

Highlands NEWS

JOURNAL OF KETTLE RANGE CONSERVATION GROUP



Kettle Range Conservation Group
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Spring 2018

Mission

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

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Timothy Coleman
Executive Director

Yes! We need your help!

Please volunteer for one or all of these projects:

- 1) Whitebark Pine Rx
- 2) Wild & Scenic Festival
- 3) Kettle Range Rendezvous
- 4) Forest Monitoring

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KETTLE RANGE CONSERVATION GROUP
PRESENTS

5TH ANNUAL
SYRCL'S **WILD & SCENIC** FILM FESTIVAL
WHERE ACTIVISM GETS INSPIRED

GROUNDSWELL
Two "Snow Day" Shows
Curlew Civic Hall, April 7 -- Northern Ales Brewery, April 8

April 7 - Curlew Civic Hall show tickets on sale on at the Ferry County Coop, \$12 Adults, \$5 Students. Day of show \$15 - Doors open 6 PM

April 8 - Northern Ales Brewery show tickets on sale at Colville Sign and Northern Ales \$15. Doors open at 4:30 PM, Films at 5:30 PM

Our 5th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival, March 1, 2 and 3 – coincided with a huge two-day blizzard that literally buried NE Washington under so much snow ticket holders and others intending to go the show, were unable to get out of their driveways. Participation was down by about 250 from what was expected.

But, South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) who owns and manages the national and “on tour” festival, generously gave us two additional events to make up some of the loss in revenue. Yay SYRCL! Please join us for one or both of the rescheduled shows!

A NOTE TO YOU - Timothy Coleman, Executive Director

So much going on and so little time – you know. That’s my excuse having delayed so long in getting out this missive to you.

See Page 6 for a year-end review of Kettle Ranger’s activities.

This newsletter focuses on key issues, in particular wolf and forest management issues. Kettle Range Conservation Group was formed in 1976 by local wilderness activists and we’ve always been a wilderness group and that’s our devotion. In the current political chaos we are constantly challenged by a reductionist ideology driving federal and state government to eviscerate environmental laws guaranteeing a citizen right to review and challenge government projects (NEPA), protecting clean water and air, wildlife and Inventoried Roadless Areas -- and even un-designating National Monuments and other laws to desecrate our most cherished wilderness, parks and wildlands.

Areas suitable for wilderness designation continue to be desecrated in the name of “forest health” and wildfire “prevention” – both euphemisms contrived by and for the very government and corporate special interests that created these problems in the first place by mismanaging our public lands.

There are many similarities to other misdeeds and falsehoods throughout history, the wholesale slaughter of buffalo and other wildlife, genocide of indigenous people, the subjugation of earth and enslavement of people of color, misogynistic behavior toward women, castigation of the poor and devaluation of animals in general, especially predators.

There is also a ringing hyperbole concerning forest “health” and the factors that have led to it. I have spent the last 15 years working collaboratively to protect and preserve national forests, participating in the creation, structure and successes of the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (NEWFC). I’ve worked closely with timber industry, conservation groups and the Colville National Forest to create one of the most successful forest collaboratives in the U.S.

Informed by extensive experience in problem-solving, demonstrable compromise, countless field trips and scientific lectures on the topic of forest management, wildlife, fisheries and native plants, I want to take an opposite and perhaps somewhat cynical assessment of our current forest health situation as it pertains to the upper Columbia River watershed.

It is troubling to read and hear the clamor for more logging to heal a forest out of balance without an equal dose of why and how things got this way. From my perspective, forests are not unhealthy --- but rather evolving to rebalance a system out of balance after centuries of clearcut forestry and roads cut across sensitive forest soils. Wildfire suppression and widespread cattle grazing since the 1930’s have further destabilized national forest ecosystems.

Forest wildfire suppression created an ecological imbalance that wildfire, disease and insects have been rebalancing for decades. When a large wildfire occurs, we are told it’s catastrophic! But so too are our sick forests! We are being fed two different and conflicting narratives here.

Logging ancient forest and wildfire suppression seriously impacted landscape level forest community patch size and distribution – but that’s only part of the story in the Pacific Northwest from the east Cascades to the Rocky Mountain Front. The road network built to extract logs degraded watersheds, cattle and sheep ranchers were encouraged to graze livestock in the forests, following road networks deep into the last remaining wild land and to the top of the highest mountains, further degrading streams and lakes already harmed by logging, from headwaters to main stem rivers.

