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Clearwater Forest Watch

Coalition

Moscow, Idaho

I have alerted them
that you will call
Thanks
CW

P.O. Box 9910
Moscow, ID 83843
(208) 882-0206

TO: Christian Marsh

FROM: Lisa Lombardi

RE: Follow-up on phone calls requesting time to meet on October 4, 5, or 6 to discuss Inland Northwest forests.

Will -
Should Kim do
Reynolds
- CW

Here are some of the issues facing the Inland Northwest forests, specifically Idaho. I have taken these 2 pages from some background information I gave to the NY Times, and the other document from a lobbying trip I made to DC last spring. I would like to speak to you specifically about how the Administration's "reinventing government" initiative could be used to change the direction of the Forest Service; and about the opportunity for ecosystem management that we see in Idaho. I am, as of now, available after noon on Monday October 4, after 2:30 on Tuesday October 5, and before 10 on Wednesday October 6. I hope you can schedule a time when we can meet. I can be reached at the number above; or my fax number is (208) 882-8029. Thank you.

- Companies from the west coast are coming over and buying up timberlands. Miller Shingle, a small (for the coast) company out of the Granite Falls area, has bought lands around Orofino, Idaho, and is cutting the logs and shipping them back to their west-side mills. Just this past week, Crown Pacific, the Portland company that junk-bonded itself into existence a few years ago and bought Georgia-Pacific (? out of Hamilton; it might not be GP, but one of the biggies) out of northwestern Washington, bought out DAW and W-I, which have large land holdings and mills in northeastern Washington, northern Idaho, and northwestern Montana. Folks around here think, hope, they'll keep the mills going.

Weyerhaeuser has bought a mill in Headquarters. And, of course, Plum Creek has always been here, carving up the railroad lands. The big difference is, Washington state has some laws, and regulations, and thanks to public involvement they even sometimes have teeth. Idaho's forest practices act has a great preamble about protecting public resources and then pages of culvert sizing -- no regs at all. And the timber industry through the legislature has successfully moved to limit public participation by requiring a bond for any appeal of even a state lands timber sale.

When I drive from here to Seattle, loaded log trucks with Idaho plates pass me like a steady dripping faucet, adding up to a stream.

- Last spring, a company called Idaho Forest Industries paid a record \$14 million for one FS timber sale near Coeur d'Alene. IFI used to be down in southern Idaho, in St. Anthony; when a friendly public official at a hearing asked an IFI spokesman about it, he said yes, they used to be down there, but closed the mill because they "ran out of resource."

- This is the Forest Service Region that John Mumma was ousted from; his replacement, Dave Jolly, is a timber beast from the Southwest, Region 3, and he doesn't seem to feel the need to change. We lost Wynn Green, the previous Clearwater supervisor, over a furor like the one over Mumma -- Wynn said he couldn't get the cut out. Jolly convened a panel to look into it, and the panel, all hand-picked supervisors who share his philosophy, said the reason was the "ologists," meaning the scientific staff of the forest, the biologists and hydrologists and ecologists. So Al Espinosa, the fisheries biologist, was given one of those wonderful choices that led to his early retirement. The

Lisa Lombardi
 Clearwater Forest Watch Coalition
~~206 E. Morton~~
 Moscow, ID 83843

Currently listed species: bald eagle, grey wolf, grizzly bear, mountain caribou, salmon.

Species within the listing process, or status unknown/declining: Townsend's big-eared bat, pine marten, fisher, wolverine, northern goshawk, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, Coeur d'Alene salamander, giant pacific salamander, bobcat, lynx.

As you can see, there are many vertebrate species of concern in north Idaho, and the list is only going to grow. But, with the new Administration's emphasis on ecosystem management, we have an opportunity to use pending wilderness and forest health legislation, as well as reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act and consequent recovery plans for currently listed species, to craft a truly holistic solution to the land management decisions facing north Idaho. Components of that plan should include:

