

Environmentalitis* & Catastrophic Wildfires: Unintended Consequences

Part 1. 1969-1996



Field trip to Round Lake and B&B Complex Burn, September 15, 2004. (Clockwise from foreground) Kermit Cromack, Jim Petersen, Benjamin Stout (profile), Bill Hagenstein, Bob Zybach, Wayne Giesy, Nana Lapham. Photo by Brad Morisette, USDA PNW Research Station.

The “Environmental Movement” can reasonably be said to have begun in 1962 with Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring*. It became required reading among my like-minded high school classmates and our older associates, and highly recommended by some of the “cool” teachers.

The 1963 Clean Air Act was followed by the 1964 Wilderness Act, the 1965 Water Quality Act, and the 1967 Air Quality Act. Then, on December 22, 1969, Congress -- whose members included about 60% lawyers -- passed NEPA, the National Environmental Protection Act. On the same day, less than 50 miles away, another group of lawyers were incorporating the Environmental Law Institute (ELI).

A Virulent Disease

Two years later, in December 1971, Bill Hagenstein wrote an essay for *Southern Timberman* magazine titled “Environmentalitis: A New Epidemic.”

At that time, Bill was nationally well-known in the for-

estry and timber communities as long-time Vice-President and spokesperson for the Industrial Forestry Association (IFA), a position he had held since the organization’s creation in 1949.

With his tall stature, photographic memory, booming voice, and constant stream of “goddammit” and other profanities -- coupled with his encyclopedic knowledge of forestry -- Bill made a memorable and persuasive figure during his hundreds of Congressional testimonies, regular industry speeches, and otherwise daily Portland business meetings.

Bill was concerned about the political direction the environmental movement had taken, and particularly the perceived danger of public indoctrination into destructive actions.

He wrote that the “new epidemic environmentalitis” was “a virulent disease and if not controlled could consume us. It is the vehicle on which the poison pen-men of preservation pro-paganda are speeding through the countryside calling names, making charges and hit-and-running by dramatic and

graphic TVing, photo-pressing and word-picturing the aftermath of the timber harvest.”

Bill was particularly concerned that the successful advocates of the new Wilderness creations, “where man is a visitor who does not remain,” were now setting their sights on clearcuts and logging roads that were despoiling their “experiences of solitude and quiet.”

Bill’s beliefs were deeply felt and based on significant

personal experience. He further charged that:

“They never interpret that harvest in terms of homes, furniture, magazines, pictures, tissues and all the other essentials which come principally and, in some cases, only from wood. They show the eggshells, but not the omelet. They show the slash, but not the jobs. They show the disturbance to the land by logging, road-building and slash disposal, but never the tree planting, the thinning, the genetics, the fertilizing and the healthy watersheds and beautiful countryside which trees make on each acre for the long years between their harvests.”

In his essay, Bill was especially upset with how

language was openly being changed in Orwellian fashion to turn the public and their political representatives against logging and forestry, and particularly the bastardization of the forest industry’s foundational concepts:

