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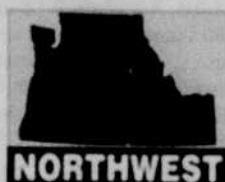
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Environmentalists seek alternative to forest plan



NORTHWEST

WASHINGTON (AP) — Optimistic that a federal judge will throw out President Clinton's Northwest forest plan, environmentalists said Tuesday they will ask for approval of an alternative that would allow about one-tenth as

much logging. Details of the recommended alternative still were being worked out before a court deadline Wednesday. At least one conservation group was holding out for a proposal that instead would allow for no logging of national forests in the region, at least temporarily.

Environmental leaders said they intended to suggest to U.S. District Judge William Dwyer in Seattle that the best plan would be a variation of an option government scientists earlier projected would produce about 100 million board feet of timber annually.

That option, known as "Option 1," was the most restrictive of logging among the 10 options the Clinton administration considered last year. It would place about 11.4 million acres in new, no-logging reserves, compared with the 7.4 million acres Clinton proposed.

Clinton had projected his plan, known as "Option 9," would result in about 1 billion board feet of logging annually on those same federal forests in Oregon, Washington and northern California.

During the peak years of the 1980s, as much as 5 billion board feet of timber was logged on those lands per year.

Both environmentalists and the timber industry have filed lawsuits in Dwyer's court claiming Clinton's plan is illegal. The plan was developed after the northern spotted owl was declared a threatened species and Dwyer ordered the government to come up with a plan to protect the bird's habitat.

The industry argues the plan doesn't allow for enough logging and that the administration would have produced an alternative with higher projected timber harvests if it had not allegedly violated open meetings laws.

Environmentalists argue the plan allows for too much logging and that the administration would have produced a more restrictive alternative if it

had done the appropriate environmental and economic impact studies.

"Saving the old-growth is the best thing you can do economically," said Andy Kerr, head of the Oregon Natural Resources Council, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

"These trees are more valuable to the economy as a whole left standing than when you run them through a mill."

Dwyer made a reference to "Option 1" last week when he ordered all the plaintiffs and the government to respond by Wednesday to a series of specific questions about what should be done if he finds Clinton's plan illegal.

"Some parties have argued that the federal defendants have acted contrary to law in adopting a plan which permits more logging of spotted owl habitat in the face of evidence and scientific opinion that ANY further habitat loss must be avoided to preserve the owl and/or other species," Dwyer wrote.

"If that contention... were to be upheld, what remedy should be ordered?" he asked.

The judge specifically asked all sides if it would be acceptable to proceed with timber sales consistent with "Option 1."

He said in his order his questions should not imply he was prepared to rule one way or another.

But Kerr said Tuesday, "I must admit I inferred a lot."

"I think the questions bode better for us than they do for the industry."

Ralph Saperstein of the Northwest Forest Resource Council, a timber industry trade group, said, "I don't think it means good news."

Kerr said the original 12 plaintiffs who won a 1991 injunction from Dwyer, effectively banning logging across millions of national forests in the region, are "fairly well unified" behind a variation of "Option 1."

The variation would protect all spotted owl habitats, prohibit all thinning and salvage logging and allow no harvests in key watersheds or areas that lack roads, he said.

One dissenter is Tim Hermach, executive director of the Native Forest Council based in Eugene. Hermach said Tuesday he believes Dwyer will grant whatever the environmentalists request in terms of minimum logging levels. That's why he advocates "zero cut" on the national forests in the region.

Negligent farmer loses pigs to auction

WOODBURN (AP) — The state has sold 47 pigs seized last week from a fugitive farmer facing numerous charges of animal neglect.

More than 35 pigs were found dead of apparent starvation and dehydration on Gary Vandenhede's farm near Donald.

Another 130 pigs survived, and most were taken to a farm near St. Paul owned by a friend of Vandenhede's family.

Police searched Vandenhede's farm Wednesday after neighbors complained he had not been around for several days

to feed his animals.

The pigs sold Monday were seized under the state's stray animal law after they were found running loose in the area, said John Murray, a livestock inspector with the state Department of Agriculture.

The pigs were sold at auction at the Woodburn Livestock Market. Owner Bob Babcock II would not say how much they brought.

Rodger Huffman, the state Department of Agriculture's brand inspector supervisor, said a 200-pound pig generally sells for about \$70. So, 47 pigs

weighing 200 pounds each would be worth \$3,290.

Most of the proceeds will go to Vandenhede, but the livestock market will get several hundred dollars for caring for the animals for six days.

The agriculture department also will get some of the money for Murray's time on the case, Murray said.

"It's a pretty sad, sorry situation," Murray said. "This is one time out of a thousand that something like this might come up. Most farmers don't treat their animals that way."

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