Committee holds rally to protect French Pete

By TOM KNAPPENBERGER
Of the Emerald

The People for French Pete Committee held a rally Monday in a last-ditch attempt to prevent the logging of French Pete Valley.

The 19,200 acres of virgin timber has been a center of controversy since 1957. The National Forest Service has recently announced that "timber harvest will be planned for the reasonably immediate future," and that recreation and timber management alternatives will be presented to the public next spring.

Bill Turner, chairer of the People for French Pete Committee, told a packed council chamber that French Pete is the last remaining unlogged valley of ten miles or more in length west of the Cascades. "Mother nature has managed the area well so far, and can continue to do so. We need it for perspective," Turner added.

Former Sen. Wayne Morse, long a foe of attempts to log the valley, slammed the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for their timber policies. "We're not going to get anywhere until we eliminate the National Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. We need a new set-up," Morse said. The former senator supports Senator Bob Packwood's bill which would add the French Pete area to the Three Sisters Wilderness area. "The Packwood bill is the principle that Dick Neuberger (former U.S. Senator) and I fought for back in 1954," Morse said. "Each generation is but the trustee of God's natural resources and should leave it better than they found it."

Other speakers at the rally included State Representative Nancy Fadeley, John Reynolds, Eugene Water and Electric Board member; Nancy Hayward, Lane County Commissioner; State Senator Betty Browne; Eugene City Councilman Neil Murray; former State Treasurer Robert Straub; Lane County District Attorney Pat Horton; and author Ken Kesey.

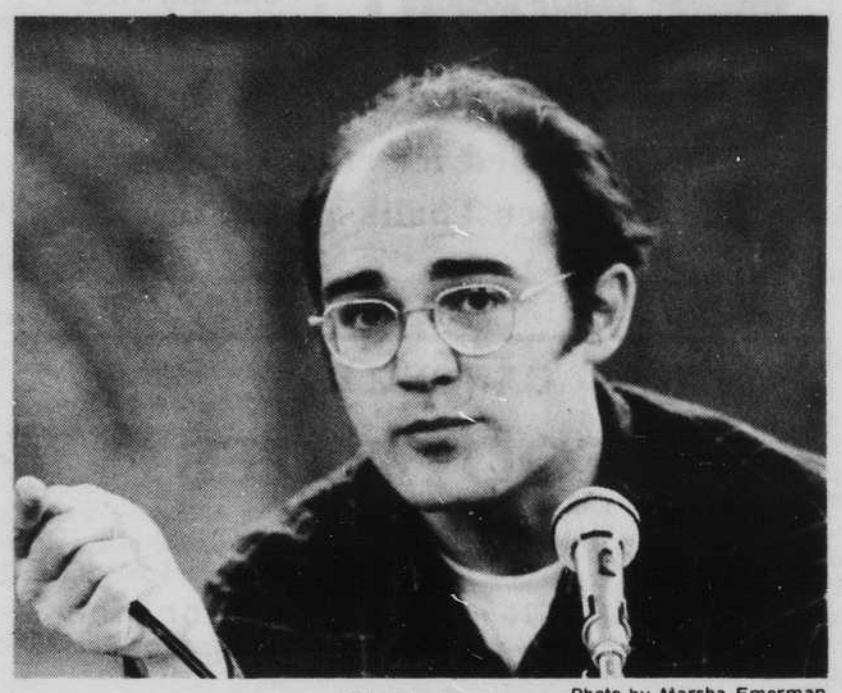
Straub said, "The issue should be determined by the people." He termed arguments by lumber companies that the wood is needed for housing "phoney and fallacious. I want to see more chain saws in Oregon's woods, not fewer, but in the right places," Straub remarked.

District Attorney Horton said, "There is an arrogance on the part of lumber companies in this matter." In response to arguments that no logging in the French Pete area would mean a loss of jobs, Horton replied, "The only job loss that is significant is the one our elected officials may suffer if they don't act to save French Pete."

Author Ken Kesey spoke of "a consciousness afoot in this country to do away with something." He cited examples of logging in Montana and said, "the loggers are not out for money. Some people are trying to harm this country. They are the enemy. If we don't stop slipping in to these people, we are part of that enemy." Kesey also remarked that he's glad wilderness areas like French Pete exist even if people do not visit them. "Just like the Library of Congress, I'm glad it's there," Kesey said.

A number of telegrams supporting the rally were read, including those from gubernatorial candidates Betty Roberts, Clay Meyers, and Jim Redden.

Turner ended the rally by urging all concerned to write Zane Smith, Supervisor of the Willamette National Forest, stating their desire that the area not be logged. He also urged persons to write Senator Mark Hatfield and Representative John Dellenback urging them to come out in favor of the Packwood bill.



Bill Turner Photo by Marsha Emerman

Spiritual battle

Kesey urges passage of bill to save French Pete, souls

By CHARLES HOLZHAUER
Of the Emerald

Calling the battle to save French Pete valley from opportunists a "war for souls," Ken Kesey urged students Tuesday to support a bill to make the valley a part of the Three Sisters Wilderness Area.

Kesey, Pleasant Hill author (Sometimes a Great Notion), told students on the EMU terrace that the struggle between environmentalists and business boils down to "a consciousness that we still have with us in America — a consciousness that likes to get its rocks off and then split."

Urging attendance at a rally to be held later at the Eugene City Council chambers, Kesey also suggested that in writing letters in support of the bill, which is sponsored by Sen. Bob Packwood, one should include at the bottom of the letter a list of all the people who have been sent copies of it.

"When you write to the highway department or whoever, xerox copies and send them around; to the Register Guard, to the senators, to everybody. Then, when that guy at the highway department is finishing your letter and is about to wad it up and toss it into the trash can, he'll see that list at the bottom, and he'll say 'Oh my God, all those people have read it too!' "

The virgin timber in the valley, Kesey said, represents "almost a sexual thing."

"The timber industry is panting after those trees, because nobody has ever 'got' those trees," he explained.

"Oregon, I'm beginning to realize, has two things — rain and trees. When those trees are cut, we have to ask ourselves, 'Who is going to benefit first?' There are people right now who want to mine up in the Three Sisters because they want pumice for Kitty Litter. But it's not Oregon that wants to do it. It's people out of state who skim off the money and throw back a few old socks."

Kesey pointed out that the United States is sending millions of board feet of lumber to Japan "and trading it for Yamahas."

"This country has got to realize that bigger and better and wider and more is not necessarily what we want. And yet people like the Highway Commission are still seeing the future in terms of bigger cars and wider highways."

French Pete, he said, is the last virgin valley in the Cascades.

"It's not a big place. But like Thoreau said, it's a good place to go to get your head together.

"You can go up there and get stoned, and look at the trees, and maybe it'll put your mind back to where it used to be. We need these places.

"Think of this planet as if it was a spaceship," said Kesey, choosing his words slowly. "It's as though there was one person in that spaceship eating up all the food and shitting out as fast as he ate it. You'd have to call that guy out...Look, some of my best friends are loggers, not environmentalists...But this is a sort of war. What is ultimately important is a man's soul. There are plenty of people who know what's going on, but who need someone to grab them and shake them. And they'll argue back, too. But that's what it is...it's a war for souls."

odeodeodeod