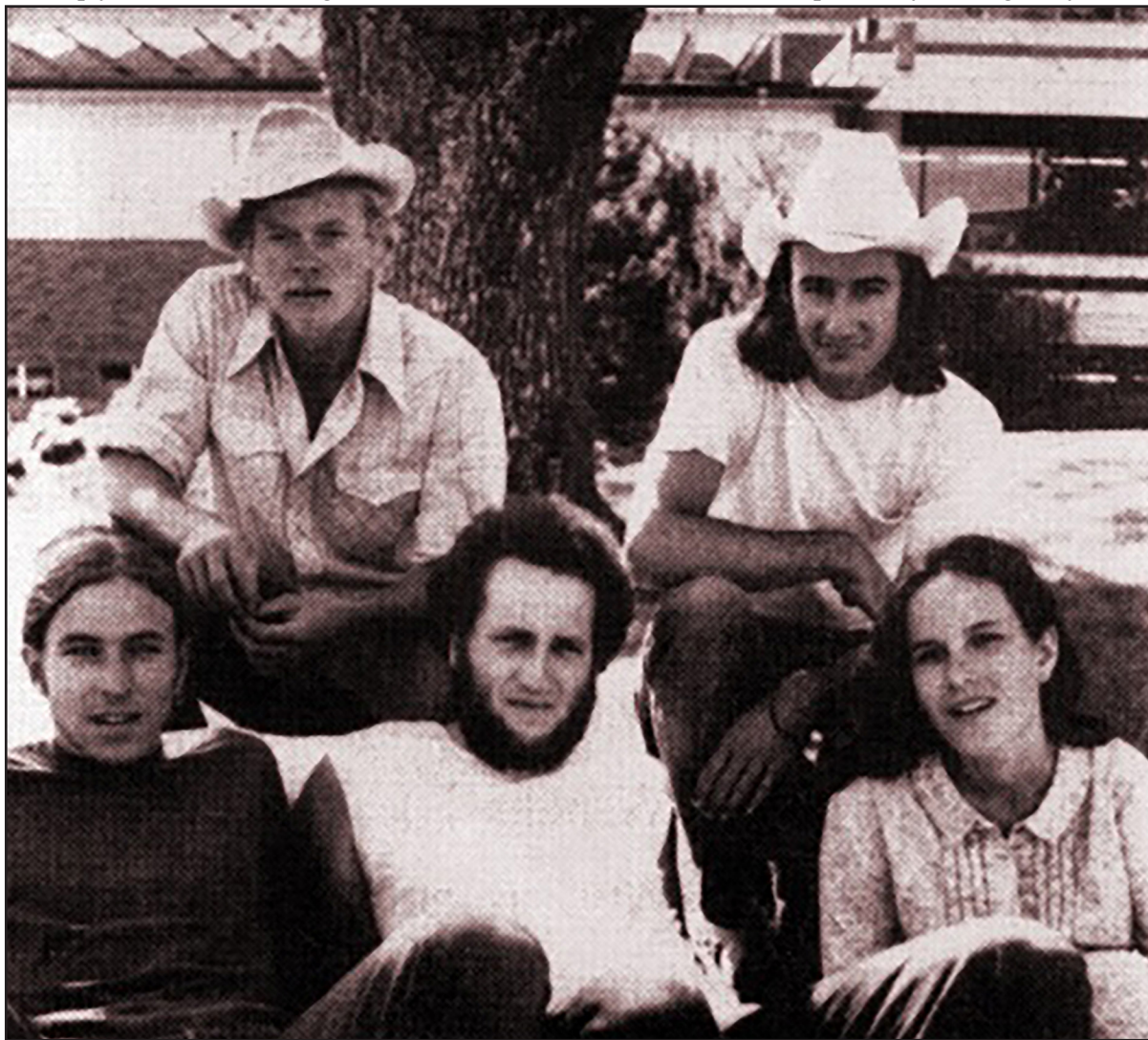
“Environmentalitis is in error on many counts. One is that its exponents have tried to snatch the mantle of conservation away from the forestry profession which started it in the United States. And, too many people trying to stem environmentalitis . . . have quit calling themselves conservationists. Yet they dignify the anti-forestry forces by that term.”

And: “They use the worn-out old clichés of timber baron

days by regurgitating about “greedy lumbermen,” “nasty profits,” “stump manufacturers,” “wanton wastrels” and “timber miners.” They never identify the men who make the forest industry go as tree planters and growers, tree protectors, employers, home-builders, tax-payers, multiple-use managers and responsible citizens in everything they do.”

