



The Watershed

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THE NEWSLETTER OF FORESTS FOREVER

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Forest Service repeals the roadless rule

On May 5 the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which had kept roadless areas in the national forests from being logged, drilled, and developed, passed into history.

On that date the Bush administration released the final version of its rule that replaces the Clinton-era regulation.

The new rule eliminates the protections of its predecessor, substituting instead a complicated bureaucratic process that does not guarantee any real protection.

The original roadless rule, implemented in 2001, covered 58.5 million roadless acres of federal forest, helping to ensure clean water, wilderness recreation, and habitat protection.

There are 4.4 million roadless acres in California.

Under the U.S. Forest Service's new rule if governors want to protect roadless areas in their states, they must petition the Forest Service. The secretary of agriculture can accept or deny these petitions.

If a petition is accepted, a state-specific rulemaking process is set in motion. But the outcome is determined entirely by the Forest Service. Acceptance of a petition by the secretary of agriculture does not

guarantee that the final rule will reflect it.

If a petition is rejected, or if

2004, letter to the secretary of agriculture, California Resources secretary Mike Chrisman had

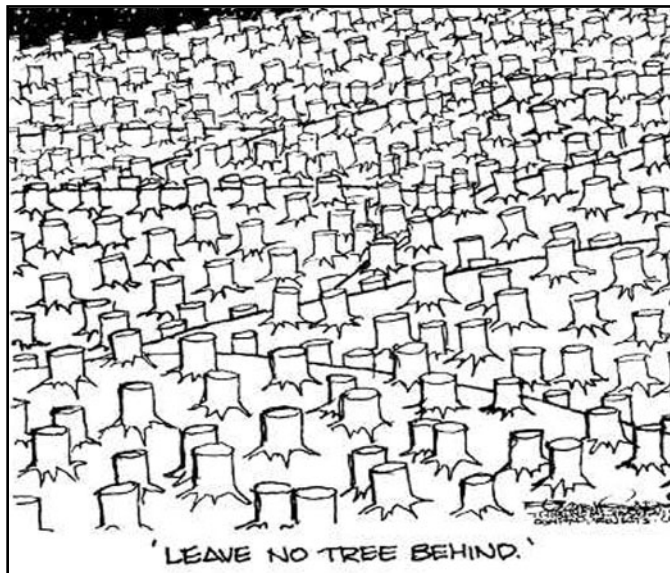
Forest Service on Jan. 24 of this year. His letter made no specific request for roadless protections, however. Instead it proposed that the Forest Service's "Interim Directive"—a policy that governs management of roadless areas until the new, watered-down rule takes effect in January 2006—be used as the basis for permanent management of roadless areas in California.

"But the Interim Directive is not 'at least as protective as the Clinton roadless rule,' as the governor maintains," said Forests Forever board president Mark Fletcher. "On the contrary, it is merely an interim guideline for managing roadless areas that places key decision-making power into the hands of Forest Service bureaucrats."

"The Interim Directive does not prohibit resource extractive uses or road building on national forest roadless areas at all," said representatives of the Natural Resources Defense Council, Environment California, and Defenders of Wildlife in a Mar. 28 letter to Chrisman.

Forest Service Regional Forester Jack Blackwell responded to Chrisman's letter on Jan. 27. But Blackwell's response

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a governor chooses not to file one, the management of roadless areas in that state defaults to the existing forest management plans.

Roadless in California

The same day the new rule was released, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced that he intended to protect roadless areas in California.

Prior to that, in a Nov. 16,

announced that the governor did not intend to file a petition under the proposed new rule. Instead he wanted to work with the Forest Service as it revises forest management plans in the state, to "keep truly roadless areas roadless." The majority of these plans will be coming up for review in the next 10 years.

More than half of the current forest plans in California allow development in roadless areas.

Chrisman next wrote to the

See "Roadless rule," p. 9

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from the Executive Director

Carving up the shrinking wilderness pie: What will happen when the last bit is gone?

(If in a city we had six vacant lots available to the youngsters of a certain neighborhood for playing ball, it might be 'development' to build houses on the first, and second, and the third, and the fourth, and even on the fifth. But when we build houses on the last one, we forget what houses are for. The sixth house would not be development at all, but rather... stupidity.

— Ecologist Aldo Leopold

We have arguably entered the final phase of the great American movement to preserve its wilderness.

President Bush has scrapped the roadless rule installed in 2001 by Bill Clinton. That policy had been protecting the nation's last 58.5 million acres of roadless and undeveloped public lands— mostly forested— including some 4.4 million acres in California.

With the roadless rule gone, several options remain for saving these areas, and Forests Forever will be supporting state and federal bills, lawsuits, and other initiatives in the coming months.

The reason the wilderness movement as we have known it is reaching its end, though, is not that we lack tactics for saving what remains. Rather, it is that the wildlands left to save are just about gone.

When the dust settles on this roadless areas fight we will have preserved or condemned the last potential wilderness areas in the country big enough to meet a 5000-acre minimum size.

After that, future wilderness battles mostly will revolve around public parcels small enough to cross in a two-hour stroll on level ground . . . a far cry from the 100,000-acre minimums considered when advocates such as Leopold and Bob Marshall began in the 1920s and '30s to set up the precursor to today's wilderness system.

In a total U.S. land area (all 50 states) of 2.3 billion acres, just 106 million acres

(4.6 percent) have been set aside so far in the National Wilderness Preservation System. But of that designated wilderness over half lies in vast, remote, thinly populated Alaska.

Leaving out Alaska, then, just 49 million acres are safeguarded in the continental U.S.— an area roughly the size of

“Perhaps human communities may again become islands in a sea of green.”

South Dakota. This is less than three percent of the total American land area.

Meantime there are some seven million miles of roads in the lower 48— enough to stretch around the planet 280 times.

The U.S. created the world's first large-scale wilderness preserves with its national parks: Yellowstone in 1872 and Yosemite in 1890, as well as New York's Adirondack State Park in 1885.

What is today the world's largest national forest system was created through our Forest Reserve Act of 1891. And the Wilderness Act itself, in 1964, broke new ground in saving ground from being broken.

Our opponents like to characterize wilderness preservation as a “lockup” of precious resources. Yet wilderness designation can be undone, while wilderness destruction is, for all practical purposes, permanent.

