

# HighlandsNEWS

JOURNAL OF KETTLE RANGE CONSERVATION GROUP

Winter 2014



**Kettle Range  
Conservation Group**  
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Executive Director

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#### **Mission**

Our mission is to defend wilderness, protect biodiversity, and restore ecosystems of the Columbia River Basin.

#### **Board of Directors**

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## **A NOTE TO YOU** - Timothy J. Coleman, Executive Director



Unless the international scientific community is wrong and oil industry oligarchs are correct we are in for a wild ride from here on out when it comes to the climate. As the Chinese proverb goes: "in the face of great adversity there is great opportunity." At Kettle Range Conservation Group we strive to do our part to advance a greener economy.

The KRCG office electricity comes from photovoltaic energy that this time of year is sometimes reduced by shading of much beloved larch trees that grace skies nearby the solar arrays. Yet even in the dead of winter on foggy days and at the 49th parallel, solar power meets all the office electrical needs. This newsletter is being written with sunlight and the office is heated with wood that grows in forests that surround it. Therein is one story of local innovation and sustainability to address climate change. The change starts here.

We will not avert potentially disastrous climatic impacts of drought, flood, storm or sea level rises by doing the same thing and expecting different results – any more than we can sustain and protect forests by clearcutting them. There is a balance between human use and non-use, but we are nowhere near where we should be on that front. Mega-corporations like John Hancock are clear-felling their corporate forests (formerly Forest Capital Partners and before them, Boise-Cascade) across northeast Washington because it makes their shareholders more money. From the 70's to early 2000's, the U.S. Forest Service also did their share of clearcutting, and now there is pressure from industry for them to do it again.

Why is this important to us? Forest and grasslands are the second largest source of climate impacting carbon storage. Neo-liberal economics that pursue "drill-baby-drill" and coal exports are extolled as "independence." We just passed 400 ppm (parts per million) atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, that's the highest that has been at any time in human history (see: <http://lasthours.org>)

Mass extinction faced by all living things from climate change can be averted through innovation, changing habits, and a new green economy that can be as enjoyable as growing a garden, and in fact that is flourishing now in the Slow Foods Movement. Change does not have to be painful, but doing nothing will almost certainly be. We have a responsibility to future generations to take action to avert disasterous climate change. At KRCG, we do our part by preserving wilderness, restoring old growth forests and resolving problems through community collaboration.

*Continued on Page 2*

A NOTE TO YOU (*continued*)

**Forest Health and Corrupting Legislation**

I could write a dictionary of terminology about forestry and political euphemisms to help us to better understand the flimflam, malversation we get from our government including elected officials and their crony benefactors. “Forest health” was a term I first heard used by Forest Watch groups in the 90’s to argue the health of forest ecosystems should be a primary objective of national forest management. No sooner did the grassroots put that term to paper than the Forest Service and Congress began using it to redefine clearcuts, bark beetles and forest wildfire. Unnatural was good; Natural was bad. Recently, Rep. Doc Hastings championed legislation, HR 1526, the “Restoring Healthy Forest for Healthy Communities Act,” that could fundamentally change National Forest System management. If enacted this bill would make it a requirement for the U.S. Forest Service to designate hundreds of thousands of acres in every National Forest for the sole purpose of logging, mandate yearly cutting levels and lock the public out of the decision-making process. Cosponsored by Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, the bill would virtually gut the existing Forest Plan standards of the Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests.

The Bishop Border Bill, also cosponsored by Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, would exempt any project (mining, logging, road construction, Homeland Security infrastructure, etc.) on federal public lands within 100 miles of U.S. Border and shorelines from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires the public have a voice in federal management decisions.

So what were these politicians thinking?

As you know, in 2002, Kettle Range Conservation Group cofounded the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (NEWFC), a collaboration of industry and conservation interests organized to resolve problems facing Colville National Forest management. Early on NEWFC was held up as a national model, but nowadays collaboration is not unique. There are dozens of collaborative groups around the country, especially in the West, working with forest practitioners, industry, conservation groups, U.S. Forest Service, et al, to resolve conflicts related to logging projects on public lands. So what’s the deal with all these rotten bills coming out of Congress that would lock the

public out of the NEPA process and essentially override citizen collaborative groups?

The latest turd out of Washington is S. 1966, Senator Barrasso’s “National Forest Jobs and Management Act.” Much like the Hasting’s bill, S 1966 would demote law and relegate collaborative groups to a spectator role.

It’s long overdue for the timber industry that has benefitted from forest collaboration to shout out their disagreement with these undemocratic bills.