Oregon Wild

The first time I remember personally meeting Andy Kerr



Oregon Wilderness Coalition staff, late 1970s. (Clockwise from top left) Tim Lillebo, Kurt Kutay, Nancy Duhnkrack, Andy Kerr, and James Monteith. Photo courtesy of Oregon Wild.

was in the late 1980s or so. He was a guest lecturer at one of the forestry classes I was taking at Oregon State University (OSU) and showing a large photograph of Mt. Hood with some clouds near its base. Andy informed us that “they” had drawn the clouds on the photo to “hide clearcuts.”

In subsequent years, and until the present time, Kerr developed into a well-known spokesperson and writer for the environmental community. He still writes a fairly regular newsletter titled “Andy Kerr’s Public Lands Blog,” and lately he has been reminiscing about those early years -- which forms the basis of the following accounts and quotes.

Sometime within a few years of Hagenstein's essay, and unrelated to that publication, Andy notes that "three Oregon conservationists came together to found the Oregon Wilderness Coalition (OWC). Holly Jones and Bob Wazeka, then super-active Sierra Club volunteers from Eugene, and Joe Walicki, then Northwest representative for The Wilderness Society, envisioned a network of local wilderness advocacy groups across Oregon, especially in places where the Sierra Club name was not an asset."

The OWC articles of incorporation called for "a full-time staff person" to "advocate for wilderness in Oregon." This position was first staffed by Fred Swanson, but he was soon replaced by James Monteith, who became the OWC executive director from 1974 to 1991 -- during which time the organization changed its name to Oregon Natural Resources Council (ONRC) in 1982.

In 2006 the name was changed again, to Oregon Wild, which remains active to this time. Kerr became employed with the organization in 1975, and the focus became the "Endangered American Wilderness Act of 1978," which added 1.3 million acres and 13 new designated Wildernesses to the National Wilderness Preservation System and was signed into law on February 24 by President Jimmy Carter.

Kerr writes that: "It also really helped that the economy was in the toilet during the Carter administration, 1977-1981, and nonprofit organizations could get federal money to hire people."

With federal funding for new employees, the organization needed an office and was able to use former student housing buildings on the University of Oregon (UO) campus: "Monteith surreptitiously gained control of about a half-dozen of them. Each shack came with a heater, a telephone line, and a bathroom. All "free" from the unknowing university."

Further: "We were also using the university phone system, and Monteith could occasionally sweet-talk a UO

WILDERNESS CONTROVERSY

Last year a coalition of Democratic representatives led by Jim Weaver introduced a resolution (HR 1149) into Congress that recommended increasing Oregon's wilderness holdings over 1,000,000 additional acres. Many of the proposed additions included some of this nation's most productive timberlands. In a March, 1983 Board meeting the ARC Board of Directors unanimously supported a resolution to oppose HR 1149 as being excessive and detrimental to the economy of the state. A result of this resolution was that a letter was sent to Senators Hatfield and Packwood informing them of our position. Both Senators replied immediately, with Senator Hatfield soliciting more specific comments for his field hearings. The following statement was drafted following last August's annual ARC meeting and was presented to Senator Hatfield's committee on August 25.

HEARING ON HR 1149 BEFORE THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND RESERVED WATER OF THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
ASSOCIATED REFORESTATION CONTRACTORS, INC.
Salem, Oregon
August 25, 1983

Dear Senator Hatfield
and Members of the Committee:

In a letter to your office dated March 30, 1983 I outlined the Associated Reforestation Contractors, Inc. unanimous opposition to HR 1149 as well as some of the points of discussion concerning that bill. In your April 25th reply you requested "any particular comments" that we might have. Copies of those letters are included with this statement to provide a background to the following commentary:

During our annual membership meeting held this year on August 19 at the Agate Beach Hilton, I made a formal presentation concerning the wilderness issue in general, our board's position on HR 1149 and the basic reasoning involved in adopting that position. Following an outline of six other wilderness proposals, the floor was opened to discussion concerning any specific comments our organization might make to this hearing. The following points were discussed without attracting dissenting viewpoints:

Any proposed additions to existing wilderness should allow for labor intensive management. Specific mention was made for fire control, trail maintenance and insect control through salvage harvesting.