Moreover, America's innovations in wilderness protection have been more than offset by an opposing cultural bias.

Writing in 1909 in defense of Hetch Hetchy Valley (now inundated behind O'Shaughnessy Dam inside Yosemite National Park), *Outlook* magazine editor Lyman Abbott said:

“... (If this country were in danger of habitually ignoring utilitarian practice for the sake of running after sentimental dreams and aesthetic visions we should advise it... to dam the Tuolumne River in order to instruct its citizens in the use of the bathtub. But the danger is all the other way. The national habit is to waste the beauty of Nature and save the dollars of business.”

So what happens after the remaining tatters are preserved or gone? The new frontier will be bringing back wilderness. Restoration will likely become a central focus of the environmental movement in the coming century.

A key objective will be to connect the remaining wilderness by semi-protected corridors. This will allow species to migrate between core preserves and thereby maintain more-diverse gene pools, as well as escape catastrophe in one core by relocating to another.

Perhaps human communities may one day again become islands in a sea of green, instead of today's situation, in which our wilderness areas are islands in a sea of cities and farms.

As conservation sage David R. Brower said, *“Restoration is not an effort to stop the clock, but rather a chance to keep the clock running . . .”*

But as for now, the first step in furthering the restoration movement of the future is to start with as much intact raw material— wilderness— as possible.

— Paul Hughes



Finding our way back to forests

Forests Forever Foundation's first book discusses forest science and policy

On Feb. 22 Forests Forever Foundation signed a contract with co-publisher the Center for American Places and author John J. Berger to bring out *Forests Forever: A Concise Guide to Understanding Their Ecology, Restoration and Protection*.

"This will be remembered as the first title in the Forests Forever Books line," said Paul Hughes, executive director of Forests Forever Foundation. "It's an exciting beginning."

Forests Forever: A Concise Guide is the expanded, illustrated second edition of Berger's *Understanding Forests*, which appeared in 1998 from Sierra Club Books.

"When John Berger first approached us with his proposal for bringing out a new edition of his book," Hughes said, "I saw right away that it was the perfect project for us."

Forests Forever: A Concise Guide is scheduled to come out in Spring 2006. At 288 pages, this new edition adds 100 pages of text to the previous version. In clear and compelling language it explains how forests function

ecologically, how current logging practices and other activities are destroying them, and how they can be restored.

Author and environmental consultant Berger did not want to see *Understanding Forests* vanish from the bookshelves forever when it went out of print. He felt it still had a bigger audience to reach and important ideas to spread.

"In some ways a book is like a child," Berger said, "and I didn't want to abandon it."

Understanding Forests was well received when it first appeared, and sold out. But it was produced in a straightforward, unillustrated format that Berger thought missed many opportunities for engaging readers visually and emotionally.

That won't be a problem with the new edition, which will have some 100 illustrations, including dozens of full-color forest and wildlife photographs. The book also brings the reader up to date on the latest developments in destructive forest policies

emanating from Washington, D.C.

Berger, who holds advanced degrees in energy and natural resources and in ecology, works as a consultant in Berkeley. By writing *Forests Forever: A Concise Guide* he hoped to alert readers to the damage that has been done to North America's native forests by several centuries of exploitation.

focus, Berger also includes a chapter covering tropical forests and the special problems they face. He takes a look at positive developments in forest protection, such as the Canadian Boreal Initiative, which proposes the preservation of 50 percent of the vast Canadian northern forest and the sustainable management of the rest.

As so often is the case, the only important limits on Forests Forever's publishing program are financial. Forests Forever shared the fundraising chores for *A Concise Guide* with the author, and got some important help from friends such as Advisory Council member Martin Litton and celebrities Robin Williams and Peter Coyote.

Striking nature photography has been an important tool for conservation ever since William Henry Jackson's photographs of Yellowstone led Congress to make it the United State's first national park in 1872. *Forests Forever: A Concise Guide* will follow in that tradition, with a 32-page gallery of color photographs by some of the best-known names in nature and forest photography today—

Larry Ulrich, Gary Braasch, Herb Hammond, and Daniel Dancer, just to name a few.

Selected for more than their sheer beauty, the photographs depict abused and threatened forests and sustainably managed forests, as well as many of the forest ecosystem types discussed in the book.

The book will appear in softcover and hardback editions; both will be printed on kenaf (or another environmentally sound paper) using soy-based inks. For a preview of the kind of design and production work done by the award-winning Center for American Places, check out their website at www.americanplaces.org.

A Concise Guide will be distributed by the respected University of Chicago Press, which will place it before a nationwide audience.

For more information visit www.forestsforever.org/ConciseGuide.html.

—M.L.

Photo © 2005 by Benson Lee



Early morning light through a stand of Douglas-fir near Bend, Ore. Photo from John Berger's forthcoming book *Forests Forever: A Concise Guide to Understanding Their Ecology, Restoration, and Protection*.

"I wanted to write a primer," Berger said, "something that would explain complicated and little-understood forestry issues to a broader concerned public."

With so little undamaged forestland left, and with the pressures of population growth and global climate change and the destruction caused by ramped-up exploitation since World War II, Berger sees restoring forests as not simply a good but also a necessary thing.

"Restoration is one of the most important issues today," Berger said. "It's possible to bring the forests back, and in this edition I wanted to take a look at how we might begin doing that."

In the chapter "New Developments in U.S. Forest Policy" Berger pays particular attention to the protective Roadless Area Conservation Rule (now repealed), the landmark Endangered Species Act, and the White House's deceptively titled Healthy Forests Initiative.

While the book has a North American

Test-tube trees:

Could genetically engineered trees make wild forests a thing of the past?

Two forests:

In one, trees grow quickly to marketable size, resisting insects and disease, growing on soils no tree would grow on before. These trees, their genetic material altered in the laboratory to instill desirable traits, are vigorous and low-maintenance, so productive that there is no longer any need to cut down old-growth forests.

In the other forest, evenly spaced rows of identical trees stretch out over land that was once old-growth forest. There is no insect life in this grove; insects have been killed by an insecticide manufactured by the trees themselves.

There are no birds or other wildlife, since these trees don't produce flowers or seed. The rows between the trees are barren; even

the fungi and microbes in the soil around their roots have been eliminated by poisons the trees generate.

