

HELLS CANYON FALCON



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HCPC Mission Statement:

The mission of the Hells Canyon Preservation Council is to protect the Hells Canyon Ecosystem in its natural condition. Our goal is to ensure, through direct advocacy, the conservation and maintenance of all its natural splendor: Wildlands; clear, free-flowing rivers and streams; thriving native wildlife and fish populations; natural forests and grasslands; intact archaeological and historic resources; and inspiring scenic and ecological qualities.

CRY WOLF?

By Ric Bailey

Naturalist Aldo Leopold spoke of the fierce green fire in their eyes. Author Barry Lopez told the anguishing story of the holocaust that was perpetrated upon them, perhaps the most senseless act of ecological genocide in human history. Perhaps because they are so near human, or perhaps because their magic is so easily discerned by humans, there are few species that so move and inspire us.

The last wild wolf known to exist in the state of Oregon was killed in 1962. Thirty seven years later, a wild wolf, the offspring of wolves reintroduced from Canada into central Idaho in 1995, found her way into eastern Oregon. She swam the Snake River in the depths of Hells Canyon and found a dwelling place in the Blue Mountains of northeast Oregon. Heeding instincts and/or designs that we will not likely ever understand, she remained for nearly six weeks.

Over the objections of HCPC and other wildlife advocates, this inscrutable pioneer was apprehended by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on March 26 and returned to the designated reintroduction zone in Idaho. Scientists say, however, that it is likely that other wolves will come to Oregon.

HCPC wants the wild wolf, with its inspiration, its magic, and with our recognition of its niche in the ecosystem, to return. We're doing something about it. We've joined with the National Wildlife Federation, Oregon Natural Resources Council, Oregon Natural

Desert Association, Predator Defense Institute and Defenders of Wildlife to advocate that new policy be established that allows wolves to naturally re-inhabit the places from which they were extirpated.

Natural wolf restoration involves allowing wolf recovery to proceed naturally. It eschews the formal, time consuming and politically-charged reintroduction process. We kicked off this campaign with a press conference in Portland, Oregon that received wide coverage on major regional television and print media. We then initiated the 'Name Our Wolf' contest wherein school children throughout the state submit names. Local representatives from Indian Tribes will pick the winning name.

A number of other events followed, including the Oregon Natural Desert Association's public opinion poll that found 68 percent of Oregonians favor natural wolf restoration. HCPC and the National Wildlife Federation then put together the June 3-4 Northwest Wolf Conference in Portland.



The Grey Wolf was native to all of the Pacific Northwest and a key component of the ecosystem at the top of the food chain until it was

Wildlife advocates believe that our society has moved beyond the wolf myths and fairy tales and is ready to correct our mistakes of the past. But we need to debunk another myth: That wolves pose a threat to cattle ranching operations. They don't. Example? Livestock producers in Montana lose about 170,000 animals annually, most dying from disease, weather and birthing problems. Between 1987 and 1996 in Montana, the 100-plus wolves there killed 6.5 head of livestock each year. In 1995, feral and domestic dogs killed 1,600 head.

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THE 1999 HCPC MEMBER SURVEY: INSIGHTS FROM THE FOLKS WE WORK FOR

By Brenda Schweitzer

Thanks to all of our members who took the time to fill out our first-ever member survey. The thoughts expressed on where HCPC should be heading in the future by the 23 percent of our members that got back to us, were enlightening and often surprising. Following is a summary of the results. If you would like to receive a detailed read out, feel free to contact us for a free copy.

According to the respondents, the three most important activities that HCPC engages in are: (1) protecting Hells Canyon Ecosystem's water and native vegetation; (2) protecting the wilderness values of Hells Canyon by controlling or eliminating jet boat use; and (3) pursuing the closure of roads to re-establish roadless, undeveloped country. HCPC actions that will be most important for the future are: (1) litigation; (2) activities and outreach that involve the national public; and (3) media coverage.

