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# Cascadia Quarterly

Newsletter of the Cascadia Wildlands Project

## Devil's Staircase: Coast Range Heaven

### Mystical Old-Growth Rainforest Deserves Wilderness Protection

by Josh Laughlin

If you want to depress a newcomer to Oregon, drive them through the back roads of the Coast Range. Show them the trash heaps, cut over streams, helicopters spraying herbicide, and endless patchwork of tree farms. If you are lucky, you may stumble upon a patch of remnant, primeval rainforest that managed to escape the chainsaw—the sobering reminder of what the Coast Range looked like not too many decades ago.

There are few large tracks of virgin forest in the central Oregon Coast Range. Drift Creek and Cummins Creek had their day in Congress in the 1980s. But one such place remains undesignated. Sandwiched between the confluence of the Smith and Umpqua Rivers, little-known Wassen Creek is a 26,000-acre swath of impenetrable primeval rainforest. Its challenging terrain likely played a key role in keeping the foresters out.

Wassen has long been proposed for Wilderness, but never got the protection it deserves. Stripped out of the 1984 Oregon Wilderness

Bill at the last minute for an area more imminently threatened, it remains a prime candidate for congressional action today. There are no trails, no signs, no forest passes required at Wassen. Just thick coastal jungle with towering trees, steep terrain and a creek at the bottom that still supports wild salmon. We created our first-ever liability waiver after

*continued on page 5*



Wassen Creek has seen few human visitors.

David Tvedt

## Explore Wild Nature: Hike With Us!

**November 8:** Hike to enchanted **Wassen Creek** in the Coast Range and learn about our proposal to protect the area as Devil's Staircase Wilderness. This bushwhack is extremely difficult and for the thick-skinned only.

**November 15:** Hike to the **Elliott State Forest** south of the mouth of the Umpqua River and learn about this threatened majestic rainforest, home to rare critters like the marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl and coho salmon. This hike is off trail and challenging.

**January 10:** Hike in the **Oregon Coast Range** to an old-growth forest threatened by the BLM's Western Oregon Plan Revisions. This hike will be off trail and challenging.

**February 14:** Hike to **McGowan Creek** in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains and learn about the nearby old-growth forests threatened by the BLM's Western Oregon Plan Revisions. This hike will be mostly on trail and is easy/moderate.

**General Hike Info:** For all hikes, bring hefty lunch, 1/2 gallon of water, raingear, and stout boots. Many hikes are off-trail and not for the thin-skinned. Hypothermia, broken bones, falling trees and branches, dermatitis, and even vehicle accidents are inherent hazards in this activity and participants assume all personal risks and liabilities. Cascadia Wildlands Project cannot be held responsible for personal injury or property damage incurred during hike activities. For all hikes, please RSVP to [jlaughlin@cascwild.org](mailto:jlaughlin@cascwild.org) or 541.434.1463.

pure holiday cheer.

10th Anniversary  
wild wonderland  
auction

6 – 10 \* Saturday  
December 6, 2008  
EMU Ballroom UO  
[www.CascWild.org](http://www.CascWild.org)



Protecting and restoring the forests,  
waters, and wildlife of Cascadia.



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# Green Is As Green Does

## Ramblings from the Executive Director

*A familiar scene:* sifting through the mail, you find an unsolicited, plastic-wrapped, non-recycled Gift from Generic Environmental Group. Suddenly the donation you mailed them last year may not feel so good. Why are they wasting money and resources on junk mail? How can they claim to protect the environment yet mail millions of wasteful packages?

Introducing the Cascadia Wildlands Project's True Green Initiative: an organizational commitment to going carbon neutral, zero waste, toxics-free, and much more. For us, this means walking the walk. For you, it means your donations aren't being spent destroying the very environment you want to protect (so you can feel *extra* good about giving to us!).

Why True Green? Obviously, we are an environmental nonprofit. But in addition to protecting and restoring the Northwest's wild landscapes, we believe in inspiring our community, leading by example, and striving for sustainability. Our True Green Initiative is an opportunity to show other businesses and nonprofits that going green can be easy and affordable. From loaning out event supplies to consulting with other community groups, we will do our part to make sustainability a way of life.