These two forests are one and the same, a plantation of genetically engineered trees seen from different points of view. Scientists and investors in the technology see the benefits of genetic engineering, and believe it is possible to work out problems in the future.

Critics of genetic modification, on the other hand, think that the "benefits" go largely to corporate bottom lines, and worry about genetically modified plants' long-term effects on wild populations and ecosystems. They don't consider these trees a true forest at all, and worry that such plantations will displace wild forests.

These trees are the newest wave of genetically altered plants, following the introduction of genetically engineered food crops. And like GE tomatoes, canola and other crops, test-tube trees are creating controversy.

What are GE trees?

Genetically engineered (GE) trees have had a gene from another organism inserted

into their chromosomes— the genetic code that guides the growth of living things. Proponents say there is no difference between genetic engineering and the selective breeding of plants to foster certain traits.

Genetically modified food crops have

been shown to affect fish and amphibians.

And surfactants— chemicals used to help pesticides spread on application— can have toxic effects, as well.

Glyphosate's long-term impact on forest ecosystems— soil organisms, beneficial insects, and other wildlife— has not been adequately studied, environmentalists say.

Grow your own

GE trees have been engineered to produce Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). This is an insecticide widely used by organic farmers because it decays quickly in sunlight and is washed away by rain.

Trees producing Bt are supposed to sustain less insect damage, grow more quickly, and need less pesticide. Advocates of Bt-producing crops and trees say there are no documented human health effects.

Anne Petermann of the Global Justice Ecology Project disagrees.

"To say that there are no health effects is really premature. There could be some very severe health effects, and in fact there are indications that there will be." Farm workers in the Philippines, she says, have had allergic reactions when working with Bt corn.

The full effect of this toxin on forest ecosystems is unknown. Trees live in a web of dependencies; insects, birds, other wildlife, even fungi and microbes in forest soil all play an important role in tree growth. Bt might sterilize the soil around tree roots, killing soil microbes and fungi, and the effects could ripple through the food web.

Steven Strauss is a professor of Forestry Science at Oregon State University. Strauss emphasizes the potential benefits of GE tree plantations, especially in developing countries. But he agrees that there are some risks to the use of genetically engineered trees that need to be taken seriously.

"I see those as high-risk situations," Strauss says. "And if you're going to [plant

Photo courtesy Geoff Bugbee/taurus.geoffbugbee.com



Protesting against genetically engineered trees in front of International Paper, Sacramento, 2003.

become widespread in the United States: 45 percent of the corn crop and 85 percent of the soybeans in this country have been genetically engineered.

Development of genetically engineered trees is still in its early stages. There are no more than 130 test plots of GE trees in the United States, and as yet few commercial stands. This is true for most of the world, though large commercial projects are reported to be under way in China.

Chemical resistance

As with genetically modified food crops, most GE trees have been altered to grow faster and more profitably. For instance, trees have been engineered to resist Monsanto's flagship herbicide RoundUp. This means more of the herbicide can be applied, eliminating competition by weeds and other trees, and allowing the GE trees to grow quickly.

Glyphosate, the active ingredient in RoundUp, is touted by its manufacturer as safe. But the chemical is water-soluble and migrates into streams and rivers, where it has

Resisting the spread of genetically engineered trees:

The commercial production of genetically engineered timber trees might not happen soon. (Fruit trees have been planted commercially in Hawaii, however.) But forest activists opposed to their spread are getting a head start on stopping them.

- California's Marin, Trinity, and Mendocino counties have passed laws forbidding the cultivation of GE plants. Other counties have tried to pass such legislation, or are considering it.
- A bill now in the state Assembly (A.B. 984, introduced by John Laird, D-Boulder Creek) would make the manufacturer of genetically modified plants responsible if they spread into other crops.
- Maryland passed a state law forbidding GE crops in 2001; 79 Vermont towns have passed resolutions calling for restrictions on GE plants.
- A few commercial outlets, such as Kinko's and Home Depot, already have agreed not to use products made from GE timber.

Bt-producing trees] you've really got to have a lot of boxes that you check."

One risk is that trees that can stand more application of pesticides or make their own may end up creating "super weeds" and "super bugs," organisms that evolve resistance to pesticides.

Farmers using Bt alternate it with other pesticides to avoid this development, but Bt-producing trees release one strain of Bt constantly. If resistant pests develop as a result, it could lead to more pesticide application rather than less, as well as having unpredictable ecosystem effects.

Pulp friction

The pulp and paper industry is a big supporter of GE trees. Eighty percent of the trees cut in the United States (though virtually none in California) are for pulp and paper. GE trees with decreased lignin content are being developed especially for the paper industry.

Lignin is a strengthening fiber that is removed from tree pulp when making paper. Reduced-lignin trees would need less chemical processing to separate the lignin from the cellulose, proponents claim, making them cheaper to process and relatively less polluting.

Low-lignin substitutes for wood pulp, such as kenaf and hemp and agricultural wastes such as rice straw that need less processing already exist, however. And paper recycling can provide at least part of the stock for new paper.

Trees modified to have less lignin in their cells may be more vulnerable to pests. Lignin-light trees might also be more susceptible to blowdown, because reduced lignin will make them less sturdy. And as mentioned, there is the danger of these traits being introduced to wild populations.

Terminator tech

Tree pollen can be broadcast widely (up to 700 miles, in one study). To keep GE traits from spreading into wild populations (and for other reasons, such as controlling the supply of GE organisms) GE developers are working on so-called "terminator tech," in which trees are bioengineered not to propagate, producing no flowers or seed.

Tests of these sterile trees have shown success rates of up to 95 percent (though more research is needed to know if this will hold up with different types of trees and in different environments). The five percent that are not sterile, however, could spread their pollen to wild forests.

Strauss admits that this is a real concern. He expects, however, that wild trees

will overwhelm the GE trees, which have been designed to grow well in plantations, not in natural forests. Computer modeling of gene flow shows little spread of the GE trees, he says, even where sterility is less than perfect. "A big reason is, I think, that you continue to have wild pollen and seeds coming in and swamping this transgenic stuff."

"One of the big problems with genetic engineering of trees is that they're not looking at the long-term impacts."
—Anne Petermann

It is also possible that the traits fostered by inserting genes can be suppressed by the target trees. A German study by the Federal Research Centre for Forestry and Forest Products found that certain genes introduced to change the leaf shape of aspen were "silenced," or turned off, by the trees; the leaf shape of these trees reverted to normal.

