

Protecting Montana's Rivers on Private and Public Lands

John Kober

Like the paths rivers take themselves, protecting a river is a long journey. Protecting Montana's last best rivers has taken me from Oregon to Montana to Washington, D.C. several times over again. In my most recent trip to Washington, D.C., in May, I was encouraged by the progress made toward a new bill to protect Montana's rivers on both federal and private lands. Since rivers transcend political boundaries, so should our efforts to protect them. Our Montanans for Healthy Rivers campaign has a two-pronged approach, working to protect rivers on both private and public lands. We hope it can not only work in Montana, but also provide a model for other Western watersheds.

I met personally with Senator Jon Tester of Montana, whom we are encouraging to support our legislative proposal, which designates more than 600 miles of rivers and streams as Wild and Scenic and provides management guidance for 192,000 acres of public lands around these rivers.

On private lands, former Senator Max Baucus of Montana helped secure a provision in the Water Resources Development Act, which recently passed Congress, providing funding for private lands river conservation. Examples include conservation easements, floodplain mapping and restoration projects that protect "green infrastructure", such as natural floodplains that preserve river processes.



Montanans for Healthy Rivers Coalition (l to r): Senator Max Baucus, Congressman Steve Daines, Mike Fiebig, Scott Bosse (American Rivers), Kevin Colburn (American Whitewater), John Kober, Senator Jon Tester

We are also working with Senator John Walsh and Congressman Steve Daines, both of Montana. Senator Walsh recently introduced a bill to designate East Rosebud Creek as Wild and Scenic. The East Rosebud is a small part of our Montana campaign.

Protecting rivers is indeed a journey—one that requires stamina and a lot of support along the way. Thanks to strong support from Montana's leaders and a strong partnership with American Rivers, American Whitewater and the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, the Pacific Rivers Council has made huge strides toward protecting Montana's last best rivers and forwarding a model for future Western conservation efforts that covers entire watersheds on both public and private lands.

The Birth of the Pacific Rivers Council and the Watershed Approach

Bob Doppelt

I have been a river guide most of my life. I have also been a university professor and a psychologist working with troubled youth. When I burned out on all of that, I went back to the places I always loved most—rivers.

My wife and I started a rafting company called Oregon River Experiences in 1977 and, during the 10 years we ran it, the rivers of the Pacific Northwest changed. It was a moral assault to be out there on the Rogue River or the Deschutes River and see scum, oil slicks and trash floating down the river. And it turned the clients off.

Protect the Best Restore the Rest

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The Birth Of PRC And The Watershed Approach

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I decided to do something about it.

In 1987, at the urging of a woman who worked for the Friends of Columbia Gorge, a friend and I started a non-profit called the Oregon Rivers Council. We met with Senator Mark Hatfield's staff and told them what was happening to Oregon rivers. And they were genuinely concerned. They said if we put together a coalition, they could get a bill passed in Congress that would designate important reaches of Oregon rivers as wild and scenic.

In its first year, working mostly out of my garage, the Oregon Rivers Council built a coalition and did something that no group had done before and no group has done since: ***passed the largest river protection act in the history of the lower 48 states.*** The Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988 protected 40 rivers totaling 1,500 miles.

We were ecstatic. ***Until scientists told us it wasn't enough.***

The wild and scenic rivers legislation did prevent dams from being built in designated areas. It kept flows reasonable and prevented energy and mineral extraction, but it didn't affect anything happening next to the rivers or upstream. It didn't change activity in the ***watershed.***

The water-*what?*

The year was now 1989. And very few people besides scientists knew or understood the word "watershed." The Oregon Rivers Council decided to change that.

A watershed is all of the land around a river or stream that drains into the river. The boundaries between different watersheds tend to be the ridges between

different rivers and streams—the highest points. Gravity brings rainwater, snowmelt and spring water down into the river corridor. The council embarked on a project to get people who lived in, worked in and cared about each watershed together to make management decisions. ***And the idea of watershed councils was born.***



We started by establishing the McKenzie Watershed Council in Lane County. As we shopped the idea around to elected officials, farmers, ranchers and environmentalists, it turned

out to be something all of them could support. When we got the support of the most conservative member of the Lane County Commission, I remember thinking, "Okay. This is going to happen."

