

Forest Service tallies RARE II opinions

By JACK DESMOND
Of the Emerald

Letters favor non-wilderness 4 to 1

If mail volume decides U.S. Forest Service policy on RARE II, the agency will build roads into the last remaining roadless areas to harvest timber.

The Forest Service received a total of 264,093 responses nationwide, with Oregon residents leading the nation with nearly one-fourth of the total. The statements supported building

roads and timber harvest, four to one, in Oregon and throughout the nation.

"We were happy about it," says Mike Sullivan, spokesperson for the Industrial Forestry Association. "While we are gratified, we don't think it should be considered as a vote. When you are talking about such an important resource such as this, you

shouldn't let 300,000 votes decide."

The overwhelming bulk of comments received were form letter or prepared forms which were supplied by the timber industry.

Due to the large number of form letters, the Forest Service attempted to "weigh" personal letters.

"We looked at each letter individually," says Bruce Cooper of the Forest Service. "There was a tremendous amount of informa-

roadless areas," says Cooper. "The area also has the largest number of people interested in wilderness and commodity use. There were eight or nine major writing campaigns and these campaigns generated many responses."

Sullivan agreed that the Willamette received the largest number of responses because it would affect many people.

"The Oakridge community has 3,000 people, and 1,800 of them signed responses. The sympathy

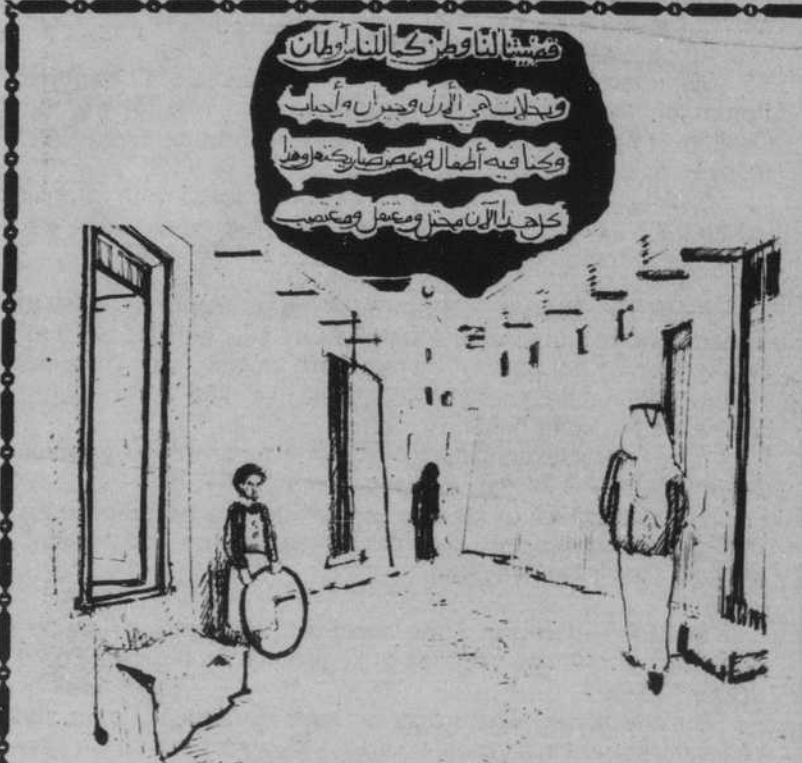
• Mt. Jefferson additions — wilderness, 2,804 (20.2 percent); non-wilderness, 11,075 (79.6 percent).

• Mt. Washington additions — wilderness, 2,586 (19.3 percent); non-wilderness, 11,903 (80.7 percent).