The implication of gene silencing is that bioengineered sterility might be turned off, and previously sterile GE trees begin to spread their traits into wild populations.

"One of the big problems with genetic engineering of trees is that they're not looking at the long-term impacts," says the Global Justice Ecology Project's Petermann. Scientists study GE trees for short periods of time, she says, whereas a tree might live for decades or for centuries. "They have absolutely no idea what the impacts will be."

The problem with plantations

Tree plantations reduce the complexity of natural forest ecosystems in the interests of faster tree growth, ease of harvesting, and other economic considerations. Turning trees into an agricultural crop is a major interest of the corporations that support GE tree research.

"It's really an agricultural paradigm," says Strauss, "for what's good and what's bad about that."

Genetically engineered trees can exaggerate
See "Test-tube trees," p. 11

How green is our governor?

Arnold Schwarzenegger promised to protect California's forests. But has he?

Arnold Schwarzenegger swept into office proclaiming his independence from "special interests." Environmental protection and the economy were not incompatible, he said.

And his campaign platform contained planks painted bright green— an unusual color choice for a Republican candidate.

The former action-movie star was elected governor of California on Oct. 7, 2003, in the recall election that ousted Democrat Gray Davis.

Now, more than a year later, has Arnold's performance lived up to his dazzling entrance?

It depends on who you ask.

Schwarzenegger has logged several noteworthy accomplishments on environmental issues. The governor announced his ocean protection plan, threw his support behind an important piece of federal wilderness legislation, and signed the Sierra Nevada Conservancy into law.

He stood up to the Bush administration on global warming, championed alternative energy, and pledged to defend the state's ground-breaking carbon-dioxide emissions standards against legal challenges.

But when it comes to the forests of California, the governor mostly seems to have gotten lost in the woods.

"While some of my friends interested in ocean conservation or clean air think he's done a good job, I can't say the same about forest issues," said Santa Cruz activist Jodi Frediani, executive director of Citizens for Responsible Forest Management.

Appointments, for better and worse

Environmentalist Terry Tamminen was partly responsible for the environmental planks in Schwarzenegger's campaign platform, and his appointment as head of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal-EPA) at the start of Schwarzenegger's

governorship gave greens something to be grateful for.

Mike Chrisman's appointment as head of the Resources Agency was seen by many enviros as a good thing as well: Although Chrisman was a rancher, he has had a career-long involvement with conservation.

Tamminen was reassigned as Schwarze-

What's more, her seat on the board is one of five reserved for "members of the public."

Appointing an ex-CDF bureaucrat with a reputation for hostility to citizens who comment in favor of forest protection was seen by many activists as stretching the definition of "member of the public" too far.

The board member Drinkard replaced, Bob Heald, was well regarded by forestry activists.

"He was always a progressive, informed member of the board," said Vince Taylor of the Campaign to Save Jackson State Redwood Forest. Heald had been appointed in 1992 by then-Gov. Pete Wilson. Schwarzenegger refused to reappoint him when his term was up, instead putting Drinkard in his place.

First the good news

On the legislative front the governor lived up to his green billing on several issues

that affect forests. But good measures for forestlands have been offset by bills and policy positions ranging from the not-so-hot to the truly awful.

Protecting oaks

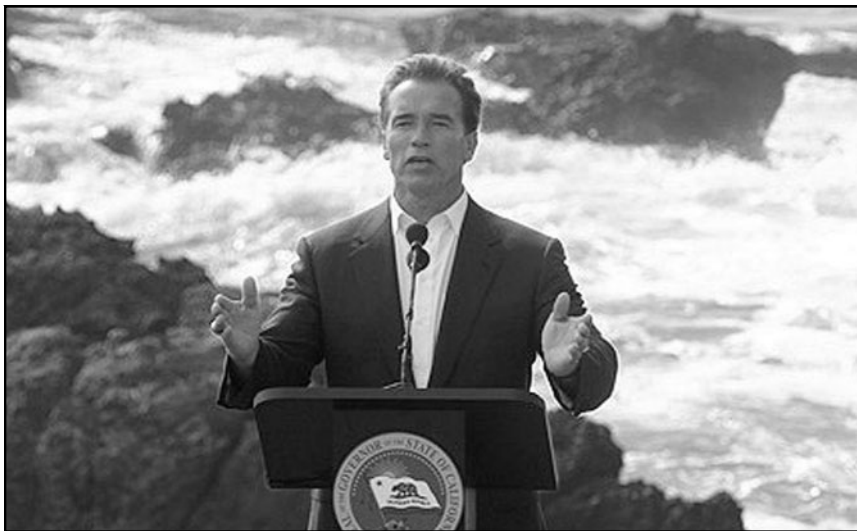
In what became Forests Forever's biggest victory in the state legislature in 2004, Schwarzenegger signed S.B. 1334, Sen. Sheila Kuehl's (D-Santa Monica) Oak Woodlands Protection Act.

"The governor heeded the call of thousands of Forests Forever's supporters urging him to help protect California's vanishing oak woodlands," said Forests Forever Executive Director Paul Hughes. "We are glad he got the message and we extend to him our sincere gratitude."

The act, signed on Sept. 24, requires counties to consider the effects on oak woodlands of any development project. It also provides a menu of mitigations to help offset the loss of oaks uprooted by development.

Forests Forever worked on the bill from November 2003, generating almost 16,000 constituent messages of support.

Photo courtesy the State of California



Schwarzenegger announces his Ocean Protection Plan in Monterey.

negger's cabinet secretary in November 2004, and in January 2005 the governor appointed Alan Lloyd as Cal-EPA director. Lloyd came from the California Air Quality Board, well known for developing the toughest air quality standards in the nation.

But forests got the back of the governor's hand. Several key appointees have come from the timber industry.

James Branham, a former Pacific Lumber Co. spokesperson, became deputy director of Cal-EPA in November 2004.

Melinda Terry and Mark Rentz, both alumni of the timber industry's California Forestry Association, were respectively appointed deputy secretary for legislative affairs at Resources, and deputy director of policy coordination at the Department of Pesticide Regulation.

The governor's appointment of Nancy Drinkard to the Board of Forestry last September was especially disappointing. Drinkard, a former official at CDF, had a reputation for combativeness and for siding with the timber industry in disputes.