A year later, I wrote the original bill for the State Legislature to establish and fund watershed councils around the state, which was signed into law in 1993. Now there are more than 100 watershed councils working collaboratively around the state to improve water quality, wildlife habitat and economic opportunity. I co-wrote a book about watersheds and the trend caught on nationally. We wanted to expand our model beyond Oregon and we became the Pacific Rivers Council.

The Oregon Rivers Council went on to do other amazing work as well, including getting coho salmon protected under the Endangered Species Act, protecting watersheds in the Northwest Forest Plan and establishing the economic value of protected resources. But it all comes back to watersheds.

Text by Kalei Augustine

Photos by Bryan Lessley, PRC Board Member

JOHN DAY FLOAT 2014

All the PRC staff and board members who recently floated the John Day River came back a little more tan, a little more relaxed and a lot more energized about PRC's plans for next year. For three days, we rafted, fished, hiked, camped, ate and strategized on how best to continue PRC's work protecting and restoring Northwest rivers and their watersheds. The future of PRC and the rivers we all care about is bright.



Rafters dip their rods in the water to find a whole lot of non-native bass.



The whole group, including staff and board members, who rafted the John Day.

From left to right: Greg Haller, James Scott MD, John McGlenn, Karl Konecny, Bruce McGlenn, Sherold Barr Kaib, John Kaib MD, Kalei Augustine, Paul Hoobyar, Ani, Tina Stupasky, Carmen, John Kober, David Bayles, Bryan Lessley

We needed quite a few boats to carry the entire crew. And our executive director, John Kober, never led us astray.



Pacific Rivers Council to Host Science Workshop on Oregon's Federal Forests

John Kober

How can we allow modest logging increases on Oregon's federal forests, support rural economies and protect clean water?

We don't have all the answers, but we know some folks who probably do.

We are hosting a scientific workshop this year to bring together respected scientists to weigh in on how to modestly increase logging on Oregon's federal forests while still protecting clean water.

We are working to ensure the Bureau of Land Management also participates in the workshop because current proposals to increase logging on federal forests focus primarily on the Bureau's 1.9 million acres of O&C lands.

O&C Lands are managed under the Northwest Forest Plan. For 20 years, this plan has regulated harvest from federal forests to protect values most citizens share—healthy forests, clean water, abundant fish and more. The Aquatic Conservation Strategy is a key component of the plan, helping protect rivers and clean water. The Pacific Rivers Council helped ensure the plan includes these aquatic protections. Before PRC got involved, decision makers were only talking about owls.

There is currently an effort to increase logging on Oregon's federal forests by weakening the Northwest Forest Plan and sidestepping federal environmental laws. Some rural counties claim this will help ease their budget shortfalls. But under close scrutiny, economists say increasing harvests on federal forests will not solve the counties' economic woes. Counties must reform the tax structure, and recruit new business. What amenities attract new business in 2014? Clean water, recreation, abundant fish and wildlife and a high quality of life.

There are two proposals in Congress to increase logging on Oregon's O&C lands. Oregon Senator Ron Wyden's bill includes many elements that the Pacific Rivers Council believes will truly help protect clean water, including explicit protection of drinking water sources. However, Wyden's bill includes provisions that weaken existing environmental laws by not requiring full compliance. The other bill is from Representative Peter DeFazio, also of Oregon. It has fewer elements we support. Both bills passed their respective chambers. The next step is for the House and Senate to negotiate a compromise.

In the meantime, the Bureau is revising its expired resource management plans for these lands. Given the gridlock in Congress, the Bureau's planning process might be a better place to meet our goal to protect clean water.

The science workshop will help ensure that advice from leading experts in ecology, fisheries biology, hydrology, geomorphology, wildlife biology and more is considered in the BLM's planning process.

