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Friends of Douglas-fir National Monument

Dispatch

Protect the Best, Restore the Rest

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Winter 2024

Stop wasting tax \$\$\$ on money-losing timber sales

Long ago, both sides of the timber wars recognized that the US Forest Service was losing money on timber sales. That is, taxpayers were paying more to sell timber from national forests than it received from the buyers.

In 1981, the American Enterprise Institute (not known as a tree-hugging group) was arguing “Rational economic management would permit the production of more wood on less land, freeing large areas of national forest land for wilderness, recreation, and other purposes.” <https://www.aei.org/articles/wasting-our-national-forests-how-to-get-less-timber-and-less-wilderness-at-the-same-time/>

The problem is getting worse. In 2016, the Natural Resource Economics organization found that “below-cost timber sales are far more severe than those of the 1990s.” https://nreconomics.com/reports/2016-07-28_16-04_OR_Below-Cost.pdf

Yet such below-cost timber sales continue. When we plea for more recreation projects, we are told “Good idea. We don’t have the money.” We are even asked to donate to such projects. This, to us, a tiny non-profit, from the Federal Government.

As we focus on recreation facilities and programs, we are learning that the bulk of Forest Service recreation facilities rely on grants and volunteer efforts like trail building and maintenance for their existence. It is time for the Forest Service to stop losing money on preparing, monitoring and selling public trees at a loss, and to shift those \$\$\$ to recreation. The Forest Service can better fulfill its mission of “serving the people” by improving recreation facilities, not subsidizing timber industry resources in the name of job creation. That defies logic while the mills are eliminating those very jobs through automation.



How much taxpayer money is being lost on this sale?

Credit: Bureau of Land Management

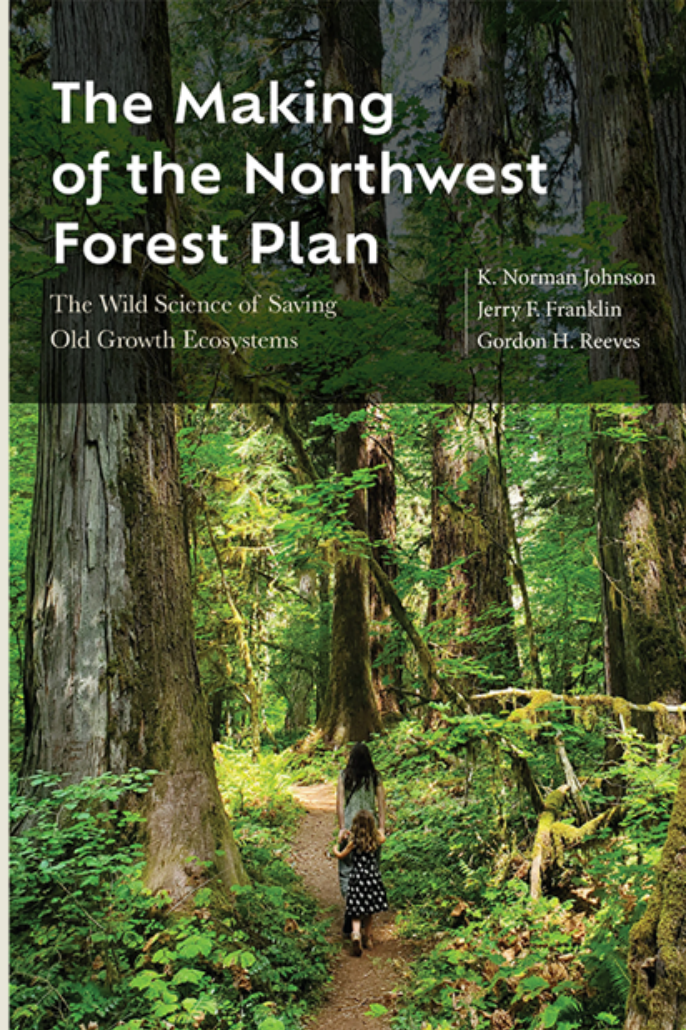
READ THIS!

The Making of the Northwest Forest Plan

By Norman Johnson

Jerry Franklin

Gordon Reeves



The timber wars were inevitable. in fact, the Spotted Owl just may have saved the timber industry.

As the industry marched across the continent, looking only for profit, it finally came to the end of the road, so to speak. Until the 1970s, the industry's attempt to convert the forests to monoculture tree farms, including public lands, was succeeding. Demonizing old growth as biological deserts, spraying herbicides everywhere to "suppress" "competing " vegetation, maintaing mills to handle large old growth trees, all to make trees into mere products such as toilet paper. Given this trajectory,all the old growth would eventually be gone. Mills would have needed to be retooled to accomodate smaller, plantation trees. Guess what? After the spotted owl put so many big old trees off limits, the mills retooled. Not only that, in the process, the mills were automated, putting many workers out of their jobs. Turns out, the Spotted Robot did the job the industry claimed the owl would do.

