

the COUNCIL NEWS

Winter 2007
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The Lands Council preserves and revitalizes our Inland Northwest forests, water, and wildlife through advocacy, education, effective action, and community engagement.

FOREST WATCH • URBAN FOREST COUNCIL • WATER WATCH • TOXICS EDUCATION

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Two Triumphs for Conservation!

Umatilla National Forest Protection

For over a year, The Lands Council has been fighting in court to stop logging on 9,000 acres of the Umatilla National Forest affected by the 2005 School Fire. The School fire burned about 52,000 acres and 215 buildings in southeast Washington in August 2005. The Lands Council has argued that many of the trees marked for salvage logging are barely scorched and not likely to die, based on field research with a tree mortality expert.

On February 12th, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in The Lands Council's favor and said that no large, living trees may be cut in the area of the Umatilla Forest burned in the fire. Even if the trees are dying, the appeals court wrote, the trees are not yet dead. The court did not, however, stop logging in two roadless areas that were burned. This issue will hopefully be addressed later in the spring.

Congratulations to Karen Lindholdt, Lands Council attorney, for her tremendous effort in arguing this case, as well our partners in the lawsuit: the Oregon Natural Resources Council, the Sierra Club and Hells Canyon Preservation Council.

Mountain Caribou Habitat Protection

The Lands Council, along with the Selkirk Conservation Alliance and several other environmental groups, has been fighting to keep certain areas in federal forest land north of Priest Lake off-limits to motorized vehicles in order to protect important mountain caribou habitat. The Selkirk Mountain caribou population is the only caribou herd remaining in the Lower 48, and is considered one of the most critically endangered mammals in the United States.

On February 14th, U.S. District Judge Robert Whaley ruled that the remote Trapper Burn area north of Upper Priest Lake will be off-limits to snowmobiles in an effort to protect critical migration routes for the mountain caribou between Idaho and British Columbia. This ruling only effects the Trapper Burn area – snowmobiling remains open on hundreds of groomed trails around Priest Lake. This is a small, but important victory for the caribou, whose numbers have dwindled to less than 40 in the herd.

Congratulations to the attorneys and experts who worked on this case, including Laurie Rule and Rick Eichstaedt.

Follow news coverage of these stories and more: www.landscouncil.org/news



BREAKING NEWS: Our website redesign is complete!
Please notice links throughout the newsletter and visit the new website at www.landscouncil.org for updates on our programs, action alerts, and events!

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Executive Director's Report



Post Fire Logging:

Tripod Fire & School Fire Timber Sales

What's wrong with logging dead trees after a fire?

Fire is a natural, vital part of forest ecosystems. Burned trees provide refuge for wildlife, enrich soil for natural regeneration and protect streams from the erosion caused by logging. Numerous bird species in western North America depend heavily on the abundant standing snags (dead trees) for perch sites, nest sites, and food. Salvage logging often removes the largest and best snags for bird habitat. Science research shows that soil disturbance and sediment loss occur even from minimal activities such as hand felling

and logging over snow, the damage increases when logs are skidded and equipment drives on burned forest soils. To quote from a peer reviewed report by eight top forest scientists, including Dr. Robert L. Beschta:

“Human intervention on the post-fire landscape may substantially or completely delay recovery, remove the elements of recovery, or accentuate the damage. Many such adverse consequences are difficult or impossible to predict or foresee in specific situations. In this light there is little reason to believe that post-fire salvage logging has any positive ecological benefits, particularly for aquatic ecosystems. There is considerable evidence that persistent, significant adverse environmental impacts are likely to result from salvage logging”

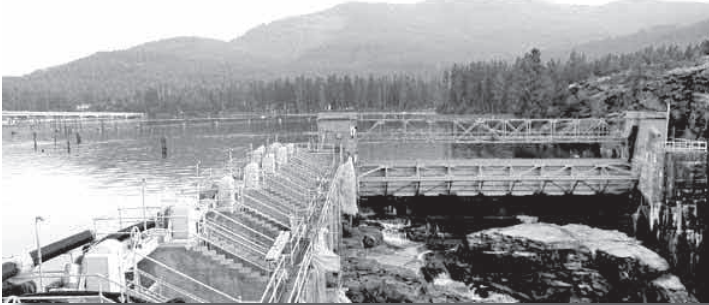
Based on the science, The Lands Council challenged the School Fire Salvage Sale and won! This project would have logged over 9,000 acres (over 14 square miles) of fragile forest south of Pomeroy, Washington. We are still keeping a close eye on the Tripod Fire Salvage Sale, a project similar in size to the School sale. The Tripod sale is west of the Okanogan Valley on the east side of the Cascades.