The forest “health” dilemma is framed by a capitalist system that commodifies forests as logs, chips, board feet, tons of forage per acre and equivalent new homes, but fails to mention its ecosystem values. In this system, workers who cut, transport and process trees and livestock, and laws that protect values like clean water, air, scenery, solitude and wildlife, are just costs.

Dead and dying pine, spruce and fir in the Kettle Crest are an effect of extended droughts, tree age & species composition, warmer winters and human-driven climate change that has allowed beetle larva to overwinter or reproduce in a single year. The bark beetle epidemic blew through heavily logged (managed) forest in British Columbia and Alberta – just as the Northstar Wildfire blew through 280,000 acres of managed forest land. Forest health is not going to be fixed by logging forests.

Nature immediately sets to correcting imbalances and in a forest that includes tree death and rebirth. Its stark visibility is part of a complex and beautiful ecological interaction of soils, plants, sun and water. If wildfire “destroyed” a forest, why is the Kettle Crest in the area of the 1988 White Mountain Fire, now covered in young, naturally seeded forest?

Note continued from 2

Evolutionary adaptation to fire is why. Seeds that had lain dormant in the ground beneath tree canopy, opened by fire, grew and lightweight seeds from adjoining green forest even tens' of miles distant were carried by wind and storm to drift into and fill the sink created by fire.

Forest management to reduce wildfire risk near buildings, communities and people is important and reoccurring. Logging to reduce tree density and "fuels" will only reduce risk to lives and property for about a decade – then the problem will return and thus requires systematic attention. However, the narrow so-called wildland-urban interface (WUI) zone extends only a short distance from structures and shouldn't be confused with the majority of our publicly owned forests.

Silviculture – the science of production forestry – logging and milling are commercial activities that support jobs and produce lumber for home and building construction. I support that. This industry is important to the economy of northeast Washington. However, equally important are wilderness, wild rivers, wildlife, healthy shrub-grassland and other Nature managed ecosystems.

Forests have evolved and persisted for millennia in the absence of "management." How did the ancient forest of Olympic and Mt. Rainier National Park survive without being logged? "Health," in the forest sense, is not granted by a chainsaw and in the present vernacular, is more about the health of capitalist enterprises than the forest itself. We are not going to fix existing problems following a roads and logging strategy, albiet with newer science.

Protecting wild nature and restoring ecosystems is the Kettle Ranger's mission. Why is it so URGENT that we restore forest health but not ecosystem health? The Forest Service can build 50 miles of road and log tens of thousands of acres, but it has to hold its nose to manage pristine areas in the Kettle Crest proposed for 42 years as wilderness.

It's not an equitable system, and it's not about healthy forest or wildlife habitat.

We need to reconnect severed wildlands such as Copper Butte to Twin Sisters, Bald-Snow to Thirteenmile – to create wild land complexes large enough to support endangered wildlife. The benefits to society will be enormous by doing so.

In addition to my 15 year commitment to NEWFC, I have participated in at least a dozen so-called collaborative groups mostly organized by the US Forest Service. Promises made by three Colville National Forest (CNF) supervisors have proven illegitimate concerning wilderness, recreation and wildlife habitat management. On the other side, timber outputs have now soared to near 120 million board feet. Wolves are being killed for predating indefensible cattle grazing in thick, mountainous forest in the Kettle Crest.

Kettle Rangers have supported requests by motorized recreation three times (Phase 1 & 2 Recreation Travel Planning by the CNF, and the South End Project) – all told opening nearly 900 miles of ORV accessible routes and trails. But that's apparently not enough and now Tri-County Motorized Recreation Association (TCMRA) wants more new routes open in the CNF. Tri-County Forestry Group has been organized by Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille county commissioners for over a year and continues today with a promise to compromise and balance needs of non-motorized and motorized recreation. This has not happened and most recently Commissioner Steve Parker (Stevens) told TFG it is just an "advisory group." Still, we wait for our piece of the pie.

Not enough tough choices are being made to truly restore healthy forest ecosystems damaged by past mismanagement, motorized recreation and cows spread across the Colville National Forest and subsidized to the hilt by taxpayers. *end*

16th Annual Kettle Range Rendezvous July 13, 14, 15

Make plans now to attend the 2018 Kettle Range Rendezvous at Jungle Hill Campground, located one mile north of SR 20 of Albion Hill Road and east of Sherman Pass in the Kettle River Range. This year will be our 16th Annual celebration with children and adults of all ages enjoying the company of old friends and the chance to meet new ones. Relax, hike a new trail and enjoy good food and the company of outdoor enthusiasts.