In NE Washington, NEWFC has supported three dozen timber sales approved without legal challenge because of its twelve years of dedicated collaboration. So the “thank you” we get is a backhanded political maneuver? I ask why Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers endorsed Rep. Hasting’s and Rep. Bishop’s legislation? For if these bills were to become law, the result could essentially kill the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition. Wishing you, family and friends a healthy and prosperous 2014. And I hope it’s good for Nature and the environment, too! Enjoy the journey.

*end*



**The Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition has been problem solving and supporting forestry projects in the Colville National Forest for almost twelve years - all the while Congress has been slashing Forest Service budgets and blaming environmental law as the reason behind forest health problems.**



- March 6, Alpine Theatre, Colville, 6:30 PM  
*Beer~Wine~Raffle~Door Prizes*
- March 7, Republic Elementary School, 6:30 PM  
*Raffle~Door Prizes - Reception at Republic Brewpub*

The first ever Wild & Scenic Film Festival in northeast Washington will be held on March 6 in Colville and March 7 in Republic. The event is hosted by the Kettle Range Conservation Group and sponsored locally by 49 Degrees North Ski Association, REI Spokane and Colville Sign, and nationally by Patagonia, Sierra Nevada Brewery, CLIF bars and Mother Jones Magazine.

The South Yuba River Citizen's League started the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in 2003 and began taking the films "On Tour" in 2007. Each January, the opening Wild & Scenic Film Festival brings in award-winning films, filmmakers, celebrities, activists, and filmgoers from all over the world. The Festival screens more than 350 environmental films and selects over 150 to show at the opening festival. Over 80 films are then selected to go On Tour.

The Colville and Republic events will explore a wide variety of social and environmental issues on a global scale through the medium of film. Films will include international and U.S. productions featuring breathtaking scenery, snow & water sports, hiking, fishing, biking and even skateboarding.

The Wild & Scenic Film Festival works with environmental and outdoor recreation conscious groups across the country to host tour venues. The goal is to use film to inspire greater awareness of our shared environment, individual achievement and cultural diversity.

Thursday, March 6 event will be at Alpine Theatre located 112 N. Main Street, Colville. A second showing Friday, March 7 is scheduled at the Elementary School Multi-purpose Room located off Highway 20 east of Republic. Hours for both events are 6:30-9 PM. Tickets are \$6 for 18 & under and \$8 dollars for adults and are available at the door, Alpine Theatre Box Office, Colville Sign and Ferry County Coop. Raffle prizes will be given away at both events.

For event information call 509-775-2667 or visit [www.KettleRange.org](http://www.KettleRange.org). For more information about Wild & Scenic festival visit [www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org](http://www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org)

#### Festival Film Program

Rock Wall Climbing, 2014, 4 min  
Georgena Terry, 2013, 6 min  
Unicorn Sashimi, 2013, 6 min  
Sage Steppe, 2014, 9 min  
Fall Run, 2014, 15 min  
Gimp Monkey's, 2013, 9 min  
Sanctuary, 2013, 13 min  
Skateistan, 2013, 2 min

--- Intermission

Song of the Spindle, 2013, 4 min  
Walk on Water, 2014, 5 min  
A Boom With No Boundaries, 2014, 5 min  
Last Light, 2013, 6 min  
The Last Ice Merchant, 2013, 14 min  
Cafeteria Man, 2013, 6 min  
Yukon Kings, 2013, 7 min  
Powell to Powell, 2014, 24 min  
The Joy of Air, 2014, 4 min

## Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife Goes Rogue -- Enacts Gray Wolf Lethal Control Measures

Kettle Range Conservation Group joined eleven other conservation organizations sending a letter to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife raising concerns about the agency's increasingly aggressive approach to killing endangered wolves in the state. The groups, working together as the Washington Wolf Collaborative – which advises DFW wolf management policy -- are requesting that the department revise its protocol for lethal control of wolves involved in wolf-livestock conflicts. The groups asked DFW to focus on nonlethal measures to keep livestock away from wolves.

Washington's wolf plan was crafted over five years by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife with input from a 17-member stakeholder group; it included more than 65,000 written comments from the public and a peer review by 43 scientists and wolf managers from outside the state.

Unfortunately, after the wolf plan was adopted in 2011, the state agency immediately transferred management authority over wolves from the Endangered Species Division to the Game Management division. Since then, agency actions toward wolves have strayed from the very conservative approach that is appropriate and necessary for recovering an endangered species.

On Jan. 24, the agency issued a lethal control protocol, granting itself authority to kill wolves under circumstances that are a far cry from the precautionary approach that should be taken in the management of a recovering endangered species.

The gray wolf population has grown to 10 confirmed packs and two probable packs today and primarily located in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille Counties. But wolf recovery in Washington is still in its infancy, and at this early stage nonlethal methods of conflict-prevention should be the mantra guiding the state wildlife agency's actions.