Watch for Tripod Fire Salvage Sale updates:
www.landscouncil.org/forest/forest_watch.asp

Advocacy

Progress on Avista Dam Relicensing

Photo By John Osborn



Post Falls Dam

Since July of 2005, The Lands Council has been working to ensure that Avista takes responsibility for the environmental damage caused by their dams on the Spokane River. To date, there are still several concerns that The Lands Council has regarding the proposals made by Avista.

On March 6th, comments were due on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Lands Council mailed in over 25 letters from members and many more were reported sent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). There has been an outpouring of support from our membership and the community to let FERC and Avista know that we want operations changes.

Our members and community told FERC:

- Post Falls dam harms the Spokane River and Coeur d'Alene Lake through shoreline erosion, destruction of wetlands, and damage to the Coeur d' Alene tribe's natural and cultural resources. Post Falls Dam also reduces the amount of water released into the Spokane River, impacting native trout habitat.
- Reservoirs block the natural flushing of sediment, reduce habitat available to fish and other aquatic organisms, and reduce recreational opportunities. They are prone to rapid reduction in dissolved oxygen during summer low flows, which can cause fish kills and plant die-offs, resulting in terrible water quality.
- We have suggested solutions including effective management and willingness by Avista to address these concerns in their new license.

The entire draft environmental impact statement can be viewed on the Avista website at:

www.avistautilities.com/resources/relicensing/spokane/

Bi-State Aquifer Study to be Released

The long awaited Bi-State Aquifer Study will be released at a conference on May 8th and 9th at the Mirabeau Center Place in the Spokane Valley. This study will provide a more detailed understanding of the hydrology in the Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer.

Information published in the study will give both Idaho and Washington water regulatory agencies a scientifically defensible body of information on which to evaluate future water management decisions. This is extremely important, as the Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie aquifer provides drinking water to nearly half a million people in Washington and Idaho.

Conference Agenda:

May 8th: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Technical presentations for science professionals

May 8th: 7:00 pm

Public meeting and informational presentations

May 9th: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Daylong forum on the Aquifer Study.

Watch for the detailed agenda:

www.landscouncil.org/water/water_watch.asp

Wilderness & the Colville Forest Plan Revision

A Chance for Greater Involvement

by Mike Petersen



Sherman Peak, One Proposed Wilderness Area in the Kettle Range in the Colville National Forest

The subject of forest planning used to put me to sleep. In the past, Forest Plan revisions have been fruitless efforts resulting in plans no one was happy with. But, plans expire and forests in our region are at it again. The Colville National Forest is trying something different this time – collaboration. Over the past year we have met with the diverse users of the forest and tried to find common ground on tough issues like sustainable logging, motorized and non-motorized recreation, and Wilderness. A measure of the progress the collaborative group has achieved occurred in January, when nearly everyone involved supported new Wilderness areas on the Colville Forest, and a majority supported Wilderness protection for over 200,000 acres of the million-acre forest!

Next steps are a series of meetings to find common ground on trails and travel routes in the forest. The challenge will be to find agreement on trails where motorized users do not come into conflict with wildlife and non-motorized users.

To get involved in the forest plan revision call Tania or Mike at (509) 838-4912 or email mpetersen@landscouncil.org.