More information to follow. We'd appreciate hearing from you if you plan to attend. You can do this by visiting our Kettle Range Conservation Group Facebook page, Inland Northwest Hikers or by email: tcoleman@kettlerange.org





**CELEBRATE our 42ND ANNIVERSARY
DINNER BANQUET & AUCTION**

May 12

Carousel Building
Ferry County Fairgrounds
Doors open at 5 PM

Get Tickets NOW - Advance \$20
\$25 at the Door

On Sale at the Ferry County Coop or
call 509-775-2667

Includes 4-course dinner & drinks

Live music by Mark Rhodes

Live & Silent Auction

Don't miss the FUN – get your tickets early!

**Have fun with friends and enjoy the company
of our progressive community!**

The War on Wolves

In 2017, the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife spent \$1.23 million managing wolves in the state. Wolves killed 8 cows and injured 5, but only 5 of 22 known packs were involved and DFW processed two claims totaling \$3,700 to compensate livestock producers for their losses. DFW reported 14 wolves were killed: three shot by DFW, three were killed by hunters on the Colville Indian Reservation, two were killed in collisions with motor vehicles, two were shot by ranchers when “caught in the act” (near cattle), four deaths are under investigation but are likely to be by poaching. In January, a Pend Oreille County man was found guilty of killing three wolves in 2016 and fined \$8,000. In total, DFW and tribal survey data released in March showed a 6 percent increase in the 2017 wolf population, a decline from prior years’ growth rate of about 30 percent.

DFW recently issued a report that wolves have not caused a decline in ungulate populations in Washington.

Profanity Peak and Sherman wolf families are no more
WSU professor Robert Wielgus has been vindicated of charges he lied and misused funds allocated for his now-closed Carnivore Research Lab at WSU. Dr. Wielgus asserted in a Seattle Times story that Diamond M cowboys had placed their cows near to the Profanity Peak (PP) wolves den site and placed salt in the area and DID NOT remove it even after DFW asked Diamond M to remove it. Cattle are attracted to salt and near PP wolf den site some were killed which then led DFW to kill six PP wolves at a cost of \$135,000. The lone surviving PP sub-adult female who outsmarted DFW and survived to care for three pups over the winter of 2016-17 was killed by a poacher 15 miles south of Republic this past December. Of fourteen carnivore research projects overseen by Dr. Wielgus, there was not a single wolf predation provided livestock were kept at least 800 meters away from an active wolf den site .



Wolf, continued...

DFW data showing a collared wolf from the Sherman Pack had been in the vicinity of Diamond M cattle depredations which gave DFW license to kill one of the remaining Sherman members this past summer. The SP alpha female died after being hit by a car on Sherman Pass in March 2017. Just one lone SP survivor remains and thus this is no longer consider a pack.

Learning to Live with Wolves

We know from research that regions of the U.S. and Europe (Chapron, 2014) where large predators have persisted over time, livestock producers have adopted husbandry practices that successfully adapted to presence of carnivores, primarily using non-lethal methods.

Similarly, in the U.S., where wolves persisted even after government-sponsored eradication programs in the 1930's, including Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin, and in Montana where grizzly bear predation was an ongoing risk, livestock producers developed effective non-lethal deterrence methods to coexist with predators.

Non-lethal wolf deterrence methods (guardian dogs, fladry, human presence, electric fence, etc) have proven more successful than killing wolves in order to deter further predation of livestock (Treves 2016). Killing wolves did not lead to a decrease in wolf predation of livestock but in fact led to an increase in predation the following year in Minnesota (Harper, 2007), Idaho, Montana and Wyoming (Wielgus, 2014).

In Washington, particularly in the northeast counties where 15 of 22 documented wolf packs roam, ranchers are still learning to adapt to their presence. Apparently some operations, such as Diamond M, have had a particularly difficult time adjusting and in fact evidence presented here and collected last summer appear to indicate some unwillingness to adapt.

Livestock Grazing Leases in our National Forest

National Forest and other public lands are leased to ranchers yearly from June through October at a cost of \$1.87/month for a cow and her calf(ves). Some Kettle Range allotment management plans are over 40 years old and fail to protect trails and other recreation resources.