1994–2014 The Northwest Forest Plan

*2014 marks the 20th anniversary of the **Northwest Forest Plan**, which significantly improved land and water protections on 24 million acres of public forests.*

Since 1994, the Northwest Forest Plan and the associated Aquatic Conservation Strategy have:

- ✓ **limited logging on steep slopes**
- ✓ **limited road building**
- ✓ **reduced sediment in fish-bearing rivers**
- ✓ **spurred removal of hundreds of miles of old logging roads**

FAST FACTS

The outdoor recreation industry currently employs about 140,000 workers in Oregon.

Timber and related industries currently employ 30,000 workers in Oregon.

Nationally, jobs in outdoor recreation are growing 5 percent annually.

OREGON SHOULD TAKE A LESSON FROM THE OSO LANDSLIDE

John Kober



Aerial view of landslide area (Washington Air National Guard)

Like everyone in the Northwest, I am struck by the tragedy of the Oso landslide in Washington. My condolences go out to the victims and their families.

The unfortunate reality is that this kind of catastrophic landslide could happen in Oregon too. In fact, we're at even greater risk of landslides because Oregon allows more aggressive logging than Washington does. But there is something we can do.

Some of you may have read in the *Seattle Times* about the logging that occurred on the hill above the Oso landslide. There has been logging there since the 1940s and each harvest was followed by a landslide within a decade. The most recent slide was the largest and most deadly. Logging by itself did not cause the landslide. There were a combination of factors, including heavy rains and unstable soils. But logging certainly did not help. Unfortunately, we will never know for sure what role logging played in the slide because neither federal nor state agencies have dedicated funding to analyze the causes. According to news reports, one widow of a victim in the slide has asked the state to do everything in its power to prevent future slides, including ensure that logging rules are adequate and enforced. Several families are suing the state of Washington.

News reports also show that the state of Washington knew the slope was unstable and yet still allowed logging above it. The hill would have been more stable with large old trees at the top soaking up some of the water. A mature Douglas fir can keep 30 percent of rain from even entering the ground.

The question is not whether to log, but where to log and how. Logging on steep slopes, unstable soils and near streams does not make sense from an environmental or public safety perspective and yet ***Oregonians allow logging like it's the 1970s***. On private forestlands in Oregon, we allow logging on steep slopes, unstable soils and close to streams with very little regard for clean water or the people, communities and businesses downstream that rely on that clean water.

I'm an Oregonian, so I hate to say this— but they do it better in Washington. Our neighbors to the north updated their forest practices in 2006, while Oregon is operating under rules created in 1971. Washington has better safeguards when it comes to logging and road building. For example, Washington requires streamside buffers, even on small seasonal streams, to protect water quality and fish habitat. Conversely, Oregon allows logging much closer to streams and on unstable slopes and soils.

When it comes to logging practices, we must take health and human safety more seriously. The question is not whether a catastrophic landslide will happen in Oregon, but when. Now is the time to update the Oregon Forest Practices Act.



Managing the Columbia River in the 21st Century

Greg Haller

When the United States and Canada signed the Columbia River Treaty in the 1960s, the primary goals were to coordinate management of the river for flood control and hydropower production. Ecosystem values like salmon habitat, streamflow and water quality were not considered. Now, in 2014, the Pacific Rivers Council is helping to change that.

The U.S. Department of State is considering a recommendation from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bonneville Power Administration to add ecosystem function as a third primary purpose of the Treaty. PRC's Conservation Director, Greg Haller, testified before two congressional committees in support of a modernized treaty with ecosystem function as a primary purpose.

In his testimony, Haller noted that modernizing flood risk management will be an important step towards implementing ecosystem-based operations because it will provide the flexibility needed for greater spring and summer flows when fish are migrating. In addition, a review of flood risk management will help identify opportunities to recommend floodplains, which would create important salmon-rearing habitats and provide natural flood control where it will not jeopardize human safety or property.

With the challenges of climate change and greater demand for the Columbia's water for irrigation, modernizing the treaty to include ecosystem function is an important step toward improving fish and wildlife habitat along this vital river corridor. PRC will work to ensure the new treaty includes the river ecosystem's needs in the 21st century.

Have you always wanted to float the Rogue, Illinois or Tuolumne?