Respondents indicated that the three most prominent associations that come to mind when they think of the Hells Canyon Ecosystem are: (1) wildlife; (2) HCPC; and (3) wild rivers. They said the three greatest threats to the Hells Canyon Ecosystem are: (1) road building; (2) livestock grazing; and (3) aquatic motorized recreation. The most important legislative solution to permanently protect

Hells Canyon turned out to be a tie between designating a Hells Canyon National Park, and expanding the boundary of the HCNRA and transferring its management to the National Park Service.

When asked about HCPC specifically, our members overwhelmingly felt that in carrying out our work HCPC has been "just right" rather than too aggressive or not aggressive enough. Another overwhelming mandate was that we should keep our name as it is rather than changing it.

In the part of the survey where narrative response was requested, the primary reason people joined HCPC was because they loved the Hells Canyon Country and were concerned over its environmental future. The reasons these people remain members is because they're committed to protecting Hells Canyon and its wilderness. HCPC was seen as being different from other environmental groups because we are focused and specific to Hells Canyon and more effective than other environmental groups.

As a member of HCPC, the best benefits that respondents noted are knowing that HCPC is working to protect the Hells Canyon Ecosystem, receiving the Hells Canyon Falcon newsletter and action alerts on urgent issues. If any changes to the Falcon were to be made, the number one choice was more science-

based articles.

The new merchandise that folks found most enticing were a new t-shirt (which we are working on), a calendar, color photo stationery and a color photo poster. We're listening! Look for new merchandise this fall.

The survey also allowed us to learn more about our membership. We found out that the majority of our members politically describe themselves as liberal (although we did hear from quite a few folks who are self-proclaimed conservatives), support mostly local environmental groups and have been an HCPC member from 1-5 years.

This information is invaluable. We are using it to plan our future work into the 21st century toward protecting the Hells Canyon Ecosystem we cherish. We never forget that we work for the ecosystem, but for YOU also! We are always happy to hear from our members and hope you'll feel free to email or call us anytime with ideas, comments or suggestions (hcpc@hellscanyon.org).

Thanks again for taking the time to let us know what you think about us and our work!

Brenda Schweitzer is HCPC Development Director

If you haven't already... PLEASE JOIN HCPC!

Your contributions are tax-deductible!

Our members are our life blood. Their financial and other contributions enable visionary and dedicated activism toward the protection of one of America's true natural treasures: The Hells Canyon Ecosystem.

- \$250 (or more) William O. Douglas Society
- \$100 Benefactor
- \$50 Contributor
- \$35 Family
- \$25 Individual
- \$15 Student/Senior The Legacy Club*

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

*Join the Legacy Club!

For just \$10 or more per month, automatically withdrawn from your account, you can make a hassle-free contribution to HCPC. This gives you the comfort of knowing you are helping us every month and gives us the luxury of spending more time on issues and less on fundraising!

Option I: Bank Account Pledge

Yes! I authorize my bank to transfer \$ _____ each month from my account. In the event I wish to discontinue or change my pledge, I will write HCPC. A record of each donation will be included on my bank statement and will serve as my receipt. To begin the process, I enclose a check for \$ _____.

Signature _____ Date _____

Telephone _____

Option II: Credit Card Pledge

Yes! I authorize HCPC to charge \$ _____ each month to my credit card. In the event I wish to discontinue or change my pledge, I will write HCPC. A record of each donation will be included on my credit card statement and will serve as my receipt.

Signature _____ Date _____

Telephone _____

Card Number _____ Visa / MC (circle one)

Expiration Date _____

MAIL ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

HCPC; P.O. Box 2768 LaGrande, OR 97850
Phone: (541) 963-3950 Fax: (541) 963-0584
E-Mail: hcpc@hellscanyon.org

A HELLS CANYON STORY, PART I

By Brock Evans

Such a strange-sounding, mysterious place: A whisper of an echo of something ancient and far-off, forbidding even in its very name.

Springtime 1967. I had just left my law practice in Seattle to take on a new position as Northwest Representative of the Sierra Club-- the only paid, full-time conservationist position (we weren't called environmentalists until after Earth Day, 1970) north of San Francisco. My "territory," as it turned out was everything on the Pacific Coast from the North Pole to California, plus Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Alberta, and the Yukon Territory (my boss, David Brower, had a rather loose management style!)