Reflections on 2006 Successes

Overheard at the Board Retreat

The Lands Council starts 2007 with a busy and hopeful agenda. Last year we led or took part in some important conservation efforts, including:

Helped the collaborative effort that is working on Spokane River pollution create a draft plan for a comprehensive cleanup

Collaboration in northeast Washington reached new levels and we took several steps to gain new Wilderness on the Colville National Forest

Helped start new forest collaboration and worked with a diverse group on community fire safety projects on the Kootenai National Forest in Montana

Established a downtown recycling program

Helped Washington State pass the first phosphorus ban on dishwasher soap in the nation

Held a forest regeneration workshop with research scientists, the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition, and agencies from three National Forest offices

Helped organize one of the best and most well-attended Earth Day celebrations in Spokane

Started a forest defense legal center and a relationship with Gonzaga University's Environmental Law Clinic

Partnered with agencies and the Group Health Foundation to increase awareness of toxics along the Spokane River and the Hillyard neighborhood and published a report on our activities

Played a lead role in Spokane in stopping Initiative 933 – one of the worst initiatives in the states history that would have spelled the end of land use and zoning.

In the coming year we will see the release of the Spokane Rathdrum Aquifer Study and are developing a water conservation campaign around the protection of this wonderful resource.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS BALLOT

Please Remove and Return by March 23rd!

Dear The Lands Council Member:

This is your official ballot for the 2007 Lands Council's Board of Directors election. All candidates are in compliance with the demographic criteria established by TLC's Bylaws. Our recommendation is to vote for all 18 nominees.

Please remove this page and return it to The Lands Council. Please indicate your support by placing an X in the box that votes for all nominees OR place an X on the individual line next to his/her name. Ballot must be returned by fax or mailed to The Lands Council and received by March 23, 2007 to be valid.

The Lands Council 2007 Board Nominees

_____ MY VOTE IS FOR ALL NOMINEES

- _____ Terri Anderson, Spokane
- _____ Rein Attemann, Seattle
- _____ Rob Benedetti, M.D., Spokane
- _____ Neil Beaver, Spokane
- _____ Paul Fish, Spokane
- _____ Bart Haggin, Spokane
- _____ James R. Harless, Spokane
- _____ Jeff Hedge, D.O., Spokane
- _____ Jim Hollingsworth, Veradale
- _____ Anne Martin, Spokane
- _____ Mary Ann McCurdy, Spokane
- _____ David Moershel, M.D., Spokane
- _____ Judge Jim Murphy, Spokane
- _____ Michael Schnell, Spokane
- _____ Janice Simchuk, Spokane
- _____ Tim Sweet, Spokane
- _____ Lewis Wilson, Spokane
- _____ Caroline Woodwell, Spokane

Please print your first and last name: _____(required)

Please sign your name: _____(required)

Please note your name and signature are required as a control measure.

Your vote will be held in strict confidence.

If you have any questions, send email to mpetersen@landscouncil.org. Thank you.

Mark your ballot, fax it to (509) 838-5155 or mail it to:

The Lands Council
423 W. 1st Ave Ste 240
Spokane WA 99201

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Place one piece of tape on each side and one at the bottom
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423 West First Avenue, Suite 240
Spokane, Washington 99201

See You Soon, Ruth!

Our thoughts are with Ruth Roberts and her family. Her husband, Tom Roberts, passed away on February 8th.

Ruth has volunteered for over 12 years with The Lands Council. We miss her, but she says she will be back soon!



Featured Volunteer Sally McLaughlin
Has Joined Our Auction Team

Volunteerism Benefits Organizations and Volunteers

“I’ve enjoyed volunteering at event booths sponsored by The Lands Council, but the most rewarding experiences have come from working more closely with the staff of The Lands Council. Even mundane tasks like mailings and phone banking are fun because you are surrounded by environmentally conscious people. Working in Hillyard for the Toxic Outreach Program was hard, but gratifying because I knew I was getting important information to the people who needed to hear it. Right now I’m working on generating donations for the annual auction, and the community seems to be really receptive to the mission of The Lands Council. Even if I don’t get a donation, I feel like I am generating a genuine interest in The Lands Council. Since I started volunteering (at Pig Out in the Park last summer) I have met people with different experiences and educations who have come together for the same purpose. The experience continues to be invaluable and will surely contribute as I continue on to major in Environmental Policy at Huxley College of the Environment at Western Washington University in Bellingham.”