We take a holistic approach to protecting and restoring endangered forests. We cannot work to end old-growth logging on one hand while using non-recycled paper and disposable supplies on the other. And we recognize the climate crisis presents unprecedented threats to endangered forests and wildlife. We will minimize our contribution to this global dilemma and raise awareness through our True Green Initiative.

Our True Green Initiative is a comprehensive commitment to minimize our environmental footprint. We will implement the initiative at every level, from becoming certified carbon neutral (thanks to the support of Mountain Rose Herbs) to serving local food at events. Our daily operations and events will produce minimal waste. (We already use reusable dinnerware, compost food scraps, and recycle everything possible.) Our office will be green from top to bottom: tree-free paper, eco-friendly cleaning products, reused mail packaging, energy-saving power strips, and more.

Our annual Wild Wonderland Auction on December 6th marks the official launch of our True Green Initiative. The event will be carbon neutral, nearly zero waste, and as sustainable as possible. But this is only the beginning of a longer process and vision. Sustainable business consultants are donating services to help us create a long-term plan for sustainability. Marketing consultants are donating services to help us promote our initiative as an example in our community. This initiative will continue indefinitely as we seek innovative, affordable ways to reduce our footprint.

As the new director of the Cascadia Wildlands Project, I am thrilled to launch this exciting initiative. It is part of our greater vision for creating a vibrant, enduring, and genuinely sustainable organization and community. If you have ideas to incorporate into this initiative, please share them with me at [kritley@cascwild.org](mailto:kritley@cascwild.org) or call our Eugene office.



*New Director Kate Ritley sits atop eastern Oregon's Steens Mountain, site of her great-grandparents' homestead.*

Kate

*Transitions:* At the end of the summer we bid farewell to Executive Director Jay Lininger. Jay moved Arizona to work for the Center for Biological Diversity and focus exclusively on conservation policy and advocacy. Thanks for your excellent work, Jay!

pure holiday cheer.

# wild wonderland 10th Anniversary auction

6 – 10 \* Saturday December 6, 2008 \* EMU Ballroom UO Eugene  
details, absentee bidding & tickets at [www.CascWild.org](http://www.CascWild.org)

Get ready to bid on: A week for 6 people in an exquisite vacation home in Nosara, Costa Rica! Private swimming pool, jungle canopy deck with ocean views and monkeys swinging by, pristine beaches (\$3,500 value); A week-long rafting trip for 2 people down Alaska's Copper River! Feel salmon bump against your boat, photograph wolves and grizzlies, and marvel at mountain glaciers—this trip will change your life (\$6,000 value).

Thank you to all of our individual and family supporters and the many volunteers who help us protect wild places! Huge thanks to the foundations, businesses, and groups that recently supported our work:

444S Foundation  
Acorn Foundation  
Alaska Conservation Foundation  
Ben & Jerry's Foundation  
Brainerd Foundation  
Burning Foundation  
Charlotte Martin Foundation  
Deer Creek Foundation  
Emerald Valley Kitchen  
Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation  
Fund for Wild Nature  
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Paul's Bicycle Way of Life  
Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund  
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# Hoedown Hits Record Crowd



*Warmest thanks to:* Janine Nilsen and Fabian Lawrence for hosting at Avalon Stables; Dan Kruse and Ivy Knox for feeding us 30 gallons of vegan chili so graciously; Ninkasi Brewing for sponsoring the event and providing delicious local brews; Paul's Bicycle Way of Life for donating a new bike to raffle; and a very deep thanks to all the volunteers, who worked so hard to make this a successful event. Special thanks to the local farms and grocers who donated organic grub!

K. Ritley

by Judith Osborn

That toe tappin', back slappin', chili eatin', raffle ticket buyin' time of year has come and gone. Yes, the seventh annual Hoedown for Cascadia's Ancient Forests once again had people doe-se-doeing and honoring their partners as we gathered together to generate some old-fashioned fun as well as operating funds at our well-loved Avalon Stables in the hills outside of Cottage Grove. Over 350 cowboys and cowgirls of all ages, dressed to dance and thrill, stepped lively to the directions of caller Bob Ewing and the musical twang of

the incomparable Conjugal Visitors. Fortified by the vegetarian dinner prepared by our attorney Dan Kruse and friends, hours of dancing were followed by the first-ever Hoedown Olympics. The human wheelbarrow and sack races were huge hits and the exuberantly funny five-legged races inspired contestants and bystanders to begin practicing for next year. The evening's festivities ended with professional fire dancing performed to bluegrass.