North Coast Wilderness

The governor did another good thing by speaking up recently in support of Rep. Mike Thompson and Sen. Barbara Boxer's Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act (H.R. 1501 and S.738).

This legislation would designate as wilderness nearly 300,000 acres of the North Coast's unprotected federal lands. At the governor's behest, Resources Secretary Chrisman wrote to the chair of the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee, Rep. Richard Pombo (R-Tracy). Chrisman let him know that Schwarzenegger strongly supports the bill, suggesting that Pombo schedule a hearing with his committee.

The not-so-hot

Sen. Wesley Chesbro's S.B. 1648, the State Forest System Reform Act, would have changed the purpose of California's taxpayer-owned forest system to put restoration and recreation on an equal footing with timber production.

The bill also would have established an advisory board to oversee Jackson State Forest in Mendocino County, with members from the local community and academia as well as from the timber industry and government agencies. The measure was supported by environmentalists and local timber interests, and it had passed both houses of the legislature by Aug. 27, 2004.

Vigorous opposition came from the California Department of Forestry (CDF), which had come to depend on selling off Jackson's century-old redwoods to round out its agency budget. The governor chose to listen to the CDF rather than the public, and vetoed the bill on Sept. 16.

"All the advice Schwarzenegger is getting is coming from Big Timber," says Vince Taylor. "We need to take a look at the economics of timber. It's such a minuscule fraction of the California economy. They're given way too much power."

The Heritage Tree Preservation Act (S.B. 754), authored by state Sen. Don Perata (D-Oakland), would have banned the cutting of California's last old-growth trees, defined as trees that meet species-specific diameters and were alive in 1850, California's first year of statehood.

The bill surprised everyone by passing several committees and clearing the Senate on June 5, 2003. In the Assembly the measure jogged through a few more committees, but stalled short of a floor vote. According to

activists working on the measure, votes for the bill were just a few shy of the necessary majority when time ran out last summer.

If the governor had gotten behind the Heritage Tree Act and told the legislature it was something he wanted to see on his desk, it might have given the bill a real chance at passage. He may have a second chance in the next session if the bill or one similar to it is re-introduced.

Wait, it gets worse

Perhaps the most egregious anti-forest legislation originating from this administration so far has been the governor's "trailer

The fee for filing timber harvest plans seems to be truly dead, but the "streamlining" and self-regulating features of the trailer bill have reappeared in the so-called California Performance Review, Schwarzenegger's massive proposal to restructure the state government.

Among the many suggestions in the 2,500-page document were getting rid of boards such as the Board of Forestry and departments such as CDF.

To be sure, the Board of Forestry has its problems—overrepresentation of the timber industry by its sitting members, for one—but the board represents one of the only real public forums for forestry issues in the state.

If the Board of Forestry were to be dissolved and the CDF broken up, and responsibility for managing state and private forestry moved upstairs to the Resources Department, there would likely be less transparency and public accountability. Centralized bureaucracies tend to be more subject to the will of the governor—and whatever special interests have his ear.

Fortunately, the governor has given up on disbanding the 88 state boards and commissions, for now. In February, faced with widespread opposition, Schwarzenegger dropped his plan.

How he will proceed with the other recommendations in the CPR remains to be seen. And of course the governor might still propose to eliminate certain boards, possibly including the Board of Forestry, rather than tackling them all at once.

The roadless rule

The governor sent mixed signals during the struggle over the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, refusing to speak out against the rule's repeal, then declaring after the rule was scrapped that the areas in question must remain roadless. He seems to be trying

to steer his own course, with what success remains to be seen. See the complete story on page 1.

The Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment

The governor signed the law creating a

See "Green governor?" p. 12

When it comes to the forests of California, the governor seems to have gotten lost in the woods.

bill," an attempt to slip through "streamlined" rules that would have eviscerated the timber harvest plan process.

Attached as a rider to a must-pass appropriations bill in June 2004, the proposal essentially would have allowed the industry to regulate itself through forestry "certification" groups. Acceptable third-party certification organizations named in the bill included groups founded and funded by the timber industry.

Part of this stealth legislation would



Schwarzenegger signs the bill establishing the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

have imposed a fee for timber harvest plans, to replace the \$10 million cut from the CDF budget in previous years. This fee was supported by many environmentalists but was stripped out before the appropriations bill was passed, as were the odious "streamlining" measures.

Saving forests to save salmon

Not everyone sees the connection between the fish we eat and bad timber harvesting practices. Zeke Grader is glad to explain.

Zeke Grader grew up riding his bike on the makeshift roads carved out by logging companies in Mendocino County. Many of his classmates belonged to logging families and grew up to become loggers themselves. The friend he shared a dorm room with at Sonoma State University is a tree faller to this day.

The Grader family owed its livelihood to a different industry, but one equally dependent on the redwood forests that formed the playground for Grader and his friends in the 1940s.

Grader's father was a fish processor. The plant he and Grader's mother ran processed salmon caught off Northern California— fish that spawned in forest-shaded portions of rivers such as the Eel, which winds through Mendocino County.

The silvery-pink fish were far more plentiful in those days. Coho salmon, as an example, were once prevalent in coastal streams from Monterey Bay to Alaska. When Grader was growing up, California had an estimated wild Coho population of 500,000. Today their number has fallen to one percent of that— about 5,000 fish.

Yet even during Grader's childhood salmon were showing signs of decline. His father Bill was one of the first people to attempt to do something about it. In 1956 the elder Grader helped form Salmon Unlimited, an organization of both commercial and sport fishermen dedicated to preserving California's native salmon.

In 1968, after a stint as resources undersecretary for then-governor Pat Brown, he helped pass legislation to create a state salmon and trout advisory committee.