- **A landscape approach.** We need to get away from stand-by-stand, or even drainage-by-drainage, land management planning, and instead treat the forested landscape as a coherent whole. The large predators -- wolves and grizzlies -- that we are trying to manage for require such an approach, as does any solution to the forest health crisis. Wilderness areas are crucial refugia for wildlife, fish, water, and forest functions and processes, and should be designed in concert with recovery plans for the wide-ranging carnivores that stitch the northern Rockies together. The forests around them should be managed as a matrix that can also support many of the functions, and large predators some of the time. This type of landscape approach will prevent hard lines between wilderness and non-wilderness management, but instead will provide a flexible landscape capable of supporting all native species.
- **Watershed restoration.** A comprehensive watershed restoration program will restore our rivers and streams to sustainability while easing the transition of timber-dependent communities. Most of the watersheds in roaded areas are degraded; in some areas, like the Palouse district of the Clearwater National Forest, we have 20 year's worth of restoration work. But restoration must not be a band-aid to justify further resource damage. To paraphrase Dr. Jack Ward Thomas, we want the patient to get out of the hospital, not just out of intensive care.
- **Truly sustainable forestry.** Sustainable forestry is that which maintains all functions and processes of a forest, including all native species. Ecological subsidies, in the form of loss of species, silted rivers, and regeneration failures, are symptoms of a non-sustainable management regime, and should be no more acceptable than the now-disgraced economic subsidies that create below-cost timber sales. There should be no "sacrifice areas;" we can't afford them.
- **Scientific assessment of forest health.** Truly healthy forests are complex ecosystems. The current health crisis was caused by fire suppression, insect suppression, and changing the forest type through aggressive logging of climax species -- in other words, the unintended consequences of management. Rather than one comprehensive bill which tries to promulgate one solution to forest health problems, we need to look at a flexible combination of prescribed fire, planting of ponderosa pine, tamarack, and other species on a site-specific basis, and understanding root rot and insect outbreaks as agents of forest succession. It may include limited salvage logging, on a site-specific basis, and only as a tool, not a goal. Dr. Thomas, of the Forest Service's La Grande experiment station, has indicated that he would enjoy putting together a scientific panel similar to the Interagency Scientific Committee to study the forest health issue and present recommendations to Congress. The goal should be, again, truly sustainable forestry.

Mr. LaRocco, from my perspective as a biologist, I can see clearly that all these issues are interconnected. Consequently, any legislation which attempts to address any piece of these issues is bound to affect them all. This can be a problem, if all insist that these issues be dealt with separately; or it can be the greatest opportunity of the new Administration to attempt an ecosystem management approach. We need your leadership on this issue -- Idaho, and the future, depend on you.

rumor has been that Dan Davis, the wildlife biologist, is next, but the axe still hasn't fallen on him yet. And Wynn was given a job as the liaison between the governor's office and the FS -- they took him out of decision-making and into a dead end.

- The new Clearwater Forest supervisor, James Caswell, is from the Targhee NF, down around St. Anthony. That forest is, as the IFI comment might lead you to assume, in very bad shape, having been cut to hell for the last decade or more. The appointment of Caswell up here is considered a very bad sign by the environmental community; we wondered if the Clinton administration's commitment to a new forest service would actually occur, and it seems we have our answer, at least in our region. Just a few weeks ago, the environmentalist lawsuit against the Clearwater NF Forest Plan was settled out of court. The FS agreed to limit the ASQ to 80 mmbf per year (down from 173 in the old plan) for five years. The Supervisor's public response to that was to promise that those five years would be spent "loading the pipeline."

- We have been having rancorous meetings on grizzly bear and wolf recovery, both of which occur on the Clearwater National Forest. One county commissioner told Idaho Fish and Game that if he saw a grizzly he'd shoot it himself.

Bull trout may be listed as threatened or endangered. We've got big salmon issues here too, not just in the eastside forests of Washington and Oregon. And we're losing our native cutthroats; wherever roads are, they aren't.

- And we have wilderness hearings, covering the same territory, and a wilderness bill that Congressman LaRocco is sponsoring. The industry is absolutely opposed to it despite the fact that the areas to be included in wilderness were specifically drawn to exclude the timber base. We oppose it for that reason -- we have plenty of rocks and ice, but hardly any forest. And everybody assumes that if it's not wilderness it'll be roaded and logged -- everybody assumes that, which tells you something about the FS's reputation for multiple use management around here.

- Everybody's afraid. The FS personnel are afraid to talk -- under a gag order, some of them. The local loggers can see the end of the pipeline, are afraid of losing their jobs and homes. The independent loggers are afraid in a more immediate way -- the big company around here is Potlatch, and Potlatch controls the scaling, so if they don't like you you can work all day and come out owing the mills money. We're all afraid of the newcomers, flooding into the state, condo-ing up the bottom lands and driving us out of the housing and job markets, ruining our own private paradise.

- The good news is, the Nez Perce tribe is starting to flex its co-managment muscle.

- Into all this, Earth First! has come, focusing their national attention on a timber sale just south of here. A local friend of mine, sympathetic to the EFers but not a protester, got beat up -- nerve damage to his face -- on his way up to the encampment, and some tourists got attacked on their way through because they were driving a volkswagen bus and local teenagers assumed they were Earth First! A lot of young folks from all over are getting criminal records. And the sale is absolutely horrible -- 135 miles of road, numerous clearcuts -- but not much worse than we see every day, and better than the private lands.