I had actually heard of Hells Canyon for the first time the year before. By a strange turn of fate, the law firm I worked for had as its major client the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS). This corporate giant was one of two premier dam-building entities in the northwest and mortal rivals of the other dam builders. The struggles over who got to plug up the great Northwest rivers seem grotesque to us today, but those were the realities of that not-so distant past--when the words "wild river" were subjects of scorn and derision from all the northwest political powers. It was in the struggle between the dam-building titans that I was first introduced to Hells Canyon.

"Brock, we just got our appeal to the Supreme Court approved [challenging a license recently granted by the Federal Power Commission to Pacific Northwest Power Company, a combine of private power companies, to build a big dam in Hells Canyon, flooding out the last 120 miles of its inner gorge]. We'd like you to work on the brief for us," said one of the firm's senior partners.

A brief before the Supreme Court, every young lawyer's dream! But I hated dams--the whole idea of dams--even then, and I knew I just could not do it. I begged off, wanting no part of what I considered a dirty business.

The wheel of fate turned again. A year later in my new position with the Sierra Club, I attended my first meeting of the Executive Committee of the Club's



Brock Evans with his wife, Linda Garcia

Pacific Northwest Chapter. Not only was the Club much smaller in those days--about 40,000 members nationwide--but its tiny membership in the Northwest was almost exclusively located in the "west-side" Seattle-Portland-Eugene axis. Although knowledgeable and determined on issues there--wilderness, parks, and forests--few knew much about the vast deserts, rivers, wild mountains and boreal forests of the Pacific Northwest interior, much less had ever visited there.

On that bright spring morning, from "Darkest Idaho," across the rivers and the deserts and the mountains, came a visitor--one Floyd Harvey, of Lewiston Idaho. Floyd, longtime boatman and guide in the Canyon, loved the great river, knew every bend and cove and cliff. His quiet earnestness, eloquence and passion moved us all as he told us of the loss of a great living river if the dam was built, and pleaded with us to try to save it.

"Okay Brock--take a look and see what we can do," said my ExCom. Yeah, sure, I thought. I hate this river-killing dam, the whole idea of it--but what could be done at this late date? The license had been already granted and the only issue before the Supreme Court was now only about who got to do the terrible deed, not whether. I was morose and unhappy about it for weeks, and could come up with no solution to the problem, given our very few resources in those distant times.

But hope came--and from a totally-unexpected place: The Supreme Court

itself (this was long before there was any such thing as "environmental law"). That June a small headline in the Lewiston Morning Tribune screamed out at me: "Hells Canyon Case Sent Back by Court for More Hearings."

What's this?

What happened was a now-famous opinion from the great Justice, William O. Douglas, one which had nothing to do with any of the legal arguments presented by those who argued the case. But Supreme Court Justices don't have to worry about such niceties; it is they who decide what the law is. Justice Douglas' opinion (known in Latin legalese as an opinion obiter dictum--meaning outside the parameters of the case itself) was a landmark in American environmental history. And for me and our tiny band who wanted to save Hells Canyon it represented Hope, a fighting chance-- if we could seize it.

Brock Evans lives in Washington D.C. and is currently the Director of the Endangered Species Coalition. He is known among wilderness and ecosystem advocacy leaders as one of the modern day patriarchs of the movement and remains unquestionably one of its most respected spokespersons. Parts II and III of Brock's story will appear in the September and January 2000 editions of the Falcon.

BEAVER CREEK: A WATERSHED QUESTION

By Jennifer Schemm

Twelve miles south of the city of La Grande lies the Beaver Creek Watershed, over 12,000 acres of which is pristine forested land virtually untouched by roads or logging. Located on the LaGrande Ranger District of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, it is a rare gem surrounded by abusively logged and roaded land.

Beaver Creek provides La Grande with its backup water supply. It will one day be the city's primary water source since groundwater wells, the current primary source, is expensive and not performing as expected. Further, because of its pristine state, Beaver Creek provides incredibly important habitat for wildlife, including pine marten, black bear and elk.

