

and prevent gullying. Standing water all up and down the watercourse infiltrates underground aquifers and exits slowly in dependable springs. Dams inhibit flooding, and the vegetation sponsored by the permanent water shades the water, retarding evaporation and cooling it for the fish. Now the beavers are gone, the clearcuts come right down to the eroded gulley's edge, encouraging more erosion; and in Eastern Oregon especially, the cattle have eaten everything on the streambanks, so there wouldn't be anything for the beavers to eat even if there were any.

In 1950, after a century of ravaging the forests, the loggers really got going with clearcuts and heavy machinery. Looking up toward Mount Hood in the winter, one sees white spots of snow — clearcuts. Clearcuts are colder in the winter than natural forests and hotter in the summer. The hydrology of clearcuts is that they warm up more rapidly in the spring, and the water runs off or evaporates faster than in the moderate temperatures of a forest. When the clearcut is dried out, the forest is still retaining moisture. Looking at the serial view of the clearcuts done by the industrialists, one sees that spring flooding, erosion and no evapotranspiration are the result.

Another cycle is the cycle of the salmon in the rare places that logging and grazing erosion haven't covered the spawning beds. In former times the spring freshets would bring them out of the mountains, but now the cycles of the rivers are strangled by hydroelectric dams so that the smolt arrive in a large, still pond behind a dam, and the ones that figure out which way is downstream go through the turbines to become salmon-burger.

When the ranchers denuded Eastern Oregon and Washington, the land dried out and eroded; when the wheat farmers began to plow the Columbia Basin, the land dried out and eroded; when the loggers cut the ancient forest, the land dried out and eroded — now we have no margin left. The Summer of 1992 is the payback.

The civilized began to attack the forests of Eastern Oregon early on. The big yellow-belly ponderosa pines were what they wanted — knotty pine paneling for people's living rooms, 2x4s and 1x12s — very high-profit and high-quality. Now their profits are in, and the companies have headed to the Southeast where trees grow fast. We have been left with the result. In the old days, fires crept along the ground among huge trees whose branches began fifty feet up, cleared out the underbrush, but seldom burned down a tree. Then the loggers cut the trees and an obliging government stopped the fires to protect the "valuable sawlogs." With no more fires, the brush and other trees sprang up: red fir, white fir, lodgepole pine, tamarack and others.

They came up thick and fast, to the glee of the timber barons. And rather than let them burn with the natural cycles of fire, the government protected the out-of-cycle ecological situation. Now where there was a beautiful park-like open forest, there is dense brush and stunted bunched up trees. With the unnatural abundance, especially of lodgepole pine, the bugs that eat them have a population explosion. Now the Eastern forests have vast areas in which dense patches of dead lodgepole and others stand among live pines, douglas fir, tamarack and others. This summer when the dead stands go, the whole forest will go. Many of us in Eastern Oregon have fought forest fires in live forests, but the prospect of stopping a fire in this industrially-created mess is very daunting.

Fire danger is a function of dryness and high temperature. These we've had for years, and now 1992 is a "record breaker." A National Weather Service assessment states, "The 1000-hour fuels, or large logs, are as dry today, June 1, as they normally are one to two months later in the summer. Values as low as 9 to 11% (humidity) are being reported in South-Central Oregon. These values are lower than those reported in Yellowstone during that disastrous fire in 1988." This already on June 1!

In 1992 the civilized reap the payback. The forests will burn, the crops will die on the land because there will be no irrigation water, and the Willamette may get so low that ships cannot reach the docks. Let's all repeat now with King George the Bush, "What Greenhouse Effect?" Oregonians already are functioning on the ecological margins, and now the big cycles will begin to whip in. Of the ten hottest years of the last 100, eight have been in the last ten. What greenhouse effect? Let's blame it all on El Nino.

Other more mysterious cycles are wobbling in the background. The average number of tor-



nados per year in the U.S. from 1916 to 1986 have gone from just over 100 to 900. In 1991 they topped 1000 for the second year in a row. All earthquakes averaging 6 on the Richter Scale have gone from seven per year in 1890 to over thirty in 1985.

The Inuit and Kayapo may make it; but the huge, fragile and complex industrial society will wither. When water flow goes down, electric lights and refrigerators go off because the turbines in the dams stop. The economic cycles say that world capitalism is bankrupt; the U.S. government certainly is. The climate cycles say that the food production system is bankrupt. (Already in 1990 every area in the world was going backwards in grain production per person.) The clearcut Northwest says that the timber industry is bankrupt. The extinct salmon and the Hanford radiation coming out of the mouth of the Columbia say that the fishing industry is bankrupt.

There is much that we could do. Every logger west of the Mississippi could be employed, now, in thinning and brush removal from the Eastern forests, which could be saved with enough commitment. The salmon could be saved with enough unemployed people hired to help restore the ecologies. We could make progress by replanting the clearcuts with many species rather than create tree fields with the one high-profit plant the industrialists want: douglas fir. As a society

we could restore the earth, restore our margins, establish permaculture ecologies in nonforest areas that would feed us in hard times when capitalism collapses, the greenhouse really heats up, and the rays begin to leak through the ozone layer.

It should be apparent to all of us in Oregon that the urban intellectuals whose only experience of the natural world has been a walk in Central Park will never snap to the situation. Unfortunately that layer of people runs the intellectually orthodox word mill. Will the media/industry/government frame the human-ecological situation we are in realistically? Hell no! That's not what those institutions were established for. Their purpose is profit and power — cutting the trees, not saving the ecology or us. We have only ourselves to rely on. We must develop the institutions that can weather the clashing of the great cycles.

Is there anyone remaining that thinks that civilization can save itself? Here are a couple of pieces of evidence for the negative. Go down south of San Francisco, below Daly City and look at the housing tracts, hospitals and schools in that valley, which is the crack of the San Andreas faultline. We live in a self-created reality bubble that has little relation to the earth or cosmos. Then go down to that premier exhibit of the progress of civilization, Mexico City, where to breathe is to die — early. In a dry country they pump water out of the ground (just like in Phoenix) to drink, and the city subsidizes eleven feet per year. The dinosaur is dying. This culture can never wake up and deal with reality.

All together now with King George: "What Greenhouse Effect?"

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