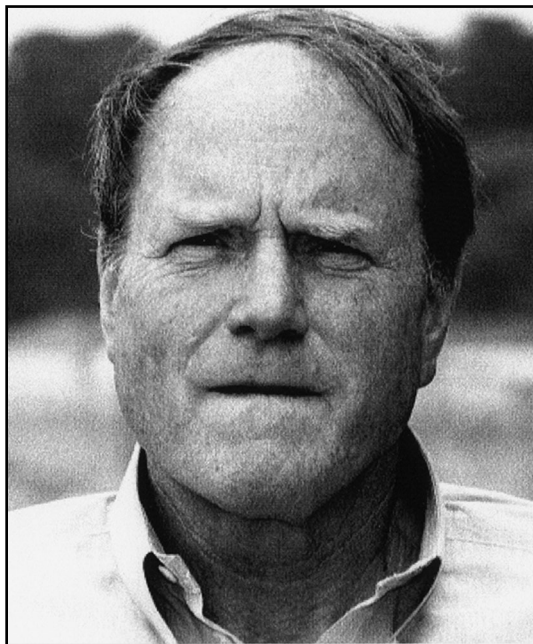
Grader's mother Geraldine, who still lives in Fort Bragg, was herself involved in conservation issues, serving on the state coastal commission. She also wrote a column for several years for the local paper.

"She still keeps me posted on what all I should know," Grader said, only half-joking, during a recent phone interview with *The Watershed*.

Not that anyone would mistake Grader for a man who needs informing, especially

when it comes to California's coastal waters and rivers and the fish that inhabit them. His parents' concern about the threats facing the state's fish populations made its way into his blood early on and never left. After graduating from college, Grader finished his law degree at the University of San Francisco and began working right away on fish conservation.

"It was much more palatable than



Zeke Grader

going to work in some corporate law office or chasing ambulances," Grader said of his career choice. "It was something you didn't have to wrestle with your conscience about."

In 1976 Grader became the executive director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA), a post he has never left. The organization works to preserve the jobs of West Coast fishermen by protecting the fish on which their jobs depend.

He also serves as executive director of the Institute for Fisheries Resources, a non-profit established to address fish habitat protection, restoration and research.

Although Grader heads a trade organization, he is one of the sources most often turned to by reporters looking for an environmental perspective in logging stories.

According to PCFFA figures, habitat losses have cost the West Coast fishing industry an estimated \$27 billion a year— enough to support 450,000 family-wage jobs. Those losses are largely due to two main environmental threats, Grader said— water diversions and logging.

Diverting water to feed California's farms and cities has been disastrous for fish populations, particularly salmon. Hydropower dams block the fish from making their natural journey to the ocean and back to their place of birth for spawning.

When the Friant Dam was built on the San Joaquin River in the 1940s— to point out one particularly egregious example— what had been the state's second-largest salmon run was wiped out. Reduced water flows have increased the temperatures of rivers, proving fatal for salmon, which become stressed and more susceptible to disease in waters above 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Logging is another cause of increased water temperatures, as removing trees along rivers and streams reduces shade. Logging roads and timber harvests increase the amount of sediment that washes into streams, where it covers the gravel beds where salmon lay their eggs.

Grader has been instrumental in passing legislation aimed at reducing the impacts of logging and water diversions. A victory he counts as one of his most significant was helping to pass a law establishing "Total Maximum Daily Loads"— or TMDLs— under the federal Clean Water Act. TMDLs are the maximum level of a given pollutant deemed environmentally safe for a particular waterway.

Grader also played a key role in helping pass the Central Valley Project Improvement Act of 1992, which established stricter environmental oversight for water diversion projects and allocated a greater portion of stream flows to maintaining fish habitat.

Such successes would not have been possible if he hadn't been working in partnership with environmental groups, Grader said. He mentions forestry activist groups such as the Garberville-based

Environmental Protection Information Center as particularly strong allies.

"It's been a symbiotic relationship. The forestry groups have the environmental expertise. What we've brought to the table is a different economic interest. It changes the dynamic."

With fisheries groups involved in conservation, it is harder for foes of environmental regulations to paint issues as "jobs versus the environment," Grader said.

"We say 'no— if you're protecting the environment, you're protecting the economy.'"

Working in coalition is crucial, Grader said, because the threats to the state's fish populations are so wide-ranging, his organization couldn't possibly take them all on.

"I wish we had the luxury of a single focus, but we don't," he said. "Any one thing can undo you. It's like keeping machinery going— there's lots of different moving parts and you can't ignore any one of them."

While his relationship with environmental groups has been largely amicable, trying to convince loggers of the need for environmental protection has been much trickier, Grader said. In his own hometown, many of the people advocating for

Forestry issues are foremost on Grader's agenda in the near future. In particular he will be paying close attention to the activities of timber companies Pacific Lumber and Sierra Pacific Industries. He is motivated by the knowledge that all that's been gained toward protecting fish habitat could easily slip away.

Even with all the work Grader and others have done to protect fish populations, disasters continue to strike.

One of the most devastating occurred in September of 2002, when

water temperatures in the lower Klamath River reached up into the high 70s and lower 80s, killing thousands of returning salmon.

One can only imagine how much worse things would be without Grader's vigilance.

Lucky for us— and the West Coast's fish— Grader, like his father before him, shows no sign of ever giving up.

"If you're going to quit fighting," he said, "you're going to lose."

—Andria Strickley

*"If you're protecting the environment,
you're protecting the economy."
—Zeke Grader*

logging reform in the past had relatives in the timber industry, so they were guarded about speaking out too loudly.

Yet even many of those who resisted logging reform while working for the industry realized the damage they were causing, he said.

"The irony is that after logging operations were shut down, these same people said, 'We were just trashing this forest.' In retrospect, it would have been good if we were speaking out even louder."