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (WWNF) wants to log the Beaver Creek Watershed. The agency is proposing a large timber sale that it claims will prevent a "catastrophic" fire from burning the entire Watershed. It proposes to log out sixteen miles of quarter-mile wide fuel reduction corridors, one of which would effectively bisect the Watershed's roadless area. Another 1,500 acres within the Watershed would be logged to "reduce fuel levels" and over five miles of road would be built.

Unique Wildlife Habitat in Jeopardy

Wildlife biologists from the Forest Service's Forest Sciences Lab and from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) oppose the WWNF proposal. These scientists prefer that the Forest Service not log Beaver Creek at all because of its extremely limited and unique wildlife habitat. The increased accessibility and fragmentation that would result from the project would be very detrimental to wildlife. Currently, the area contains a population of American Pine Marten (a forest-dwelling member of the weasel family) with the potential to repopulate other suitable unoccupied habitats. If the proposed activities occur, this population will lose its potential to repopulate.

Beaver Creek includes a national demonstration area for elk security. Black bear dens are clustered within the Watershed due to abundant food supply, old growth habitat for den sites and security provided by the absence of roads. Further, the levels of standing dead and dying trees and dead and down material in Beaver Creek are substantial, providing habitat for many species of woodpeckers



The Beaver Creek Watershed is an island of intact forest and the future drinking water supply for the City of LaGrande, 11 miles to the north

and other excavators and small mammals. Dead and dying trees and dead and down material are precisely what the Forest Service proposes to remove.

Logging Will Hurt Water Quality, Not Help It

La Grande's water superintendent opposes the proposed activities. He believes logging and increased motor vehicle accessibility may degrade water quality. Many municipal watersheds are inaccessible to human use because of the risk of fecal contamination of water supplies. Further, increased human accessibility increases the likelihood of human caused fire within the Watershed.

Even the fuels specialist for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has said that, from his perspective, the width of the proposed fuel reduction corridors are excessive and the project's proposed "forest health" logging units are unnecessary. He would be satisfied with 200 foot wide corridors and no other logging. The proposed "forest health" cutting units, encompassing over 400 acres, are not necessary to prevent or reduce the likelihood of a large scale, high intensity fire. However, they may be necessary, according to the WWNF Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project, to make the timber sale economically profitable.

Roadbuilding Moratorium Ignored

Reasons not to proceed with the Beaver Creek Timber Sale continue to mount:

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BEAVER CREEK PUBLIC TOUR

On July 16th and 17th, HCPC will conduct the Beaver Creek Examination. This public event will consist of hikes into and flights over Beaver Creek, and informational panels on the Watershed and the proposed Forest Service project. Potential co-sponsors for the event, include the City of La Grande and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Forest Service has declined to participate, claiming that it finds such panels and public forums to be divisive and ineffective. All of these activities are intended to give the public a sense of the importance of preserving the Watershed, for both wildlife and people. We hope that you will be able to attend the event.

THE CANYON GROUP: AN UNCONVENTIONAL COALITION

By Mary O'Brien

A chance greeting one 1995 spring morning in an Enterprise, Oregon bakery between Hells Canyon cattle rancher Jack McClaran and Mary O'Brien of HCPC led to the formation of an unusual group that has been meeting ever since and which shows no sign of disbanding.

While the two had met once before, this time McClaran expressed interest in talking about the future of his family inholding on Cow Creek in the depths of the

PEOPLE COMPOSING THE CANYON GROUP

Note: The "membership" of the Canyon Group is not a fixed list. The "regulars" are listed below:

Dave Bishop - ex-Forest Service administrator, ecosystem advocate

Ellen Bishop - geologist, science writer

Judy Johnson - bird habitat advocate

Jack McClaran - Hells Canyon cattle rancher

Scott McClaran - Hells Canyon cattle rancher

Dick McDaniel - local cattle rancher and legislature candidate

Larry Nall - local contract botanist

Mary O'Brien - botanist, grasslands advocate, representing HCPC

Kevin Scribner - commercial fisherman and salmon advocate

Dennis Sheehy - rangeland researcher

Kelly Smith - hunter and research scientist

Scott Stouder - hunter, mule deer advocate and outdoor writer

Michael Straw - forest geneticist

Berta Youtie - grasslands manager

Hells Canyon Country and the steep canyon ranching they do. O'Brien suggested an informal meeting of some mutual acquaintances and on June 23, 1995, the first gathering took place in the Enterprise library basement. Six meetings have taken place since.