Conflicting factors associated with wolf and other wildlife and livestock use include: 1) livestock grazing on public lands are granted precedence over wildlife, 2) deleterious impacts (streambank trampling, polluting water, overgrazing shrub layer) to wildlife by livestock

grazing public lands is allowed to persist year after year, 3) livestock grazing on public lands have more rights to damage public assets than does a hiker, hunter or camper.

Public lands livestock grazing degrades trails & recreation, harms fisheries, kills amphibians and destroys ungulate habitat, and typically the latter occurs from August-October when ungulates are fattening up for winter.

Killing wolves to protect livestock industry profits has exposed the hypocrisy of federal lands and state wildlife management. There are 7.5 million Washington residents, only 67,000 are hunters and 786,000 fishers, but 1.8 million pursue wildlife recreational activities such as hiking, birding, wildlife watching and photography -- that are being defrauded by this system of inequity. (Source: 2014. USFWS, 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation: Washington.)

Livestock operations produced about three-tenths of one percent of jobs in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties in 2015. The Colville National Forest reported it spent \$25,455 in 2016 and \$38,926 in 2017 to repair livestock grazing infrastructure (fences, water troughs), mostly performed by Forest Service employees or summer youth corps volunteers, rather than by permittees. Nationally, total congressional appropriations for the federal grazing programs in fiscal year 2014 was \$143.6 million, while grazing receipts were only \$18.5 million.



Diamond M cows inside an enclosure meant to protect a spring that seasonally feeds into the upper San Poil River --Copper-Mires Allotment, Kettle Range - August 2017--

Year End Report - A summary of three KRCG program areas work accomplished in 2017

1) Whitebark pine (WBP) forest restoration: Copper Butte in the Kettle River Range has one of the healthiest WBP forests in the region. Kettle Rangers signed a two-year cost-share agreement with the Colville National Forest to carry out restoration work, requiring a 20% in-kind match. Fire exclusion and climate change threaten these WBP stands. Crews from 2-8 individuals spent 8 weeks (in June, July, September and October) restoring about 60 acres of WBP at 7,000' elevation. From trailhead to camp, climbing 2,000' and hiking over 4 miles made this job all the more difficult. Restoration work will continue in 2018. WBP is an important food source for grizzly bears, small mammals and Clark's nutcrackers that collect and plant its seeds. The Kettle River Range and Selkirk Mountain populations are part of just a few stands in the Rocky and Cascade Mountains that have shown promising resistance to blister rust fungus that has killed >90% of this species since 1900.



Pictured in front of an ancient whitebark pine atop Copper Butte, Jasper Summy, Trevor Licheterman, Liam Bracken, Morgan Allen and Amber Wichtendahl

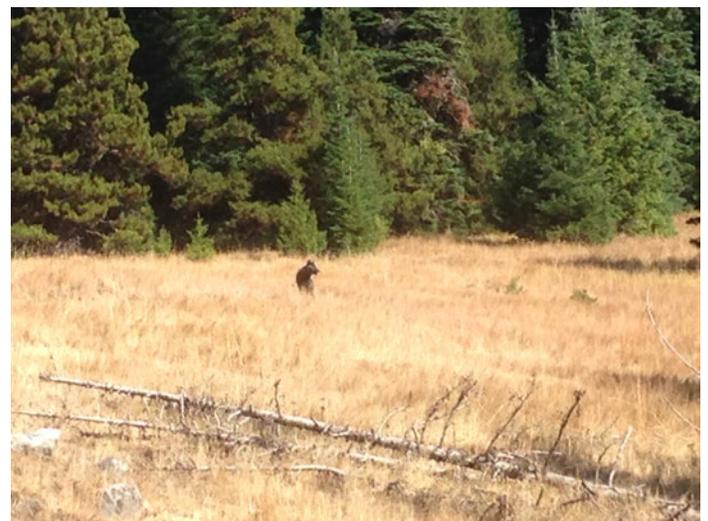
2) Preserving Wilderness and Restoring Forest Ecosystem Resiliency: Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (NEWFC) holds monthly board meetings and bi-weekly Adaptive Management Committee to work on 1) revising the Colville National Forest Plan that is due to be released soon. KRCG co-authored and submitted comments as did NEWFC supporting more wilderness protection and reconnecting large wildland areas to provide more secure habitat for wildlife. 2) Participated in group discussions and field workshops focused on forest restoration projects at watershed level "tree communities" in the Colville National Forest modeled after work done by Dr. Paul Hessberg, Dr. Derek Churchill and Bill Gaines;

3) at the project level (projects include: Deer-Jasper, Trout, Sherman Pass, San Poil, Walker and A to Z Project).