ARTA has a SPECIAL OFFER for PRC members!

ARTA, the West's only nonprofit rafting outfitter, is committed to protecting wild rivers and canyons and is offering Pacific Rivers Council members a 20% discount on all their trips this summer.

Just mention you're a PRC member!



www.arta.org 800-323-2782 arta@arta.org

Charley Dewberry Knows What Canton Creek Needs

Natalie Bennon



Charley Dewberry has been snorkeling in the Northwest's most important fish streams for 30 years. He does it because he needs to see what's in the river to know what the river needs.

"How do you know what's going on in a river system if you're not diving and looking and collecting information over time?" Dewberry asks.

Most recently, he has been diving in Canton Creek with funding from the Pacific Rivers Council's generous members and donors, as well as the Patagonia World Trout Initiative and the North Umpqua Foundation. Canton Creek is a tributary of Steamboat Creek on the North Umpqua River. Canton is one of the basin's most important steelhead refuges.

Charley doesn't dive alone. High school students from the Phoenix School, a charter school in Roseburg, dive with him, as do staff from the Cow Creek Native American Tribe. "A number of students really like it and have done it every year now," Dewberry said.

In the mainstem of Canton Creek, Charley found half as many salmonids—steelhead, coho, cutthroat, Chinook and trout—in 2013 as he did in 2011. He didn't dive in 2012 but will dive again this summer. The results of his surveys will help PRC make recommendations to federal agencies about potential changes to logging practices in the Umpqua Basin. Proposals to allow logging closer to the creek could be devastating for salmon and trout in the North Umpqua River.

Read more about Charley's work on Canton Creek:
<http://pacificrivers.org/coho-still-struggling-on-the-umpqua>

CAN YOUR EMPLOYER HELP THE ENVIRONMENT?

As you know, threats to our natural world are growing with increasing demands on lands, water, food, energy and other resources people and wildlife need to thrive. As green as Oregon is, it's simply not enough. We need more people and businesses supporting the environmental movement.



The Pacific Rivers Council is working with **EarthShare Oregon** to make that happen.

EarthShare Oregon offers workplace and online giving programs to environmental causes of your choice, including to the Pacific Rivers Council. Last year, people giving through EarthShare contributed nearly \$3,000 to Pacific Rivers Council's general fund.

You can contribute to PRC via EarthShare as well, through your employer or online. They offer easy ways for you to share responsibility for the stewardship of Oregon's environmental legacy.

First, check the list of EarthShare's business partners online to see what companies in your industry offer EarthShare. Then, if your employer does not have an EarthShare campaign, get the facts about how easy it is to start one.

To learn more about bringing EarthShare to your workplace, contact Jan Wilson at **(503) 223-9015** or **jan@earthshare-oregon.org**.

THANK YOU

A special thank you to our supporting foundations

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A Fond Farewell to Board Member Mardel Chinburg

We bid adieu to Mardel Chinburg, a long-time Pacific Rivers Council board member and former board chair. Mardel was drawn to the Council because she loves rivers ("I have never met a river I didn't like.") and respects the Council's reliance on sound science and sound policy in promoting watershed conservation. As a long-time resident of Eugene, her favorite river is the McKenzie, which flows from the Cascade Mountains into the Willamette Valley near Eugene. While Mardel says she will continue to be an active member and supporter, she also is looking forward to spending more time rafting, cycling and camping along Western rivers.

Hello to New Board Member, Robert Sheley



Robert Sheley, MD, has lived in Oregon since high school but can trace his roots as an outdoorsman and environmentalist to when he was eight years old and the Cuyahoga River near his hometown in Ohio caught on fire. *Twice*. Shortly thereafter, he read Rachel Carson's seminal book *Silent Spring*, and remembers the smells from industrial pollution that ruined a favorite area that he and his friends liked to explore. In his spare time, Sheley fishes, takes photographs and has fun with his son, Parker. "I sincerely hope I can make a positive contribution to PRC and most look forward to meeting other folks with common ideals and learning from them," Sheley said.



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**PROTECTING
& RESTORING
RIVERS
FOR 25 YEARS**