What is unique about this group is that the barriers between ecosystem advocates, scientists and ranchers have been effectively breached. Animosity has been extinguished as participants come to the table with open minds and have found common ground.

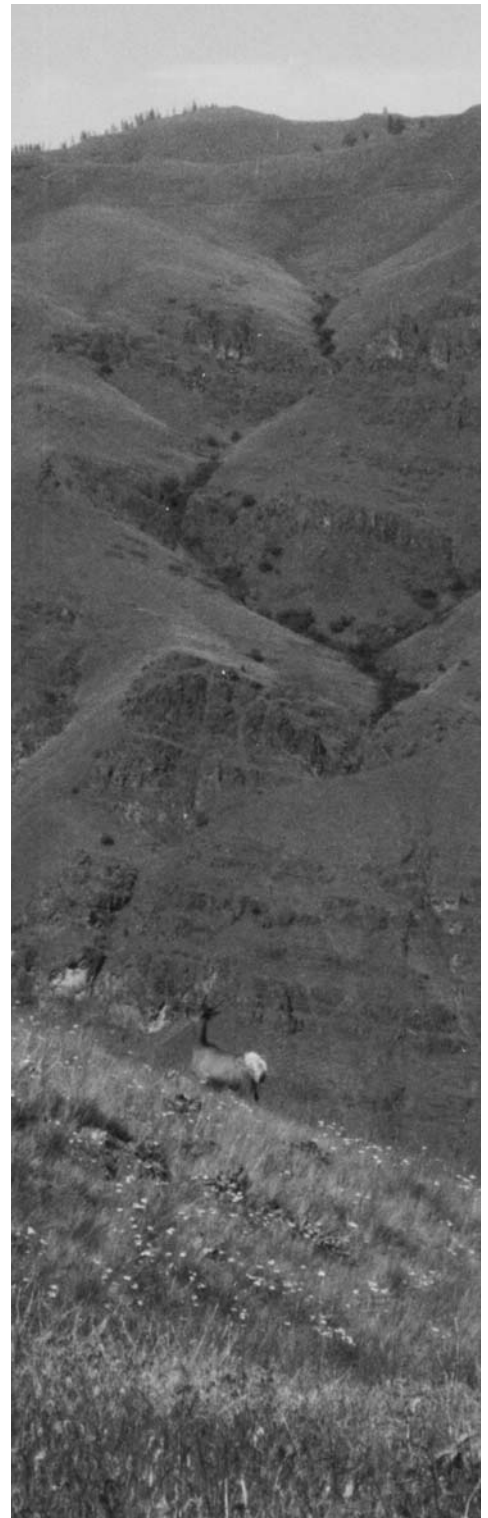
The Group is informally co-facilitated by O'Brien and Scott McClaran (Jack's son and the third McClaran generation ranching in Hells Canyon) and is composed of ranchers, scientists, a hunter, a commercial fisherman, and ecosystem and public lands advocates. (See "People Composing the Canyon Group" sidebar.)

The Canyon Group has evolved, both in terms of including more people and in moving from discussion to actual goals for possible future action: At a two-day meeting in June 1996, the Canyon Group decided on an overarching question and six related goals:

Canyon Group overarching question: The question of human effects in the Hells Canyon area. Related goals:

1. Validate and/or enhance Scott McClaran's efforts at sustainable livestock grazing.
2. Better understand wildlife needs in the area.
3. Provide information for adaptive management in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area (HCNRA).
4. Implement a model of cooperative research goals, methods and analysis.
5. Encourage integrated research; provide education for researchers.
6. Provide public, agency and rancher education about livestock grazing, wildlife habitat and potentials for grassland restoration.

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Elk and many other species depend on intact Hells Canyon grasslands, the subject of discussion among the people in the Canyon Group

HELLS CANYON RECREATION DAY: PLAN TO ATTEND THIS UNIQUE EVENT

By Juanette Cremin

Help HCPC show the world that recreation doesn't just mean jet boats, roads, all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles. Walking or biking is less impacting to the land, and it's fun!

