



Photo by Jake Berg

An enthusiastic crowd greeted George Bush during his Sept. 14 visit to a timber mill in White City, a small community east of Medford.

Bush promises jobs over owls

□ President gets enthusiastic greeting at timber mill outside of Medford

By Pat Malach
Emerald Editor

WHITE CITY — President Bush declared "the balance has been lost" and vowed last week that he would not renew the Endangered Species Act unless it considered "the human factor."

Bush, speaking to an enthusiastic crowd at the Burrill Lumber Co. in this small timber community outside of Medford, said the Endangered Species Act had been changed from a "shield for species" as it was intended, to a "sword aimed at jobs."

"It's time to fight for jobs, families and communities," Bush told the crowd of about 3,500. "It is my firm belief that people and their jobs deserve protection, too. Each pair of owls gets 3,500 acres to itself. And meanwhile, jobs, families and communities are being wiped out in the process."

"It is time to make people more important than owls," he told the cheering crowd.

Bush's jobs vs. owls message was in stark contrast to Gov. Bill Clinton, who, during a visit with timber families in Eugene, admitted some jobs will be lost. He promised retraining and compensation for workers dislocated by federal policy.

"My view is if we put the problem in terms of people or forests, we've lost before we start," Clinton told the families at a backyard meeting.

Bush promised the White City crowd he would "fix" the act to keep people employed "in 1993 and beyond."

"I call on the United States Congress to pass my plan," Bush said, "to produce 2.6-billion board feet of timber from Forest Service lands in the Northwest next year and at least 500-million board feet on BLM land."

Bush said he would tie the legislation to language that would prevent any lawsuits to the harvests. Bush also renewed his pledge to speed up

the process of harvesting dead and dying timber he said had been building up during a seven-year drought. He said the plan would reduce the risk of fire and provide up to 450-million board feet of timber for mills.

Shifting gears, Bush criticized Clinton, calling him "Gov. Doublespeak."

"When he heard I was coming here," Bush said, "Mr. Clinton cynically held out false hope to timber families by promising another meeting."

"Now look," Bush said, pointing to a stack of papers on the podium next to him. "We've produced a pile of studies and proposals this high. The good news for the timber industry is all the trees it took to print all these darn reports."

"And so I say to Gov. Clinton," Bush said. "No more studies. Help me change the law."

The President's message played well at the lumber mill, where timber workers from area mills had received ad-

vance tickets for access to the speech.

John Young, a timber worker from Riddle, said he believed Bush's speech was right on target.

"We want the bird to live, too," Young said. "But I think people are a little more important here."

Richard Rondeau of Myrtle Creek said he would like to see the Endangered Species Act kept on the books, but lawmakers should "do something to limit the amount of acreage (the owl) has to have."

However, Paul Clayton, also of Myrtle Creek, was not impressed with Bush's visit.

"I'd like to ask that boy how come he don't do things during his term," Clayton said, "and then promise 'em come time for the election. Why doesn't he do it during the year. He blames it on the Congress, and now all the sudden he can do it. It's just whatever you want to hear. It's just campaign promises."



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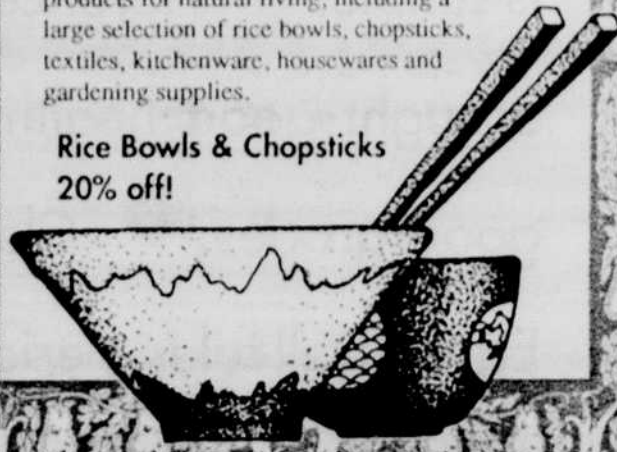
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