I should
handle - keep
Katie's time
free. W3

GUEST COLUMNS

Guest columns of up to 900 words are invited. A copy of guest column guidelines will be sent upon request. We reserve the right to edit.

SUBMITTING COMMENTARY

Please send letters and guest columns to The Spokesman-Review, W999 Riverside, Spokane 99201. Fax: (509) 459-5482. Voice mail: 458-8800, code 4853.

ROUNDTABLE

GUEST COLUMN

Forests, towns need new definition of sustainability

By Lisa Lombardi
Guest columnist

At fact-finding wilderness discussions held this month in Orofino and Grangeville, Sen. Dirk Kempthorne almost got the question right. He asked how much emphasis Idaho's congressional delegation should put on maintaining the state's timber communities.

What he should have asked was not *how much*, but *how*. The question is not whether we in North Idaho want to preserve our small-town way of life — we do. But how can we build stable, healthy, sustainable communities?

One glance from a small airplane such as that used by the delegation to view the forest, would show even a casual observer there are problems on the roaded, or managed, forest lands: large areas denuded of mature trees, creeks with no trees to shade them, spaghetti snarls of roads. To a more informed observer, the picture is even worse: streams clogged with silt and debris, road failures, loss of habitat, reforestation failures.

State and private forest lands look, and are, the worst; U.S. Forest Service lands usually are a little healthier, in part because of stricter regulations, and in part because the remaining roadless areas maintain water quality and provide havens for fish and

wildlife now not found in the managed landscape.

But even the Forest Service has admitted that, for at least the last decade, the amount of logging has exceeded what is sustainable.

Sustainability is what we're talking about. The definition used by the Forest Service, the state, and private timber companies deals only with a continuous supply of fiber or lumber off the land. Even so, roaded lands have not been managed sustainably.

And this ignores the environmental costs: loss of water quality and quantity, loss of fish and wildlife, loss of soil productivity. These factors, too, are part of a healthy forest, and ultimately determine — or undermine — the amount of timber that can be produced.

Last year, the scientific committee of the Society of American Foresters issued a paper saying that the traditional definition of sustainability is too narrow, and must be broadened to include other resources. Corn-row forestry, they said, does not work for long; it is not sustainable.

The broader definition of sustainability — with no loss of water quality or quantity, no loss of species — will go a long way towards sustaining our forest-dependent communities. It will also dictate profound changes in management, on all ownerships.

Where is the timber industry's

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commitment to sustainable communities?

In the early '80s, Potlatch Corp. closed its mill in Potlatch. The decision was made at company headquarters in San Francisco, not because of any shortage of timber but to make the company more efficient and generate more profits for stockholders. Recently, Idaho Forest Industries closed its mill in St. Anthony in southeastern Idaho because, in the words of one company spokesman, they "ran out of resource." IFI is now based in North Idaho, bidding on timber sales up here. And a small timber

company from the Washington coast, Miller Shingle, has been buying timber land around Orofino, to cut the logs and ship them to their mills.

Are these practices sustainable? Do they foster stable, healthy communities? And should we sacrifice our remaining roadless areas to such practices?

To an environmental community saddened and angered by the utter disregard for sustainability we see on roaded lands, wilderness designation seems the only way to maintain even some vestiges of healthy forests, full of fish and clean water and wildlife. Quite frankly, the track records of the private timber companies, the state, and the Forest Service at preserving public resources are all terrible, and the urge to take away any management responsibility great.

"Opening up" those lands to logging will not solve the community debate, especially if those lands are "managed" as poorly and unsustainably as the already-roaded areas have been.

But wilderness designation alone will not solve the ecological problems, either. Even making the rest of Idaho's roadless areas wilderness will not maintain our fish, wildlife, and water quality if we don't also change the way the roaded lands are managed. The relatively new concepts of

island biogeography, forest fragmentation, and genetic drift and motility in species, as well as better understanding of the roles of fire, succession, and such habitat features as riparian zones, snags, and downed woody debris, should be used as indicators to start us on the road to sustainable forest management.

Wilderness can, and should, be part of that scenario; so can truly sustainable logging. And, for a while, watershed restoration — trying to undo the damage and restore productivity and health to the roaded landscape, which in many instances will mean eliminating those roads and allowing the land to return to a more wilderness-like state.

The underlying issues of community sustainability and ecosystem management are complex and will not be solved in one piece of legislation. Nor can they be; these issues cross jurisdictional boundaries. But they should be included in each part of the discussion and help frame each piece of the solution.

The only way to have sustainable, stable, healthy, forest-dependent communities is to maintain stable, healthy forests.

■ Lisa Lombardi of Moscow is a biologist with the Clearwater Forest Watch Coalition in Idaho.