Thank you, Sally, for all your volunteer work with The Lands Council! We are so fortunate to have you as a work study student!

If you would like to volunteer with The Lands Council, please contact Mary at meagle@landscouncil.org or call (509) 838-4912.

Small Miracle on West 20th Street

In an effort facilitated by the Urban Forest Council, a winter tree-pruning pilot project began on the West 600 block of 20th Avenue on the South Hill. Neighbors, the Spokane Parks Department and a certified arborist joined forces to prune over 25 huge London Plane street trees.

Some of the trees are in a small pocket park that was damaged by ice storm. It is likely that many of the trees have never been pruned. They are subject to a disease that over winters in dead wood and reduces the leaf production of the tree. There was a great deal of dead wood, including some very large branches falling on the sidewalk, street, and lawns from these neglected old trees.

Urban Forest Coordinator, Carrie Anderson is proud that her neighborhood put forth this effort. She points out that many people are unaware that the trees in front of their property are their responsibility or know but refuse to maintain them or cannot afford the expense.

Anderson also appreciates the help of Joe Zubaly, owner of Inland Northwest Plant Health Care for pruning the trees, being so flexible on the project, being generous with his crew’s time, and for the special group winter rate! Joe and The Lands Council hope this is the first of many future winter street-tree pruning projects.

When pruning street trees, a permit MUST be issued by the City and an endorsed/certified arborist must do the work. The city arborist will inspect the trees before and after to ensure that they are properly pruned.

Tree Pruning Contacts:

Inland Northwest Plant Health Care:
(509) 892-0110

City Arborist, Jeff Perry:
(509) 363-5495 or (509) 995-2855

Carrie Anderson:
treelady@cet.com

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Mark Your Calendar!

UPCOMING EVENTS



Watch www.landscouncil.org/events for more!

MARCH

22nd: Together-Learn-Connect Member Gathering

6:00 pm @ The Lands Council

423 W 1st Ave Ste 240

Help us Protect our Drinking Water! Learn more about The Lands Council's Water Conservation Campaign with Kitty Klitzke, our Outreach Coordinator.

Contact Amber at awaldref@landscouncil.org for info.

APRIL

13th: The Lands Council 12th Annual Auction and dinner

5:00 pm @ Northern Quest Casino

100 N Hayford Road, Airway Heights. Contact Lisa at llogan@landscouncil.org or (509) 838-4912 for info.

12th Annual THE LANDS COUNCIL Dinner and Auction

Friday, April 13th

Silent Auction opens at 5:00 pm

Northern Quest Casino

North 100 Hayford Road, Airway Heights

Contact Lisa 509.838.4912 or llogan@landscouncil.org
to volunteer. RSVP today by email, phone, or on the web
at www.landscouncil.org/events/auction.

Farewell to Forest Advocate, LeRoy Lee

Long time advocate of the forests, LeRoy Lee, passed away January 17 at his home in Santa, Idaho. He was 50 years old. LeRoy worked with The Lands Council's Ellen Picken on our Old Growth Campaign, exposing mis-truths about old growth forests in the Idaho Panhandle.

LeRoy is hailed as a "giant" by conservationists for his work in exposing the overcutting of federal forests. Lee testified before the Congress in the 1990's after discovering what he believed were widespread inaccuracies in how the agency tracked timber harvests. Essentially, the Forest Service records showed tens of thousands of acres of mature trees where the ground showed stumps.

He took these findings before the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee. Forest Service managers were exaggerating, Lee said, because the forest couldn't grow fast enough to keep up with the pace of harvest, but these large-scale cuts also meant big budgets. "They've fabricated a paper forest," Lee told the subcommittee.

Congress investigated and found inaccuracies on 15 national forests across the West.

LeRoy spent the past decade teaching science classes in the St. Maries School District. In 2005, Lee was named North Idaho's high school science teacher of the year by a statewide association.

Our hearts go out to his friends and family. The conservation community will miss this gentle giant.