming mailing!!

To Join Our New Email Alert Lists

We have set up email alert lists for the Montana Chapter and one for each of the groups in Montana. To join one or more of the lists, either visit our web site (<http://montana.sierraclub.org/>), or send the following email message:

To: **LISTSERV@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG**
 Subject: **[this line is ignored and may be left blank]**
 Message: **SUB MT-NEWS YourFirstName YourLastName**
SUB MT-HEADWATERS-NEWS YourFirstName YourLastName
SUB MT-MISSION-NEWS YourFirstName YourLastName
SUB MT-MISSOURI-NEWS YourFirstName YourLastName
SUB MT-YELLOWSTONE-NEWS YourFirstName YourLastName

Replace "YourFirstName YourLastName" with your own first and last names on **ALL LINES**. The above example will sign you up for all the Montana lists. Delete the lines that correspond to the lists that you do not want to join. If you need help subscribing to the lists, or you have any other questions, don't hesitate to contact Jeff at web@vndc.com.

Headwaters Group Elections coming up!

It's that time of year again to start thinking about who our local group leaders are going to be for 2003. Currently they are Jeff van den Noort, Margot Zell, Andy Tuller, Drusha Mayhue, and Dennis Curran. Each term is two years. Margot's and Dennis' terms are up this year so we are looking for some other folks to run.

If you are interested in being a leader of your local group or would like to nominate someone, please call Jeff (582-1871) or Drusha (585-0816). **Notification must be made by Oct. 20th.**

Bitterroot-Mission Elections also upcoming!

Any Sierra Club members of the Bitterroot-Mission Group who would like to **recommend candidates for at-large positions on the Executive Committee** for terms running 2003-2005 should send the name of the candidate with a statement of their willingness to serve to Beth Peluso by **November 1, 2002**. Members who would like to **nominate candidates by petition for at-large positions on the Executive Committee** need to submit their petitions, signed by at least 15 Bitterroot-Mission Group members, to Beth by **November 8**.

Members wishing to submit **issue petitions** should also sub-

(Continued on page 10)

Yellowstone Basin Group Update—Billings By Mary Wiper

The Yellowstone Basin Group had a busy summer in 2002!

In June members and the public joined Crow Historian Howard Bogges for discussion of the Native American history and sacred use of Pompeys Pillar, a historically and culturally significant place in Southeastern Montana.

Also in Junr, Gary Thompson, professor of geology at Rocky

Mountain College, led a one-day trip to the mouth of Clark's Fork Canyon where participants learned about the geology of the canyon.

Yellowstone Basin Group members also participated with Montana Wilderness Association in a training to do on-the-ground surveying and monitoring of Forest Service and BLM roads in the Pryor Mountains. Look for more information on this project in

the future.

In July, a planning meeting of interested parties was held to discuss further steps to protect Weatherman Draw. Increased visitation, illegal off-highway vehicle use, and vandalism to the site are areas of concern. Guidelines for protection of Weatherman Draw are being developed.

YBG is also concerned with the impact coal bed methane development will have eastern

Montana's land, air and water. The group will be hosting a field day on October 5 to discuss the potential impacts to wildlife, wildlands and water. Watch your mailbox for more information.

The Executive Committee of the YBG usually meets the second Tuesday of the month. Call the Billings Sierra Club office at 406-248-4339, stop by 2822-3rd Ave N #208, or email Mary.Wiper@sierraclub.org for more information.

Economic Incentives (continued from page 2)

(Continued from page 2)

- Manage National Forests as a fiduciary trust. O'Toole asserts that a "trust's clear goals, well-defined accountability and strict sustained-yield requirements can help resolve many of the disputes over public forest management."
- Budgetary reform of the Forest Service which requires that the Forest Service be self funding. This could help to reduce or eliminate the perverse incentives created by appropriations that tend to emphasize capital funding (e.g. road construction) over operational funding (e.g. law enforcement) and programs that create local jobs (e.g. money-losing timber sales) over programs that create

jobs throughout the nation (e.g. recreation).