In addition to being a great community celebration, the event raised over \$5,000 to protect wild forests.



K. Ritley

*A lively sack race was one of several new features at this year's Hoedown (top). Hundreds kick up their heels to live bluegrass (above).*

## In Focus: Judith Osborn



Some would say Judith Osborn is overly qualified to be our executive assistant. We say we're really lucky! Judith migrated west to Oregon in 1969. In 1973, she bought little-known Sundance Natural Foods in Eugene. By the time she sold the store in 1986, it was a community icon and natural grocery destination. Judith took advantage of her freedom from small business ownership and spent the next several years traveling across Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and the US. Upon her return to Oregon, she took up farming for several years and reconnected with the land. In 2001, she earned her MA in Latin American History. She spent the next year in Mexico researching pre-Columbian art sites. Most recently, Judith served as the executive director of our conservation partner, Umpqua Watersheds, in Roseburg.

In her new job, Judith sees an opportunity to continue her life work of building community and nurturing the earth. In her own words, "We have an opportunity and an obligation to save our remaining forests. As a long time dirt-worshipping treehugger, I am entirely intent on contributing to Cascadia's essential work." We are thrilled to have Judith on our staff!

-Kate Ritley

## News in Cascadia

### Final BLM Plan Goes Public

On October 9, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released its final Environmental Impact Statement for the Western Oregon Plan Revisions. The WOPR proposes a 375% increase in logging and a 50% decrease in streamside protection buffers. Approximately 35% of remaining old growth on BLM land will be designated for "timber management," and 74,600 acres of mature and old-growth forests will be clearcut in ten years. Logging under WOPR will release 180 million tons of carbon into the atmosphere over the next 100 years, equivalent to the greenhouse emissions from one-million cars for 132 years, according to Doug Heiken of Oregon Wild. Governor Kulongoski's office is now in the midst of a 60-day "sufficiency review" of the WOPR to determine whether it meets Oregon's environmental standards. The governor is the only thing standing between the Bush Administration and remaining older forests on western Oregon BLM lands. If you love old trees, clean air and water, healthy salmon runs, please call Governor Kulongoski today and tell him to oppose this reckless proposal at 503-378-4582.

### Howl-elujah

Wolves throughout the intermountain West will continue to mount their unlikely comeback, free now from the threats of state-sponsored eradication programs. On July 18, federal District Court Judge Donald Malloy in Missoula, MT, temporarily halted the Bush Administration's decision to remove gray wolves from the protections of the Endangered Species Act by issuing a legal injunction. Judge Malloy held, among other things, that wolf populations had not recovered enough to warrant the federal de-listing and that the de-listing rule was inconsistent with the US Fish and Wildlife Service's own wolf recovery plan. The decision came not a moment too soon; Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana all had outstanding plans to radically exterminate wolves in each state,

beginning this fall.

In September, the US Fish and Wildlife Service voluntarily withdrew the delisting rule in response to the emergency injunction ruling. For now, wolves will be afforded the federal protection of the Endangered Species Act and are not left to the mercy of strikingly anti-wolf state governments.

The decision to keep Rocky Mountain wolves listed under the Endangered Species Act means everything to the future of wolves in Oregon. There are currently no plans to actively reintroduce wolves to Oregon, so wolf recovery will depend entirely on the natural migration of wolves from existing populations, namely from Idaho. Plans to kill all but 100 wolves in Idaho would likely have been an insurmountable hurdle for wolf recovery in Oregon. Judge Malloy's decision to stop the wolf killing came on the very same week that a wolf pack – complete with new wolf pups – was documented in eastern Oregon for the first time in more than 60 years.

The Cascadia Wildlands Project was among several plaintiffs in the lawsuit. We were represented by Doug Honnold from Earthjustice.