The proponents of additional wilderness form a very small, vocal minority. Actual users of wilderness form a small minority of the proponents. It was felt that these individuals should not be allowed an influence exceeding

their numbers and that greater consideration should be given to the original agreements by which Oregon lands were first placed under Federal management; in particular the issues of community stability and revenue sharing.

In any instance, the issue should be settled as quickly as practical.

Points of discussion that attracted opposition or questioning viewpoints were:

Commercial grade timberland should not be considered "wilderness," but rather as Oregon's most valuable crop land. It was argued that Oregonian workers and property tax payers would be, in effect, subsidizing "wilderness" involving crop lands through job loss and harvest profit loss.

Eastern and Southern States should be expected to provide similar amounts of wilderness to those already existing in Oregon before expecting this state to further encourage this unpopular form of land management.

A conclusion was reached that the ARC, through time and financial limitations, should not develop its own proposals, but rather, should support the existing proposals that most nearly paralleled the views of our members.

During the evening business meeting, following the election of new officers and board members and the formation of trade committees, the position of the new board concerning the wilderness issue was discussed. It was decided to support one of the following proposals:

1. The Regional Forester's Proposal
2. The January, 1979 Final Environmental Statement
3. The Carter Administration Proposal
4. Governor Atiyeh's 1979 Proposal
5. Senator Hatfield's S. 2031 Proposal
6. The AOL January, 1982 Proposal
7. HR 1149

Serious consideration was given only to the Atiyeh, Hatfield and AOL positions. It quickly became apparent that the majority of those present considered the AOL proposal as best representing the concerns of our organization.

As a result, the Board of the Associated Reforestation Contractors, Inc. voted unanimously to enter a statement to this hearing fully supporting the Associated Oregon Loggers 1982 Wilderness Proposal.

Respectfully Submitted By,
Bob Zybach, Vice-President
Associated Reforestation Contractors



Statement of Associated Reforestation Contractors regarding Oregon Wilderness Bill proposal. Delivered to Senator Mark Hatfield during public meeting in Salem, Oregon on August 25, 1983.

operator into letting him make calls on the state WATS (wide area telephone service) line . . . one could sit in Eugene and call anywhere in the country using State of Oregon lines from Salem, after first going through the University of Oregon phone system."

Kerr "guesstimated" that the free UO rent, utilities, phone service, and typewriter maintenance "to be worth well over \$100,000 per year, which was a lot of money back then (~\$0.55 million in today's dollars)."

Following their success with Wilderness politics, Oregon Wild began focusing on spotted owls, NEPA, and the revised

1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA). They next invented the phrase “ancient forest” to promote the idea that “the northern spotted owl required old-growth forests to survive” and that “old-growth-forest liquidation” was “on a trajectory toward the eventual extinction of the northern spotted owl.” This was promoted as a direct violation of NEPA and the new ESA regulations.

Oregon Wilderness

I first talked to Bill Hagenstein about 1980 or so, when I was Vice-President of Associated Reforestation Contractors (ARC) and about to become an editor and writer for our new “A.R.C. Quarterly” trade magazine. My reason for calling was to get his opinion, as principal spokesperson for IFA for 35 years, for an article or an editorial I was writing.

Bill referred me to his successor, as he was a recent -- and apparently irritated -- retiree; but still businesslike and professional. His trademark swearing was normal and reassuring for forest workers at that time, rather than offensive or startling. He was -- and remained for decades -- angry about having to retire from his position with the IFA because of “mandatory retirement rules” at age 65. Goddammit.

The principal topics of mutual interest in the reforestation industry at that time were nursery seedling quality -- Bill was a strong supporter and promoter of the highly successful IFA Nursery program -- the use of herbicides, and the Oregon Wilderness proposal, H.R. 1149.