O'Toole rejects what he calls the "ban everything solution" and proposes that so-called "charter forests" be established in which variations of the remaining three possible solutions (i.e. collaborative groups, trusts and self-funding) be tested and evaluated by conducting numerous experiments/demonstrations. O'Toole's hope is that these experiments will produce results that can help us find a way out of the morass of Forest Service and other public land management problems. However, even if the experiments proposed by O'Toole do identify potential solutions to the "morass of the Forest Service, etc." it seems

likely that such solutions could be implemented throughout the Forest Service only after major political and bureaucratic changes are accomplished. Making major change and overcoming bureaucratic inertia is often difficult.

A legislative proposal to end commercial logging on National Forests is contained in the McKinney-Leach Bill, which has been introduced in the U S House of Representatives. The Sierra Club has taken a position in support of this legislation as the result of a membership referendum held several years ago. This legislation would probably fall under O'Toole's category of a "ban everything solution," and not have his

support. However, proponents of this legislative mandate to end commercial logging on National Forests contend that it would put an end to the extensive clearcutting and related environmental and financial abuses described by O'Toole.

The perverse financial incentives to which the Forest Service is apparently subjected and the resulting problems and abuses described by O'Toole seem very real, well documented and are not likely to be corrected without some major legislation and / or regulatory actions that redirect the Forest Service timber harvesting and management practices.

Roadless Inventory Project (continued from page 8)

(Continued from page 8)

hours in the field with new volunteers always being recruited. Volunteers document current roadless area boundaries by identifying peripheral roads as well as other routes, recreation use, natural and man-made historical features, wildlife, habitat type, and invasive weeds within each area. The Ecology Center, a

local non-profit GIS mapping organization, is compiling the data and producing a forest-wide map depicting remaining roadless areas. Sierra Club members and staff are staying on top of agency management proposals that would undermine the integrity of these areas.

The diversity of individuals and groups who have contrib-

uted to this effort makes the project truly inspiring! Local Sierra Club board and members, students, retirees, a high school science club and a local Girl Scout troop are among the dozens of local folks who have helped out with the project to date.

The information will be valuable to land managers and conservationists alike, contributing new information to on-going efforts to protect America's unprotected wild places. Protecting the unprotected is a top priority for the Sierra Club and our members are helping to make that happen. Thank you to all those who have lent their time, energy and support to this project.

To get involved in this effort contact Sierra Club's Missoula office at 406-549-1142 or e-mail Bob Clark, Conservation Organizer at sierrabob@wildrockies.org

**The Thoreau Institute's
web site address is
<http://www.ti.org/2c.html>.**

Bitterroot-Mission Elections (Continued from page 9)

mit those to Beth by **November 1**. The Nominating Committee will submit its nominations to the Executive Committee by **November 13**. The list of candidates will be finalized at the **November 13** meeting.

The Executive Committee will mail ballots on **December 1**. The ballots will be due **December 31**. Members eligible to vote in this election will be determined by membership lists as of **November 1**. Ballots will be counted at a time and place to be announced on the ballot.

Beth Peluso
815 Harrison Street
Missoula, MT 59802
bpeluso@yahoo.com
406-549-7268

The Van Ness uninventoried roadless area in Lolo National Forest Photo by Jen Nitz



Chapter Urges Baucus to Protect Our Forests and Communities by Len Broberg

It became clear in late August and early September that the Bush Administration would advance legislation to exempt logging on public lands from environmental protections and analysis in the name of fire protection. The Chapter responded by sending Senator Max Baucus the following letter in Washington, DC on September 9, 2002 by fax:

Dear Senator Baucus:
I am writing to convey the serious concerns the Montana Chapter of Sierra Club has about the Bush Forest legislation. Senator Baucus, you have stood up for protection of Montana's land, water and air. We need your conviction and leadership again. Opening Montana's public forests to logging without environmental analysis, public participation and the protections of the National Forest Management Act, the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act would be a grave error, placing the environmental legacy we can leave our children in serious jeopardy. The 2700 members of the Montana Chapter of Sierra Club urge you to vote against the Bush plan.