"Roadless rule," continued from p. 1

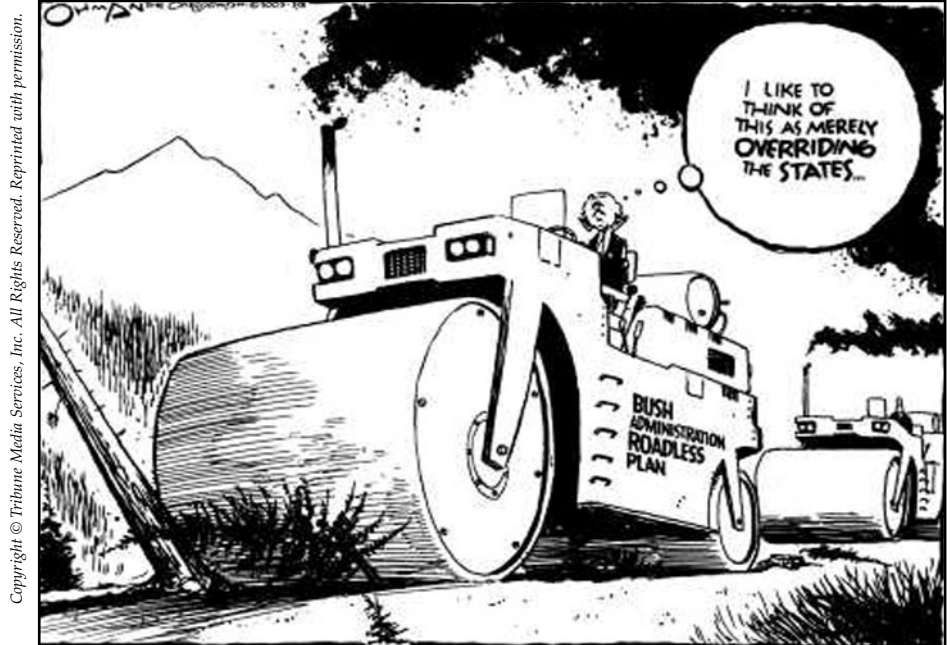
makes no promises of protections specific to California. It only says that "Future roadless protection will be determined by the forthcoming rule."

When the new federal rule was released in May, Schwarzenegger announced that he had asked the agency to issue a state-specific rulemaking. The governor's office did not elaborate, however. Judging by Chrisman's correspondence with the Forest Service, this rulemaking would apparently apply the provisions of the Interim Directive to California.

The governor has said that he intends to work with the Forest Service on individual forest management plans as they come up for renewal: A recent letter from the Resources Department to the manager of Los Padres National Forest may show the approach he plans to take in dealing with the state's roadless areas.

The forest plan for Los Padres, on California's Central Coast, came up for revision last year. Since then the Forest Service has been working on a new plan.

On Apr. 13 Chrisman wrote the agency to say that the governor wanted oil and gas development kept out of roadless areas in



the forest. (The Forest Service had been studying potential drilling sites, more than half of which were in roadless areas.)

The Forest Service is under no obligation to accommodate the governor's requests, but presumably the wishes of the governor could have some influence. The

final plan is due out sometime in June.

While it is encouraging that the governor has spoken out in favor of roadless areas, making a separate case of each forest leaves open the possibility of reduced protection in many instances. Environ-

See "Roadless rule," p. 12

Forest Service sued over Sierra Nevada and Sequoia Monument logging plans

The State of California, the timber industry, and an array of environmental groups have taken the U.S. Forest Service to court over its recent undermining of the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan (the Framework).

"We will not let stand this betrayal of treasured forests and the public trust," said California attorney general Bill Lockyer, announcing his lawsuit on Feb. 1.

Also haling the Forest Service into court over the Framework were environmental groups Earthjustice, the Sierra Nevada Forest Protection Campaign, the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, the Center for Biological Diversity, and The Wilderness Society.

The Forest Service's plan for logging in Giant Sequoia National Monument also is being litigated. Lockyer filed suit against the agency on Mar. 3, joining six conservation organizations, who filed their suit on Jan. 27.

Dismantling the Framework

The Framework is the Forest Service's plan for managing 11.5 million acres of Sierra Nevada federal forests. The original agreement protected endangered wildlife, old-growth habitat and watersheds, while providing for sustainable logging.

The Forest Service initially accepted the Framework, but after complaints from the timber industry, the agency began to rewrite the plan, taking a year to change a document developed over a decade.

The newly confirmed amendment increases the size of trees that may be cut, and scales back protections for endangered wildlife such as the California spotted owl, the Pacific fisher, the American marten, and other species dependent on old-growth.

The revised plan allows forest managers to exempt grazing lands on a case basis from the standards of the original Framework. This would increase risk of stream bank and meadow erosion and could degrade Yosemite toad and willow flycatcher habitat (a California species of concern and a state endangered species, respectively).

The Bush administration cited the danger of wildfires as the main reason the original forest plan needed to be revised. But the new plan in effect cuts the funds provided for fire prevention closest to communities. The original plan had allocated 75 percent of its fuels-reduction resources to the Wildland/Urban Interface; the amendment reduces this to 50 percent.

Full court press

The California Forestry Association, a timber industry trade group, meanwhile, filed suit against the Forest Service over the original Framework. The industry group claimed that the plan violated the original

Diversity and the Sierra Nevada Forest Protection Campaign filed a lawsuit over the Forest Service's plans to log in Giant Sequoia National Monument.

Attorney general Lockyer also is suing the Forest Service, claiming that the agency's logging plan violates the presidential proclamation that established the 328,000-acre monument in 2000, as well as the National Forest Management Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and the federal Administrative Procedure Act.

Giant Sequoia National Monument contains two-thirds of the surviving giant sequoias in the world. The proclamation specifically prohibited logging in the monument except where it is "clearly needed" for public safety or environmental protection.

The Forest Service plan would allow at least 7.5 million board feet of timber to be cut. It would endanger sensitive wildlife species such as the California spotted owl, Pacific fisher, and American marten.

As in other recent cases, the Forest Service claims that the logging is necessary to prevent catastrophic wildfire that might destroy the giant sequoias.

But the groups suing the agency point out that the plan targets removal of larger, more fire-resistant trees

instead of the underbrush and smaller trees that make up the "ladder fuels," which carry fire into the canopy. The slash left after logging is a fire hazard, and the brush that grows in recently cleared forest also is highly flammable.

Under the Forest Service plan, trees up to 30 inches in diameter can be removed. Such trees can be 200 years old or more. In areas called SPLATs (Strategically Placed Local Area Treatments) there is effectively no limit on the size of tree that may be cut. SPLATs are purportedly a kind of firebreak meant to slow the spread of wildfires. Critics say they are untested and another excuse to log merchantable trees.

"The Bush administration . . . wants to turn John Muir's 'big trees' into dead wood," Lockyer said. —M.L.

Photo © 2003 by Martin Litton



Small clearcut in Giant Sequoia National Monument.

purpose of the national forests to provide a continuous supply of timber.

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), an organization with many Forest Service employees among its members, has filed to intervene in the timber industry's lawsuit. The industry's suit is asking that the amount of logging in the Sierra be tripled, as does the Forest Service's amendment to the Framework.

PEER believes the suit is collusive, meant to allow the agency to settle with the timber industry, and by so doing justify weakening the Framework.