Wildfires and illegal migrant labor were not issues because we hadn’t had a major fire in 15 years, and the Forest Service had just started hiring agricultural labor contractors. But creating even more designated Wilderness -- including prime timber-growing forestlands -- was a topic of much concern to foresters, loggers, and reforestation workers.

I was selected to represent the reforestation industry at a

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Title page of initial UO Law student-created issue of Journal of Environmental Law and Litigation, 1986.

hearing on H.R. 1149 in Salem conducted by Senator Mark Hatfield but learned my first lesson in politics. During my 90-minute drive from Eddyville to Salem, organizers had replaced me on the panel with an industry rep because “they couldn’t reach me by telephone.” This was before cell phones.

Instead, I was given the opportunity to meet Hatfield, shake hands, and deliver my written statement. This was published in the A.R.C. Quarterly and contained the following account of recommendations discussed by our Board:

“Any proposed additions to existing wilderness should allow for labor intensive management. Specific mention was made for fire control, trail maintenance and insect control through salvage harvesting.

“The proponents of additional wilderness form a very small, vocal minority. Actual users of wilderness form a small minority of the proponents. It was felt that these individuals

should not be allowed an influence exceeding their numbers and that greater consideration should be given to the original agreements by which Oregon lands were first placed under Federal management: in particular the issues of community stability and revenue sharing.”

H.R. 1149 was passed as the “Oregon Wilderness Act of 1984,” adding 850,000 acres of new wilderness and 22 new Wilderness Areas to the national system. The proposal passed the House 252-93 and by voice vote in the Senate with no consideration given to the ARC recommendations.

Environmental Law & Litigation

The Environmental Law Clinic at UO was founded in either 1976 by Professor Frank Berry, or in 1978 by his associate, John Bonine, depending on the source. In either instance, it is considered to be the first of its kind in the US and was principally formed to train students in public interest law and to provide free legal representation to “grassroot conservation organizations” in the western US.

In 1983, students led by recent Law Clinic graduate -- and future old-growth litigation specialist -- Michael Axline, launched the inaugural Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (PIELC), which has developed into the oldest and largest public interest environmental law conference



Tim Ingalsbee, Catia Juliana, and baby Kelsey, Cascadia Free State, 1995. Photo by Kurt Jensen, Eugene Weekly.

in the world. It is entirely hosted by a volunteer student group from the Oregon School of Law.

The most recent PIELC took place in March 2026, it's 44th year, and the official theme of the event was given as:

“Fight Back. Through this theme, we want to address the recent and ongoing efforts to dismantle environmental protections and social justice. We also hope to celebrate diverse leaders in the environmental movement and highlight important voices that continue to build a more inclusive, community-minded approach to addressing the environmental challenges currently present in our world. The organizers of PIELC are committed to continuing to host an inclusive event that celebrates diversity, opposes injustice of all forms, and acknowledges the connection between oppression and environmental destruction.”

Given the success of the PIELC, students led by Robert Herz and Cynthia Koehler founded the Journal of Environmental Law and Litigation in 1986. Among the original editors was Geoff Huntington, currently personal advisor to Oregon Governor Tina Kotek and a primary figure for several years in Elliott State Forest politics. The Journal is now more than 40 years old, still in regular publication, and

considered one of the world's best forums for literature of its kind.

In 1990 the spotted owl was declared a threatened species

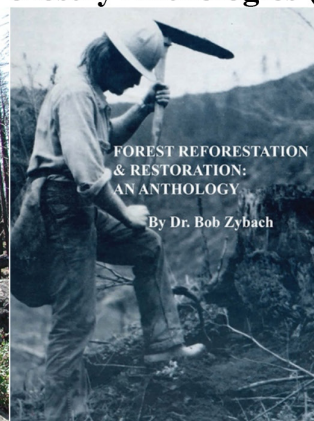
Amazon Book Series: Zybach Forestry Anthologies (1980-2025)



The Elliott



West Oregon Wildfires



Reforestation



Spotted Owls & Habitat

These topical collections of 80+ articles, editorials & interviews by Dr. Zybach were published over the past 45 years. Contents are chronological facsimile reproductions of original magazine, newspaper, and report formats (\$10-\$30)

by ESA and the UO Environmental Law Clinic and PIELC became nationally recognized leaders in spotted owl and old-growth litigation. The Journal of Environmental Law and Litigation documented the entire history in detail.