Nationally, since 2011 when the gray wolf was delisted from the Endangered Species Act in six western states (including eastern Washington), state-sponsored hunting and trapping has killed roughly half the total known wolf population in the lower 48 including: 915 in Idaho, 566 in Montana, 130 in Wyoming, 562 in Minnesota, 374 in Wisconsin and 23 in Michigan.

## USDA WILDLIFE SERVICES WANTS TO KILL WOLVES

Kettle Range Conservation Group joined seven other conservation groups to file comments in opposition to the U.S. Department of Agriculture / APHIS Wildlife Services (WS) proposal to give itself the authority to kill wolves in Washington State.

Fortunately because the National Environmental Policy Act gives the public a voice in federal management decisions, conservation groups were able to voice opposition to Wildlife Services killing an endangered species – such as gray wolf is in Washington state – and demand it prepare a more in-depth analysis including providing data that supports its assertion that killing wolves actually reduces wolf-caused losses of livestock. WS also failed to address the ecological effects of killing wolves in Washington, including impacts on wolf populations in neighboring states and on non-target animals — such as federally protected -- from grizzly bear and Canada lynx to wolverine, which are now proposed for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Years back WS called itself “Animal Damage Control” which more accurately described its mission then and now. Wildlife Services is responsible for killing approximately 1.5 million wildlife per year from prairie dogs to grizzly bears that imping on profit-making of agricultural interests, and particularly regarding livestock grazing on public lands. This is yet another subsidy paid for by the public - which it largely opposes -- to benefit livestock producers.

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**To see firsthand the importance of wolves to ecosystem health watch this short film: <http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/how-wolves-change-rivers/>**

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Thousands of animals killed by Wildlife Services each year are non-target wildlife species, endangered species and even people's pets that unwittingly get caught in traps or ingest poisons intended for target species.

Long criticized as a rogue entity, Wildlife Services was recently the subject of a prize-winning newspaper exposé of its shadowy operations, as well as a documentary containing firsthand descriptions by former program personnel of illegal and cruel practices perpetrated on wildlife and domestic animals. Conservation groups petitioned the USDA in December demanding reform of Wildlife Services' entire operations. Since then there have been congressional calls for an investigation into the program's questionable operations and there is a pending USDA Inspector General investigation into the agency. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSV8pRLkdKI&list=UUD8GP2q9p2-DBpDbny2y\\_qQ&feature=c4-overview](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSV8pRLkdKI&list=UUD8GP2q9p2-DBpDbny2y_qQ&feature=c4-overview)

Wildlife Services acted in an advisory capacity in the 2012 killing of the Wedge pack in Stevens County by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. In that instance, the department killed seven wolves after depredations of livestock on public lands, despite the rancher's failure to take sufficient action to protect his cattle.

An estimated 2,570 gray wolves were reported killed by hunters and trappers in the six western states where wolves were removed from Endangered Species Act protections in 2011 and 2012. Since then these recorded kills are in addition to wolves killed by state and federal agency staff over livestock conflicts, and wolves killed by illegal poaching.

The impacts of gray wolf to livestock production is routinely blown out of proportion. Research has shown that weather, disease, birthing problems and depredation by non-wolf carnivores (including dogs) cause the vast majority of livestock deaths and loss of body weight rather than gray wolf.

## **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Reconsiders its Nationwide Wolf Delisting Proposal**

In 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service delisted the northern Great Lakes wolf population segment off the Endangered Species Act (ESA) list. What was unusual about another delisting of gray wolves that same year in eastern Washington, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming was that Congress did it. Congress' action was in fact the first time in history Congress legislated an endangered species off the ESA list.

Last June, the Fish & Wildlife Service announced its proposal – based on a now discredited research paper -- to delist the gray wolf across the entire U.S., even though it was still absent from most of its former habitat, thus making it less likely wolves could successfully migrate to states such as Colorado, Utah, Nevada and California where it does not currently exist. Over one million people wrote the agency telling it NO! to their plan.

On February 7, an independent scientific peer review panel hosted and managed by the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS), and made up of five leading geneticists and taxonomists, came down hard on the agency's proposal to delist gray wolves, unanimously concluding that Fish & Wildlife Service had not relied on the "best available science." Individual panel members described "glaring insufficiencies" in the supporting research and said the agency's conclusions had fundamental flaws regarding the basis for its assessment to delist gray wolf across the entire U.S.