### Rogue Old-Growth Logging Cancelled

Exciting news emerged from our colleagues at KS Wild in early October about the cancellation of Upper East Kelsey, the worst of the timber sales authorized by the egregious Kelsey Whisky Project, located above the Wild and Scenic stretch of the Rogue River on Medford BLM land.

This project has been a posterchild example of everything wrong with the Bush administration's Bureau of Land Management. It had timber sale units dotted in the heart of the 46,464-acre Zane Grey roadless area and new roads to be punched into the unroaded forest. Much of the area also fell within designated "critical habitat" for the threatened northern spotted owl.

### Santiam Pass: Decision Withdrawn

In early September, the Cascadia

Wildlands Project appealed the Santiam Pass Motorized Vehicle Project located on the McKenzie District of the Willamette National Forest. For decades, unchecked abuse of the volcanic ash deposits located near Hoodoo Butte has occurred from off highway vehicles (OHVs). Dozens of miles of renegade trail have been created. New damaging routes are pioneered each year.

The project was a good attempt at curbing wonton abuse of the area as 3.8 miles of the historic Santiam Wagon Road was proposed to be closed to motorized users. Yet, four miles remained open. The Santiam Wagon Road, originally an American Indian trail that led from the foothills to the obsidian flows of the high Cascades, was used to facilitate commerce across the Cascades in the late 1800s. The Cascadia Wildlands Project also took issue with an alleged non-significant forest plan amendment that changed the allocation of the area adjacent to the Pacific Crest Trail from non-motorized to motorized, which would encourage OHV crossings of the famous hiking trail. The decision was withdrawn in early October, and we await a new one.



Don Allen

*Rampant ATV use has torn up ash deposits at Santiam Pass.*



# Healing Alaska's Lost Coast

Restoration Begins on Alaska's Biggest Clearcut

by Gabe Scott

It was a wonderful treat this summer to plunge my hands in the dirt and start the first pilot restoration projects at Cape Yakataga. This has been Alaska's biggest and least-known timber sale. Over 20,000 acres of old-growth are cut. But now, with road closed, saws silenced, and loggers gone back Outside, the economy of extract-and-export is being replaced with the restoration economy. Balance is being restored.

"Nobody's ever planted trees here before," remarked 27-year resident Lahoma Leishman, whose hot coffee and banana bread warmed our small crew of volunteers after a morning of planting trees along streambanks. We had come to break ground on the Lost Coast Restoration Project, a citizen monitoring and hands-on restoration effort initiated by Yakataga artist Jen-Ann Kirchmeier.

For nine days we walked the closed-out roads, surveyed streambanks, and planted baby trees in the highest priority locations — places like Charley Creek, the Leishmans' source of water and a locally significant salmon stream. In total we planted 157 spruce and 147 willows on streambanks of all the salmon streams over the first two miles of road. This technique is designed to accelerate natural restoration of ecosys-

tem function using simple hand methods—a sort of homeopathic approach to healing land. We've now set up over 100 photo-point monitoring witness posts for long-term monitoring.

Another top priority was to ground-truth the logging company road close-out. Basically, the 100 miles of old logging road are having all culverts and bridges removed. When done right, this is the single most important step forward to restoration of logged-over wildlands. When done carelessly, it can ruin streambanks and cause significant long-term harm.

Happily, this work was done very



Brett Cole

Roads and clearcuts traverse salmon-bearing streams, areas prioritized for restoration.



Brett Cole

Vast clearcuts sprawl from mountain sides to river banks along the Lost Coast, located between the Tongass and Chugach National Forests in Alaska.

## Thank You!

Special thanks to Marion Weber, Jen-Ann Kirchmeier, Titcomb Foundation, Laird Norton Foundation, Mark Cummings, and the Eyak Preservation Council, whose generous support have made this effort possible.

well. This is no doubt caused by the extraordinary efforts the State of Alaska has taken to regularly inspect and issue permits for the work. Last year we noticed on the first closed sections that while work done when State inspectors were present looked wonderful, work done the day after they departed was rushed and was damaging salmon streams. State inspectors reacted quickly and this year ensured that every mile of closed road has been physically inspected.