Warner Creek

In 1988 the Shady Beach Fire in the Willamette National Forest burned across 9,000 acres. About 195 million board feet (MBF) of snags and surviving trees were quickly sold and harvested, creat-

ing an estimated 200 local jobs, with 25% of sales income distributed to Lane County schools and roads, in accordance with 1908 law. The land was then planted and today features a healthy stand of 35-year-old trees nearing merchantable size.

The Warner Creek Fire was set by an unknown arsonist on October 10, 1991, a short distance from the recent Shady Beach reforestation projects. By the time it was controlled on October 27, it had also burned 9,000 acres of the Willamette National Forest. Suppression costs were \$10 million. The fire area occurred entirely within an area designated as a planned Habitat Conservation Area (HCA 0-10), to be managed primarily as “old-growth spotted owl habitat.”

This time there would be no salvage logging or reforestation as had been practiced by past generations. Using NEPA regulations and the ESA listing of spotted owls and their stated need for “critical old-growth habitat” to survive, UO political activists and environmental law students took the lead in threatening litigation if salvage sales were completed.

Two key figures in protesting the salvage of the freshly-burned timber were Tim Ingalsbee, a 30-year-old former firefighter and college student, and Catia Juliana, his future wife, who first met on a Forest Service field trip to the Warner Creek Fire while it was still smoldering in October 1991.

Catia was “monitoring the proposed salvage sale” for her organization, Southern Willamette Earth First!, while Tim was a “newly minted Environmentalitis [who] saw a chance to redeem himself.”

As Ingalsbee listened to Forest Service salvage logging plans he later claimed: “All those years fighting fire — I could payback that bad karma with good works defending this place



Earth First! blockade at Warner Creek Burn, 1995. Photo by Kurt Jensen, Eugene Weekly.

from salvage logging.” Within a few months the couple had formed a new organization, Cascadia Earth First!

They then combined talents to produce “Alternative EF” for the Forest Service’s 1992 “DEIS” (Draft Environmental Impact Statement). The official story was that the EF stood for “Ecology of Fire,” but everyone knew it actually stood for Earth First!

On October 27, 1992, the Warner Creek DEIS was released and presented nine alternatives. Forest Supervisor Darrel Kenops chose Alternative F, “Removal of Fire-killed Trees Using Existing Roads.”

The Forest Service estimated there was a total of 180 MBF of dead trees in the burned area, similar to the amount sold on Shady Beach salvage. The management options ranged from zero to 56 MBF. Alternative F would have permitted salvage logging of only 39 MBF on 1,197 acres, with six of the nine alternatives recommending even smaller harvests.

In response to Kenops’ decision, a group of Earth First! members performed a Halloween skit in front of his office, depicting salvage proponents as monsters on trial before Mother Nature. This received significant local media attention and 2,300 comments were submitted to the Forest Service opposing the selected Warner Creek logging plan.

The Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) that were released on October 13, 1993 selected a level of only 9 MBF salvage logging, 25% of the original proposal.

Thirteen appeals were submitted to Regional Forester John Lowe prior to the December 3, 1993 deadline, and he agreed to a Sierra Club request to delay awarding logging



Tim Ream's 75-day hunger strike at the Eugene Federal Courthouse, October to December, 1995. Photo by Kurt Jensen, Eugene Weekly.

contracts until the appeals had been decided. In April 1994, the Clinton Plan for Northwest Forests was approved, which replaced the HCA's with a system of "late successional reserves," or LSRs.