Mark your calendars for the weekend of August 6-- Join other HCPC members, friends, and perhaps a few noteworthy celebrities for a campout at Coverdale Campground, on the beautiful Imnaha River about 38 miles from Joseph, Oregon, to celebrate Hells Canyon Recreation Day. This weekend event will feature short and long hikes, horse or llama pack trips and bike rides designed to include participants of all ages and fitness levels.

Friday and Saturday nights will showcase socializing, excellent camp meals

and presentations by experts in various environmental and scientific fields. Hikes and bikes will occur Saturday, led by veteran hikers and advocates for protecting wild places. Media and government officials will be invited to attend.

Discussion of current threats to the Hells Canyon Ecosystem and what we can do to eliminate them will be the focus of Saturday night's talks. Local musicians will provide camp music both evenings.

The purpose of the event is to highlight the current accessibility of Hells Canyon, illustrating the intrusion of roads and motors and the need to discourage further development of the area. The publicity generated from this event will help us to influence the new management plan for the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, which will dictate the future of

non-motorized recreation opportunities and wilderness protection into the next millennium.

We hope you will be able join us for a weekend of fun and relaxation, learning and exploration in one of the most beautiful places on earth. Oh yes, the price? It's free, food, hikes and all, thanks to volunteers and donors to the event and the generous support of the Conservation Alliance, a coalition of outdoor recreation companies that support worthy environmental and recreation-related causes.

Please RSVP to Juanette Cremin at hcpc@hellscanyon.org; or (541) 963-3950 if you plan to attend!

Juanette Cremin is HCPC's Outreach Director

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What have these discussions led to? First, and most importantly, a lot of trust, listening and learning. Second, some time together out on the land. Third, some research. Scott Stouder, of the Oregon Hunters Association and the Mule Deer Foundation, is pursuing opportunities for mule deer research in Hells Canyon.

This new research will supplement work already accomplished by HCPC: In June 1997, Mary O'Brien took five high school students into the Idaho side of Hells Canyon to compare vegetation on a 10,000 acre livestock allotment and a similar allotment that has had no livestock grazing the past 14 years (see "What it Means Not to be Cowed" in the January 1998 Falcon). In June 1998, biologists Josh O'Brien (son of Mary O'Brien), Rick Topinka, and Whitman College student Adriane Meyers (one of the June 1997 high school students who studied vegetation on the Idaho side) spent several days on Scott McClaran's Cow Creek in holding establishing experimental plots for some bunchgrass plantings.

The Canyon Group has a lot of room for continued joint projects because the group's spirit is great and the minds are open. The foremost of these is the June 1999 Grasslands Conference (a report will appear in the next edition of the Falcon). Particular credit goes to Scott

and Jack McClaran for their thoughtful, skilled and open approach to their livestock operations and to the ecosystem of Hells Canyon. As Scott notes, "We're only tenants in time." It matters how all of us approach that responsibility.

Mary O'Brien is HCPC's Contract Scientist and Co-Coordinator of the Canyon Group



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The restoration of wolves will mark an end to the days where it was acceptable to drive wildlife to extinction in order to benefit favored industries. As a culture, we have the will, the ambition and the knowledge to share our world with all of its other inhabitants.

When the next wolves arrive, possibly migrants from the burgeoning Idaho population, or perhaps from Canada or Montana, we'll be ready to make them welcome.

Ric Bailey is HCPC Executive Director and a Passionate Wolf Advocate

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On March 1, 1999, a road building moratorium for National Forest roadless areas was implemented. The moratorium will be in place for at least eighteen months; it affects the five miles of road proposed for the project.

The WWNF has failed to justify how logging and increasing access will reduce the likelihood of a large scale, high intensity fire. There is very little empirical research conducted on the impacts of logging on fire behavior. In fact, the studies that have been done suggest that these activities tend to increase the likelihood and intensity of fires. The Forest Service's claim that a "catastrophic" fire is imminent is also suspect and without substantiation.