**What you can do: The Fish & Wildlife Service is taking public comments until March 27 about its proposal to delist gray wolf.**

>>>Write U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and demand that gray wolf receive the full protections an endangered species deserves. Scientists have identified hundreds of thousands of square miles of suitable wolf habitat where wolves used to thrive before the government killed them off including in the Pacific Northwest, California, the southern Rockies and the Northeast.<<<<

Submit web comments: <http://www.regulations.gov/> or by mail:  
**Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-HQ-ES-2013-0073;**  
**Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, Virginia 22203.**

## THE OLDEST TREES GROW FASTER

Oldest trees grow faster and store more carbon is a finding that overturns the conventional view that large old trees are unproductive. Research compiled by 38 scientists from around the globe have determined that for most species, the biggest trees increase their growth rates and sequester more carbon as they age.

In a letter published in the journal *Nature*, an international research group reports that 97 percent of 403 tropical and temperate forest species grow more quickly the older they get. The study was led by Nate L. Stephenson of the U.S. Geological Survey Western Ecological Research Center. Three Oregon State University researchers are co-authors: Mark Harmon and Rob Pabst of the College of Forestry and Duncan Thomas of the College of Agricultural Sciences.

The researchers reviewed records from studies on six continents. Their conclusions are based on repeated measurements of 673,046 individual trees, some going back more than 80 years.

"In human terms, it is as if our growth just keeps accelerating after adolescence, instead of slowing down," said Stephenson. "By that measure, humans could weigh half a ton by middle age, and well over a ton at retirement."

The report includes studies from the Pacific Northwest. Harmon and his colleagues worked in forest plots - some created as early as the 1930s - at the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest east of Eugene and Mount Rainier National Park. Researchers measured growth in Douglas-fir, western hemlock, Sitka spruce, western red cedar and silver fir.

While the finding applies to individual trees, it may not hold true for all trees, the authors cautioned. As they age, some trees in a stand will die, resulting in fewer individuals in a given area over time.

## Save the Date!

### 15th Annual Kettle Range Rendezvous

July 18, 19 & 20

Every year members and friends of KRCG campout together in the Kettle River Range. Make plans now to attend the 2014 Kettle Range Rendezvous to be held at Swan Lake on July 18-19-20. Yes - this year's event will be three days and include Friday and Saturday hikes, Saturday barbecue and Sunday breakfast - free to KRCG members.



This year will be our fifteenth annual celebration with children and adults of all ages enjoying the company of old friends and the chance to make new ones. The Rendezvous is your chance to relax, enjoy new & old acquaintances, wild forests, flowers and wildlife. Last year's experiences at the Swan Lake group campground in the Colville National Forest were so fun we decided we should meet there again.



The hike around Swan Lake was popular and included watching and hearing the local Great Northern or Common Loons (*Gavia immer*)

## Annual Auction a Success

An overflow crowd of nearly 100 people attended the Kettle Range Conservation Group's annual benefit auction on Saturday, November 17, raising \$8,800 for college scholarships, recreation and conservation programs.

A dozen volunteers crafted a beautiful evening of music, laughter, a home cooked dinner and dessert. Musician Mark Rhodes serenaded guests with guitar solos and pop songs.

Special thanks to local businesses, artisans, ranching and farming folk who donated a record number of items including tools, crafts, organic fruits and vegetables, health & beauty treatments, ski and stay packages, dinner for two, theatre tickets, outdoor gear and direct monetary contributions.

The annual auction supports Project Scholarship which provides financial support to academically outstanding high school seniors to help meet the cost of attending college. Up to three \$1000 scholarships are given away each year to students from Ferry, Stevens or Okanogan County. To date over \$42,000 has been awarded to local students.

In addition to college grants to students the auction supports local conservation projects including collaboration with local business and community groups to restore forest ecosystems, leading summer hikes, trails maintenance, diversifying the rural economy, protecting fish and wildlife habitat and preserving wild roadless forest for future generations.



## Changes to Kettle Range Board

**We bid a fond farewell** to KRCG board members Dave Gordon, Tom May and Steve Anthes. All have faithfully served as board members and as volunteers for over ten years,. Their dedication to progressive conservation, community collaboration and in defense of wild nature was exemplary. With the deepest appreciation, we all send our best wishes -- you will be sorely missed.



**Welcome new board members** Dean Fischer, Daniel Price and William Way. Dean is cofounder of KRCG and has previously served as board president. Daniel Price is currently president of Friends of Little Pend Oreille Wildlife Refuge – Dan has been one of KRCG's best hike and trail maintenance volunteers. Another awesome trail volunteer joining the board, William Way, is active in supporting expansion of mountain bike trail opportunities. Thanks to all for their volunteer conservation service.



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Help support community collaboration work. Your annual membership supports Project Scholarship and our work to protect special places while promoting healthy forests in the Colville National Forest. *All contact information is strictly confidential and is never shared or published.*

Kettle Range Conservation Group is a 501(c)3 non-profit, community charity founded by a concerned group of citizens in Republic, WA in 1976. Your membership dues are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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

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

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

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

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I'd like to volunteer doing: \_\_\_\_\_