The road from Icy Bay to the Yakataga—from the remote village of four souls to the nearest port—is now irrevocably closed. Traditional access to the vast public lands remains, but is made very difficult by the terrain. Just the way I like it.

With roads closed and logging jobs done, you might think the handful of hardcore Yakatagans would be despondent, but this is not the case. To the contrary, the export economy never gave much but hassle, and its departure has opened space to pursue alternatives. Talk at the Cape is of ecotourism, hunting and subsistence. There has been a virtual boom of toxic cleanup jobs of old military and mining junk too, which is good fast cash for residents.

The restoration economy is coming alive. The work continues. For more information, check at [www.lostcoastrestoration.org](http://www.lostcoastrestoration.org).

# Judge Rules: No Logging in Old-Growth Reserves

Cascadia Wildlands Halts Misguided Deschutes National Forest Logging Plans

by Dan Kruse

The long, arduous, and often frustrating battle over the Five Buttes Project may finally be over. On September 11, federal District Court Judge Michael Hogan halted the Five Buttes Project, ruling that the Forest Service's controversial proposal to log 2,000 acres of old-growth habitat for "forest health" was illegal.

The 142,000-acre project area straddled the scenic Cascade Lakes Highway, about 15 miles northeast of Willamette Pass in the Deschutes National Forest. Under the banner of "forest health" and "fuels reduction," the Forest Service had proposed to commercially log about 4,000 acres, including more than 2,000 acres of existing old-growth habitat.

After years of unsuccessful attempts to improve the project by working with the Forest Service, the Cascadia Wild-

lands Project challenged the timber sale in federal court with our allies at the Sierra Club and Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project. Judge Hogan ruled that the logging project violated the Northwest Forest Plan by causing long-term impacts to old-growth habitat within a designated old-growth reserve. Additionally, the Court ruled that while the Forest Service had considered the direct environmental impacts of the Five Buttes Project, the agency failed to consider and disclose the cumulative impacts of past projects in the area or how the Five Buttes Project would contribute to the forest's cumulative and ongoing degradation.

While thinning young stands can improve forest health and decrease the risk of fire, the thinning proposed in Five Buttes targeted some of the last remaining old-growth habitat in the area. Evidence before the Court dem-

onstrated that logging in old-growth forests can actually increase the risk of fire by (1) removing the biggest, most fire-resistant trees, (2) decreasing shade, and (3) encouraging young flammable trees to fill in the gaps left by logging. Our arguments also pointed to the Forest Service's own experts, who had determined that the proposed thinning in old-growth habitat was so intense that it would not be "suitable" for older-forest dependant species again for up to fifty years after logging.

Dan Kruse, Cascadia Wildlands Project Legal Director, led this case. Ann Kneeland and Crag Law Center attorneys Ralph Bloemers and Chris Winter co-counseled. Cascadia Wildlands Project continues to work with the Forest Service to promote legitimate restoration and forest health projects, while consistently challenging masked old-growth timber grabs.



K. Ritley

Our Legal Director, Dan Kruse, with one of many mature forests saved from logging under a recent court ruling.

## Devil's Staircase continued from page 1

leading a public attempt into Wassen. It is unforgiving country.

The Cascadia Wildlands Project, along with colleagues at Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, Oregon Wild and other committed partners, are in the early stages of launching the Devil's Staircase Wilderness effort, named after the mystical, 50-foot long, stair step waterfall few have discovered while

exploring the innards of Wassen.

Critical to the passage of legislation that will permanently protect this place will be the support of Representative Peter DeFazio, as Wassen lies in the heart of Oregon's 4th Congressional District. As important is the approval of Senators Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith.

One way to begin to advocate for this place is to see it yourself. Please join us on November 8 for an off-trail tromp into the rugged Oregon Coast Range

and discover why this area deserves protection. This hike is rated extremely difficult. Expect blisters, scrapes, torrential rain and crawling through thorny thickets. RSVP to [jlaughlin@cascwild.org](mailto:jlaughlin@cascwild.org) or 541 434 1463. If this does not sound like you, please contact Rep. DeFazio at (202) 225-6416; Senator Wyden at (202) 224-5244; and Senator Smith at (202) 224-3753 and tell them to support the creation of Devil's Staircase Wilderness.