Despite all of the aforementioned concerns, the Forest Service is doggedly proceeding with the Beaver Creek project. To date, the agency has released its draft EIS and has declined to withdraw it even though the roadbuilding moratorium clearly prohibits it. HCPC commented on the draft, voicing all of the above concerns. The final EIS is due to be distributed to the public in mid-August. HCPC will actively pursue Beaver Creek's protection.

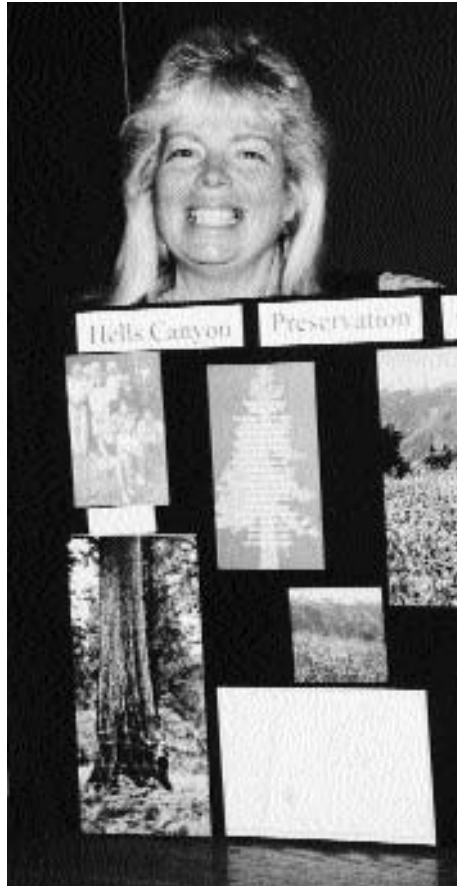
Jennifer Schemm is HCPC Chief Counsel and is conducting a legal analysis of the Forest Service logging plans for Beaver Creek

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

By Brenda Schweitzer

Shelley Cimon is a long time member of HCPC and dedicated Oregon State Board representative of the Hanford Nuclear Facility clean up committee. She represents Oregonians in the clean up effort toward the protection of the Columbia River and transport of wastes through Oregon. Shelley has been working on the Hanford Board for 13 years. She also has a degree in drafting and graphic art. Recently she put her artistic skills to work on a beautiful new display board for HCPC that has caught a lot of attention at our Open House, conferences and the 1999 Earth Day Festival. Shelley is pictured with our great new display below.

Shelley and her husband Norm have lived in eastern Oregon for 19 years. Son Jessie is into Aikido, baseball and soccer. The Cimon family travels to nearby scenic spots as often as possible, with Buckhorn Springs and Eagle Creek their favorite places and flyfishing and hiking their favorite activities. Norm is a computer systems analyst at the Blue Mountain Forestry and Range Sciences Lab and is also active in protecting the natural heritage of northeast Oregon. Thank you Shelley and family for your time and commitment over the years!



HCPC volunteer activist Shelley Cimon

Supporting the environment through your phone bill?

Did you know there is a telephone company that donates a portion of your bill to progressive organizations working to defend the environment, achieve economic and social justice, and promote peace and international freedom? Working Assets is that company! Last year alone, Working Assets customers generated more than \$3 million for non-profit groups - without paying more for their long distance.

If you switch from your long distance carrier to Working Assets Long Distance (WALD) and mention Hells Canyon Preservation Council, they will give us a rebate on our phone bill. Just another way you can support HCPC's committed work!



Wish List

HCPC is looking for:

- Macintosh computer with 60+ RAM & modem
- Office desk and chair
- Paper Cutter

All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE HCPC WEB PAGE!

We haven't really looked forward to entering the 21st Century, but in order to battle the forces of darkness that want to wreck Hells Canyon, we've got to match their technological advances. So, we created a web site and damn is it good! The magic and wonder of the Hells Canyon Ecosystem can hardly be re-created with microchips and megabytes. But we did the best we could, shored up by contributions from some of Hells Canyon's best photographers and lots of good information.

Check it out at: www.hellscanyon.org and tell your friends about it!