Logging among the giants

On Jan. 27 Sequoia Forestkeeper, Earth Island Institute, Sierra Club, Tule River Conservancy, the Center for Biological

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*"Restore,
Reinhabit,
Re-enchant"*

*"Test-tube trees,"
continued from p. 5*

gerate the problems inherent in tree plantations: GE trees engineered for rapid growth grow so fast they deplete the soil and use up available water.

"The Brazilian term for GE tree plantations is 'green deserts,'" says Mark des Marets of Northwest Resistance Against Genetic Engineering (NW RAGE).

Proponents say that only plantation forestry can meet the increasing timber needs of the world, and that plantation forestry can keep wild forests from being cut down. Genetically engineered trees, they say, can make plantation forestry much more productive and effective, and this will be a boon for poor and developing nations without forest resources.

According to Petermann, though, satellite images tell a different story. "Where the native forests stood 10 year ago is where the plantations are now," she says.

Owning life's blueprint

Ownership is an issue of overwhelming importance in genetically engineered plants—commensurate with the potential health and ecological impacts.

A Supreme Court decision that allowed the patenting of products of nature (Diamond v. Chakrabarty, 1980) opened the door on a scenario wherein multinational corporations can claim ownership of seeds and genes, license their use, and sue farmers and foresters when patented seeds and pollens turn up in fields and forests, even when this drifting can be shown to be accidental. (A Canadian canola farmer, Percy Schmiese, lost just such a case in 2001 to Monsanto before the Supreme Court of Canada.)

"Because the escape of tree pollen, once it occurs, is impossible to stop," say Petermann and Michael Cuba in their pamphlet *Genetically Engineered Trees: Myths and Realities*, "one can easily envision a future where all of the world's forests are the property of transnational pulp and paper companies."

GE trees and global warming

The Kyoto Protocol is an agreement among 141 countries (the United States not among them) to limit the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases believed responsible for global climate change. The protocol went into effect on Feb. 16 this year.

A recent decision by the United Nations would allow GE trees to be grown in plantations as "carbon sinks." Developed nations could receive "carbon credits" toward their carbon dioxide limit by investing in these plantations.

Forest activists say that the spread of GE traits to local tree populations might so damage the health of native forests that it would negate any benefits.

And those benefits may not be that great, after all. "Plantations in tropical areas store one-quarter of the carbon of native forests," Petermann says, citing reports by the World Resources Institute and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The future of GE trees

No commercial stands of GE timber trees have been approved in this country, and they may never be. The legal issues involved promise endless lawsuits. Some companies have backed away from GE tree research.

As with GE food crops, the market seems to be both driving and deforming the process, with inadequate testing for possible effects on human health and wild ecosystems, activists say. And even if the many safety issues can be resolved, troubling land-use and political issues remain.

"I don't think you can stigmatize every kind of GMO just because there are some kinds you don't like," says Strauss.

But for Petermann, the precautionary principle is paramount when it comes to genetically engineered trees. "We just don't know what the long-term ramifications are going to be."

—M.L.

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"Green governor?"
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Sierra Nevada Conservancy on Sept. 23, 2004, setting up funding resources for conservation, land preservation, and economic development in the region. He seemed to have no objection, however, to the revision of the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan undertaken by the Bush administration's Forest Service.

The original Sierra Nevada Forest Plan (the Framework) would have protected old-growth forests and wildlife, allowed for hazardous fuel removal near threatened communities, and permitted logging of trees smaller than 20 inches in diameter.

The Bush Forest Service initially accepted the Framework. But before it could be implemented the timber industry pressured the administration to revise it.

The Forest Service rolled out its final revision in July 2004. The new plan triples the amount of logging, increases the size of trees that may be cut, weakens protections for threatened wildlife and old-growth stands, and effectively cuts funds for protecting local communities from wildfire.

During his campaign for governor, Schwarzenegger had promised to support the original 2001 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan. Yet when the Bush administration rolled out its version, there was not a word of protest from the governor's office.

Now, with California Attorney General Bill Lockyer filing suit in January against the Forest Service over the Framework amendment, the governor is still sitting on his hands. (See "Forest Service sued over Sierra Nevada and Sequoia Monument log-

ging plans" on page 10.)

On balance

Schwarzenegger's environmental record overall is a mixed bag, containing things good, bad and indifferent.

But, so far at least, California's forests seem to be the governor's environmental blind spot. The reason may be a belief on Arnold's part that jobs and environmental protection really *aren't* compatible. Or it may be, as some have suggested, that the timber industry has too much influence over him.

While the rest of his environmental report card may consist of C's or even B's, the governor has not done as well in every subject.

"I'd give him an F for forestry," said Jodi Frediani. —M.L.

"Roadless rule"
continued from p. 9

mentalists fear that industry pressure on Schwarzenegger may prevent him from defending other roadless parcels.

Act Two

On the federal level, meanwhile, representatives Jay Inslee (D-WA) and Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) are planning to re-introduce the National Forest Roadless Area Conservation Act.

Together with six other representatives, they sent a letter to their colleagues in the House of Representatives on May 10 announcing their intention to introduce legislation that will codify the protections of the Clinton-era roadless rule as federal law. The act would supersede both the

original rule and the recent rule change which overturned it.

The bill attracted 150 bipartisan cosponsors when it was first introduced in the last session of Congress. Inslee and Boehlert hope for a similar number this time around.

Forests Forever has been asking its supporters for action on the roadless rule since 2003. Since then we have generated 1,635 letters, 1,180 commitments to write or call congressional representatives, and 3,080 faxes.

In addition, beginning in February 2005 Forests Forever began asking people to contact Schwarzenegger and urge him to support the original roadless rule. Since then 1,840 faxes and 988 letters have been sent to the governor.

—M.L.,
with reporting by Tara Treasurefield

TAKE ACTION:

The Roadless Area Conservation Act is about to be reintroduced in Congress. Our goal is to have 150 original cosponsors before the bill is introduced. Ask your congressional representatives to cosponsor Inslee and Boehlert's roadless legislation.

Call your representative through the Congressional Switchboard, **202/224-3121**, and ask him or her to become an original cosponsor of the 2005 National Forest Roadless Area Conservation Act today.

Find your representative at:
<http://www.house.gov/MemStateSearch.html>

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