Forest Field trip discussion led by Dr. Derek Churchill

3) Protecting Wildlife: 1) participated in the Washington Wolf Advisory Group meetings (Jan, Feb, March, May 2017 and March 2018) advising the Dept. of Fish & Wildlife about their management of gray wolf recovery; 2) worked with Eastern Washington Wolf Coalition to create a regional wolf advocacy group dedicated to protecting wolves, and 3) Participated in filming "Profanity Peak Pack: Set up and Sold Out" produced by Predator Defense <http://www.predatordefense.org/profanity/>



Adult wolf on Copper Butte

The Dark Days of Trump and the Neo-Liberal Takeover of Our Democracy

By Le Rant

To understand the underpinning of the many seemingly anti-democratic actions by the Trump Administration is to understand the Tea Party, the makeup of Congress, the courts and as far down as local school boards and our own county commissioners. If you want the inside scoop on this and more read Nancy MacLean's excellent expose' Democracy in Chains.

To understand the underpinnings to public health and wholesale roll-back of environmental regulations today you need to look back centuries to competing economic theories of Carl Marx and John C. Calhoun. Marx's thesis focused on worker-created surplus and what a capitalist system would likely do with that surplus over time, and Calhoun's neo-liberal theory, rooted in part in white Southern slavery, advocated for striking down labor, market regulation and granting veto power to minority rich.

The term surplus means what a worker produces over what is needed for their family to live. Neo-liberal is the British definition, *neo* meaning *new*, and *liberal*, meaning *conservative*. It is the latter term I will focus on as it applies itself to the current Trump Administration.

Calhoun was mocked for his theories as out of touch. President Madison said of this "such a power, to such a minority, over such a majority, would overturn the first principle of free government, and in practice necessarily overturn the government itself."

Despite the criticism, Calhoun's theories didn't go away and would lie dormant for another century to be resurrected and wholeheartedly embraced by James Buchanan in 1946 and by billionaire Fred C. Koch and later by his sons Charles and David, who financed the John Birch Society, Heritage Foundation, Cato Institute, The Reason Foundation, The Liberty Fund, etc. – neo liberal theory was taught by James Bucannon to students at universities from Chicago to Virginia.

Neo liberalism theocracy has infiltrated every facet of the media, government and judicial appointments, resulting in unlimited campaign donations and corrupting government it seeks to dismantle and use for its financial gain.

Author Ayn Rand is often viewed as a darling of the neo liberal movement for her novels *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957). Rand advocated "reason" as the only means of acquiring knowledge, rational, ethical egoism and rejecting altruism.

In essence, the neo-liberal theocracy is that corporations have rights of personhood and will do the right thing if left unfettered in doing whatever is profitable, unencumbered by government regulation.

How does this apply here at home? Neo-liberal front groups active in Washington state include the American Lands Alliance – advocates for privatization of public lands – Americans for Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) – the legislative arm that creates model legislation that it then lobbies federal, state and county legislators to enact – Americans Stewards of Liberty lobbies against grizzly bear reintroduction in North Cascades N.P.. These organizations have been paid dues for professional services by Ferry, Okanogan, Stevens, Pend Oreille, and Skagit counties.

Among the hundreds of bills introduced in Congress this year and crafted by billionaire-funded think tanks, PACs and ALEC families included: turning over management of national forests to states, exempting logging from the Endangered Species Act, gutting the ability of citizens to challenge government actions, drilling in the Article National Wildlife Refuge. At the state level in Washington SB 6140 would have transferred publicly-owned state forest lands to counties, a first step in leasing and selling off these lands. Thanks to an outpouring of opposition, all of these bills were quashed.

Our federal and state public lands are a boom to our local economies, attracting investment, tourism and attracting locals who have lived and invested their lives in this community to retire here with the wealth earned during their entire working lives. Privatization of public lands would lead to "Keep Out" signs on what is now open to all citizens and it would create economic hardship in rural counties.



The thief disguised as government



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