You should know that the Montana Chapter does not base its position on some blanket policy. Instead, we base it on hard experience gained on the ground here in Montana. In the six years that I have been active at the Chapter level we have only filed lawsuits on three projects, two in the Bitterroot NF and one in the Helena NF. Our opposition to timber sales has been a measured one, based on resources placed in jeopardy. As you know, we

participated in the Bitterroot Settlement that freed 55 million board feet of timber for harvest in exchange for what protections we could gain for unroaded lands and native fish habitat. We have opposed old growth harvest on the Helena National Forest and we continue to try and modify the Moose Fire and Lolo Post Burn projects so that they protect roadless areas (inventoried and uninventoried), water quality, fish habitat and wildlife habitat, including listed species like bull trout and the



Senator Max Baucus grizzly bear. It is these resources we seek to protect. Locking us, and the rest of the public, out of the process is not a solution and we have appreciated your statements to that effect.

Nor is waiving the few laws that prevent the worst abuses an answer. Even in the Bitterroot, where we had a legally binding agreement, we have been shocked by the BNF's conduct of those agreed sales, which we believe has violated at least the spirit, and perhaps the letter of our agreement. This week when I met with Lolo

NF staff in the field to talk about the Post Burn project before making a decision on an appeal, I was confused by how their story of the funding for restoration and the reasons for logging had changed from only two weeks before. It is clear to us that we all need the environmental laws as sideboards to agency conduct.

We advocate that the USFS change its focus to protecting communities, addressing fire risk within 500 yards of the edge of the community by the following actions: thin only small diameter trees and fine fuels, cooperate with private forest managers to facilitate similar management and provide home and business owners with the information and consultation they need to best protect their property from forest fires. These actions are what USFS researchers tell us will be most effective to protect private property.

Indeed, the sudden claim of emergency and obstructionism does not match with our experience. Look at the Pattee Canyon-Blue Mountain fuels reduction project outside of Missoula on the Lolo National Forest. In the course of public involvement on that project my comments in the NEPA process and subsequent work with Lolo NF staff resulted in a modification of the project to protect an active northern goshawk nesting area. We did not appeal or litigate this sale. The appeal period ran out sometime in the mid to late 90's. Yet the sale was not sold until last fall (2001) and the timber companies have 5 years to do the work!

Want to Stay Informed or contact the Ex Com?

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<http://montana.sierraclub.org>

This project involves old growth ponderosa pine and larch, yet because we made the most of our opportunity for public comment/participation there was no undue delay in readying the project. Whatever delay occurred was internal to the USFS. This project directly addresses issues of fire risk in a forested area where USFS lands abuts home sites. Yet, the USFS seems to be in no hurry to get the work done!

We also do not favor legislative exemptions of individual projects. We urge you not to participate in any such legislation. We do not support the waiver of public comment, environmental analysis or environmental laws in any case. We urge you to oppose any such measure. We can reduce fire risks to Montana communities and help Montana families, but we need your leadership to make sure we do not compromise the qualities that make Montana unique in the nation- clean water, wildlife, fisheries and outdoor recreation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Len Broberg
Montana Chapter Sierra Club
Conservation Chair



Photo by Scott Prinzing



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Meetings Meetings Meetings

Montana Chapter Executive Committee meeting schedule:
For more information contact Chapter Chair Ron Mueller at 406-543-7265 or rmueller@nitco.net

- Saturday, January 11, 2003—Wheat, MT
- Saturday, March 22, 2003, location to be announced.
- Saturday, June 21, 2003, location to be announced
- Saturday, September 20, 2003, location to be announced

Newsletter Policy

The Montana Sierran encourages submissions of articles and photos for upcoming issues. Payment of \$25 per article and \$15 per photo will be made upon acceptance and publication.

The Montana Sierran reserves the right to edit submissions. The Montana Sierran may reject submissions at its discretion.

For more information contact Kris Prinzing, editor of The Montana Sierran at 406-255-0940 or scotnkris@imt.net.

Winter issue deadline: January 12, 2003

**The Montana Sierran
Sierra Club, Montana Chapter
Quarterly Newsletter**



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