The subsequent protests, legal filings, and nationally significant forest management policy changes have been well documented in the 2000 video, *Pickaxe*; Kera Abraham's 2006 5-part series, "Flames of Dissent," for the Eugene Weekly; and Oregon Public Broadcasting's (OPB) 2019 7-part series, "Timber Wars."

Ingalsbee then founded the Cascadia Fire Ecology Project to "educate the public on the science of burned forests." He became an instructor of a UO class called "Envisioning Ectopian Communities," where he solicited dozens of students to join his cause.

Jeff Hogg, an Earth First! activist who had taken Ingalsbee's class, began supporting the campaign through the Survival Center, a campus organization dedicated to social and environmental activism.

Lacey Phillabaum, an art history major, and her boyfriend, James Johnston, were both reporters for the radical campus newspaper *The Insurgent* and both joined the Warner Creek anti-salvage logging cause. All students were in their early 20s.

Meanwhile, in June 1994, the Sierra Club, Kerr's Oregon Natural Resources Council, and Charlie Oglesby, the Eugene President of the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club, filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Eugene, seeking to block the salvage timber sales. The Forest Service believed this sale was necessary to create fire breaks, and to clear out dead or

diseased timber which could serve as fuel for a future fire. Plaintiffs challenged the sales under NEPA.

But then, in response to Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan, the newly-elected Republican Congress passed the "Salvage Logging Rider" in 1995. Clinton signed it into law on July 7, waiving environmental protection laws to expedite the harvest of dead and dying timber in federal forests. The law took effect immediately and was set to expire on September 30, 1997.

The Forest Service had, on June 13, evaluated the bids for a 520,000 MBF sale, and determined the

successful bidder to be Thomas Creek Lumber & Log, Co. Demonstrations against the sale began shortly thereafter.

On September 6, Judge Michael Hogan dismissed the lawsuit on the basis of the salvage rider provisions, despite plaintiffs' objections that Congress had not intended the law to be applied retroactively.

On September 7 Thomas Creek Lumber & Log, Co. was sent the salvage sale award letter and contract. The environmental groups appealed to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on September 15th but were rejected. The Court then scheduled a February 1996 date to hear the appeal. Following Hogan's decision, dozens of environmental activists set up a long-term encampment and blockade of Forest Service Road 2408 leading to the sale's roadless area.

The Cascadia Free State was an 11-month long anarchist occupation organized by Earth First! in order to protect the dead and dying trees from logging. The occupation began in 1995 with activists digging ditches in the road, chaining themselves to logging trucks and barrels filled with concrete.

This story is documented in some detail by activists Tim Ream and Tim Lewis in their *Pickaxe* video, with assistance from Johnston, and featuring Ream, Ingalsbee, and Juliana. A rallying slogan is promoted to a group gathering near the beginning, a "Simple Message": "Fire doesn't destroy a forest -- logging destroys a forest."

The protesters, primarily attractive young men and women in their 20s with hippie roots, then constructed a log fort with a moat and a drawbridge to keep out "the freddies," a watchtower, and two teepees for cooking and sleeping. They dubbed the blockade Cascadia Free State and themselves

Cascadia Forest Defenders, adopting nature-inspired aliases including Lupine, Hemlock, Crow, the Dog and Madrone.

Anti-logging protests were non-violent but dangerous: activists pinned themselves under parked cars, locked their arms into concrete-filled barrels, and even fastened a cord around the neck of an 80-year-old lady and attached it to the back of a logging truck. If the driver had started forward, she would have been decapitated.

“At the time, yeah, I was scared,” Johnston said. “The stuff that we were doing was not safe.” But in the course of the blockade, no one was seriously hurt.

Front-page stories in The New York Times and The Washington Post depicted peaceful eco-radicals taking a stand for the forest, and Cascadia Free State attracted hundreds of visitors.