Instead, the owl is surviving (barely), the fishing industry may even be revived, all because the public forest managers are finally seeing the forest beyond the trees.

How did this happen? This book tells the story in all the details of the rising influence of science, public opinion and the resulting political actions. But it is not over. The timber wars will continue untill all of the old school industry leaders leave the scene, the sympathetic bureaucrats ascend to top leadership and the old school academics retire.

So, what happened to the rural northwest economy? This book cites studies that answer that question. Employment shifted towards urban areas. Small rural towns suffered. Federal employment dropped and those workers moved on or retired.

Sounds bad, and, in many ways, it was. Missing from this book (beyond it's scope?) is a comparison to the economic impact on midwestern and eastern communities as the old growth industry moved west, leaving

those regions behind. It can only be speculated, but economic turmoil always happens when communities rely on limited resources that eventually run out.

For tree-hugging nerds like me, this fascinating story gives an in-depth look at all the influencers who made this happen, and the winding path, setbacks and compromises that gave us the Northwest Forest Plan. A real page-turner.

Just as the Northern Spotted Owl relies on the natural forest, we rely on the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) to protect the natural forest. The NWFP was developed to protect the owl and all the other critters that live in our forest - marbled murrelet, northern flying squirrel, red-backed vole, all those salmon species and all the rest.

This plan, along with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are the primary tools we use to influence the practice of forestry on our public lands, mostly the National Forests and the BLM lands. The Northwest Forest Plan, while clearly sensible as a response to the decline of the Northern Spotted Owl and the associated decline in old growth forests, was the result of hard fought battles to protect our public forests.

As such, it was a result of considerable compromise and is currently being considered for amending.

This book was written by the leading authors of the NFP (Norm Johnson, Jerry Franklin and Gordon Reeves). It also points out the weaknesses of the plan that need to be corrected in the upcoming amendment process.

If you want to influence the management of our public forests, this book is a must-read for you to learn all the nuances of that management:

- Science
- Advocacy
- Change
- Bureaucracy
- Industry
- Politics
- Community
- Timber wars

Douglas-fir National Monument

~Naturally~

SOIL

psst . . . Wanna hear a dirty story?

This is all about you. You live in a very temporary body, made from SOIL. All the minerals in your body were once soil, and will become soil again soon after you die. Dust unto dust and all that. As Carl Sagan once said "We are all stardust. . . "

Just as all the other elements in the natural world, soil composition varies widely throughout the forest, by elevation, origin and even time. Beginning at the higher locations in our area, volcanic action produces soil high in mineral content and low in organic content. Over time, soil erodes with melting snow and rainwater, carrying, absorbing and mixing the ingredients that form the rich loam that feeds our magnificent old growth Douglas-fir trees. Seeking the lowest point in the landscape, those waters form the beautiful streams and waterfalls we marvel at. Some of that water seeps into the ground and emerges further below as springs.

Along the way, those moving waters drop their load and deposit soil to support all the other plants and animals that make up the forest. In a dance of nutrient content, weather, climate, gravity and evolution, our complex forest develops into a robust ecosystem.

Occasionally, a momentary disruption occurs (erupting volcano, landslide and wildfire) and re-starts the process. Those naturally occurring events can be exacerbated by human activities like logging and roadbuilding. When we examine logging plans, we always caution against those soil-disturbing actions.

So, when you next visit your forest, look down at your feet and say hi to your dearly departed. Appreciate the efforts that we take to encourage the preservation of the vital, often overlooked role that soil plays in our forest.



Healthy soil supports a healthy forest

Credit: US Forest Service

GET OUT

Ski Ickenick, back country/cross country ski trail

Lots of snow in the mountains. Still time to strap on those skis and enjoy this little-known cross-country trail on the way to the Santiam Pass. Check out this informative report by our favorite outdoor writer - William Sullivan.

An Ickenick Day in the Snow

<https://eugeneweekly.com/2024/02/08/an-ickenick-day-in-the-snow/>

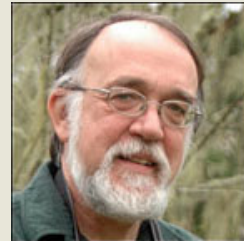
For more such ski trails, go to

Willamette National Forest - Winter Recreation Area: Santiam Pass (Hwy 20)



Prez sez:

by David Stone, President, FDFNM



Welcome our newest Advisory Board member, Woody Jackson. Known to his friends as “Woody Debris”, he has been a long time advocate for the forest in the Breitenbush section of our Monument proposal. Years ago, he put down roots in that area and has been committed to protection of that forest ever since. Currently, he is President of Friends of the Breitenbush Cascades, serves on the North Santiam Watershed Council and is a Volunteer Team Leader for SOLVE and Cascade Volunteers. We look forward to benefiting from his historical knowledge and his ongoing commitment to protecting the forest.



“Look deep into nature and you will understand everything better”
- Albert Einstein

Contact us:

by [email](#)

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