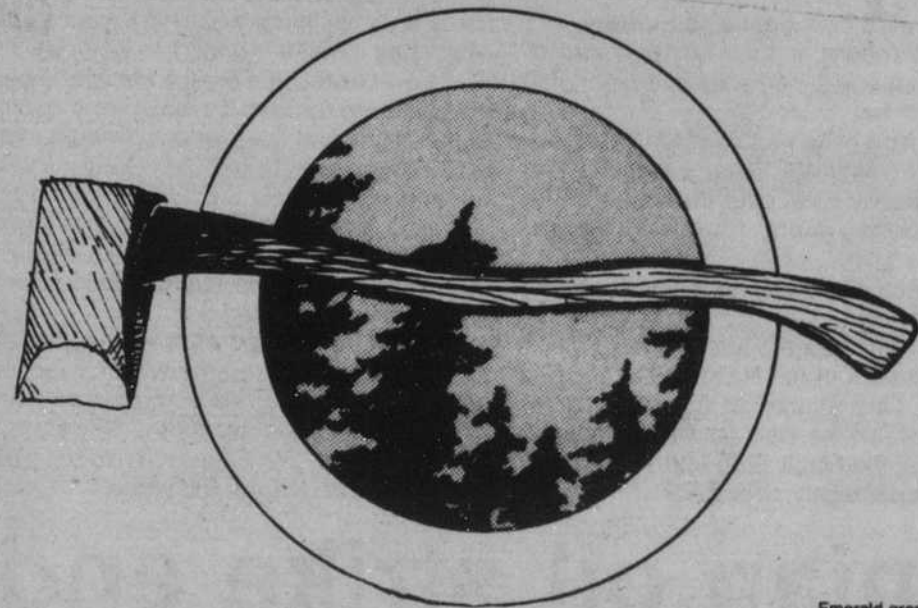
• Hardesty Mountain — wilderness, 2,762 (12.5 percent); non-wilderness, 19,241 (87.4 percent).

• Waldo — wilderness, 2,972 (19.9 percent); non-wilderness, 11,958 (79.7 percent).

• Charlton — wilderness, 2,807 (17 percent); non-



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tion in the letters. However, you can't put them on a scale and weigh them.

"It was a judgment call," he adds. "There just is no magic way to do it."

Cooper says the Forest Service knew response was going to be large and geared up for it. But, he says "It was much larger than we thought. We had large crews working days, nights, and weekends."

The 10 roadless areas in the Willamette National Forest received more input than any other roadless areas in Oregon.

"The Willamette has a lot of roadless areas and a lot of large

in those timber-dependent communities was for non-wilderness."

Environmental groups also waged a major campaign throughout the state in support of wilderness. The Oregon Alternative, a proposal to protect about three-fourths of the roadless areas in their natural condition, generated 2,307 responses.

By roadless area on the Willamette National Forest, the responses were:

• Bull of the Woods — for wilderness, 3,010 signatures (16.4 percent); for non-wilderness, 15,321 signatures (83.4 percent).

wilderness, 12,209 (81 percent).

• Maiden Peak — wilderness, 2,838 (19.3 percent); non-wilderness, 11,770 (80.6 percent).

• Cowhorn — wilderness, 2,955 (12.7 percent); non-wilderness, 20,242 (87.2 percent).

• Bull Dog Rock — wilderness, 2,717 (12.3 percent); non-wilderness, 19,348 (87.7 percent).

• Middle Santiam — wilderness, 2,813 (20 percent); non-wilderness, 11,235 (80 percent).

However, these signatures are not an accurate reflection of the actual number of responses received by the Forest Service since the agency "weighed" personal letters as more valuable.

In general, roadless areas received 800 to 1,000 letters urging development and 200 to 300 letters supporting wilderness. The Forest Service generally multiplied these personal letters by a factor of 10 and form responses had small effect on the final tally.

Cooper felt it was premature to comment about the impact of the public response on the final recommendations.

He said the Forest Service will be holding a series of meetings within the agency before issuing its final recommendations to the Carter administration by January 1.

A printout of the tabulations is available for public review at the Willamette National Forest office, 211 E. 7th St.

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