In May 1996, the Forest Service announced its intention to auction off 11 MBF of timber in the southern part of the burned area. The “Warner South Timber Sale” was outside the LSRs created by the Northwest Forest Plan, but within the “matrix” of lands still open to logging and was later renamed the “Matrix” sale. The two sales combined would open a total 19 MBF to harvest.

On July 2 Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman issued an order limiting salvage logging. The ruling also prohibited logging in roadless areas. Nearly all the Warner Creek burn was in roadless areas.

On July 29 USDA and the Forest Service announced a tentative settlement with Thomas Creek Lumber & Log Co, canceling the sale of 520,000 MBF. On the 30th, Ream chanted to the group they had won and “not one black stick” would be logged.

On August 16 Forest Service law enforcement officials began evicting and arresting protesters on Road 2408 and bulldozed the blockades and trenches. The protests had become national by that point, and Warner Creek was universally recognized as the catalyst that sparked a revolution in public forest management.

Bill Hagenstein ended his editorial more than 55 years ago with a summary of the situation at that time and hope for the future, with words that remain current today:

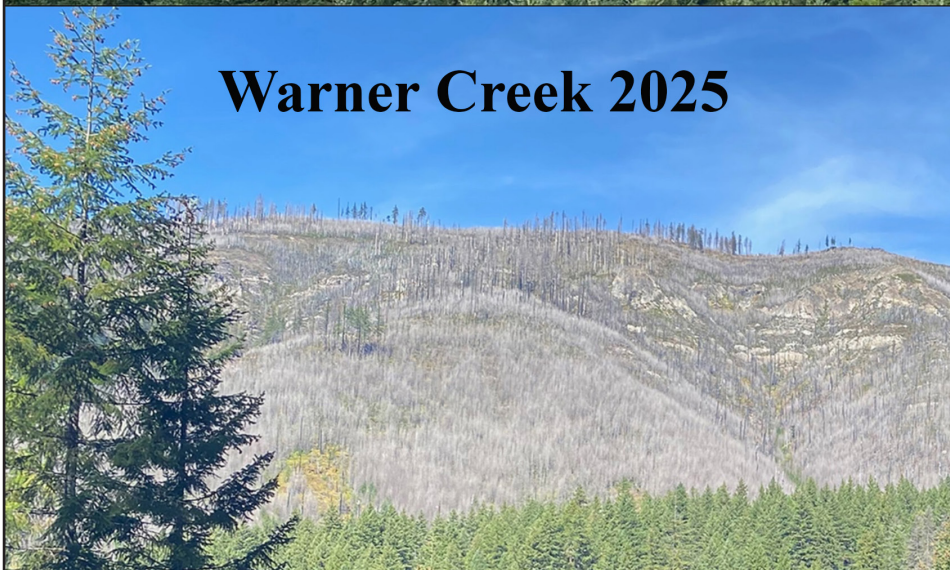
“The Environmentalitis epidemic has swept our country from the halls of Congress to weekly newspa-

OREGON Fish&Wildlife JOURNAL

Shady Beach 2025



Warner Creek 2025



Nature's Clearcut. Shady Beach Reforestation, October 13, 2025 and Warner Creek Reburn, October 5, 2025. Photos by

Bob Zybach

pers. It has been a viable movement, carefully conceived, cultivated and campaigned . . . as the urban folk, from student to senior citizen, have been sold a bill of goods which indicts forestry as something bad instead of something good for land and for people.

“We who grow the trees have a pretty important part to play in stemming this epidemic because of our greatest asset—the renewability of our remarkable resource.

“So let’s turn Environmentalitis from an epidemic into an endeavor, an effort, an exercise in betterment in every possible way.”

**Hagenstein’s invention of the word “environmentalitis” was humorously intended to infer a disease, rather than a philosophy or a practice. He was often quoted as believing loggers were the “true Environmentalists.” Humor with a point, and some cussing.*

