

## Like Nowhere Else on Earth

The Oregon Coast Range is known for its spectacular coastal scenery. Every year more people frequent the Oregon Coast to be inspired by the solitude of its unique natural environment. Dramatic coastal headlands, rolling dunes, white sand beaches and the alluring Pacific Ocean are the focal points of the Oregon Coast. The more discreet areas of the region behold lush temperate rainforests, grassy mountain meadows, diverse wetlands, teeming estuaries, and an array of fish and wildlife. All of these contribute to the coast's high quality of life. Yet, a closer look at this coastal paradise reveals the consequences of a demanding western society.

As is the case elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest, the viability of the forest and aquatic ecosystems in the Oregon Coast Range are threatened. One of the most productive timber-growing regions in the world, the Coast Range has endured more than a century of intensive logging, particularly over the last few decades. Monoculture tree plantations have replaced most of the region's oldgrowth, resulting in the federal listing of threatened species. The spotted owl, for example, ranges east into the Cascade Mountains, but the murrelets occur only within 50 miles of the coast and mostly within 20 miles. Many coastal stream salmonid stocks are either extinct or declining and proposed for listing. Timber harvest and associated road-building are some of the biggest threats to the biodiversity of the region. Increasing tourism and immigration to the area, both of which promote development, pose additional dangers, unless carefully planned.

The costs of our past and present uses are becoming evident in the loss of biological diversity, idle fishing fleets and rising social tensions. Many people feel the price paid for intruding upon the natural world is surpassing the benefits gained.

Conditions such as these in the Coast Range are what led to the need and formation of the Coast Range Association two years ago. The scientific and public acceptance of the need for conservation in the Coast Range was increasing. Yet proposals from the Bush Administration made the Coast Range a sacrifice zone. Even some national environmental groups and congressmen seemed willing to essentially give the Coast Range to the timber industry. Politically, it was easier to write off the Coast Range because it had such productive forests, little old-growth left, and relatively small populations of the spotted owls and other sensitive species which are isolated and will be difficult to restore.

The Coast Range is not a pristine wilderness, but neither is it ruined. We know that it takes great periods of time for natural systems to establish and evolve. The founding organizers of the Coast Range Association saw the need for our natural resources in the Coast Range to be judged from the perspective of the overall ecosystem health and maintenance of native biodiversity for future decades and centuries to come. "The time is now", as it has been said so well. Restoring and sustaining diverse, resilient forests and fish runs, indicative of the Coast Range ecology, will require protection of the remaining reserves of biodiversity and a new approach to natural resource management. Now... before it is too late.

The Coast Range Association is a 501-C-3 tax exempt nonprofit organization. The Association is made up of grassroots chapters known as Area Organizations which are governed by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors performs oversight, sets broad

conservation policies and insures that the

Association keeps on track of its goals. It is committed to empowering Area Organizations with the responsibility to determine the local conservation priorities and agenda, as well as specific organizational and fiscal responsibilities. The Association has one full time staff person working with the Area Organizations out of the Association's Newport office. The Association's purpose is concerned with forest and associated aquatic ecosystems of the Coast Range.

There are various issues related to our purpose. The timber industry's current trend is monoculture -- mono-aged tree plantations and clear cutting. Tree plantations are a fire hazard and provide only limited wildlife use. The current rate at which the industry harvests and plants will inevitably impoverish the forest soils. A transition in the timber industry is essential to rely on less volume and engage in operations that will be conducive to the overall health of forest and aquatic ecosystems. The Association sees the need to restore and maintain adequate, healthy native forests while practicing sustainable forestry. This would entail protecting the remaining late successional forests in the Coast Range and restoring a balance in the distribution of successional stages. Protecting all native species of plants and animals is a key aspect to restoring our native forests and aquatic systems. The Association sees the need for a conservation emphasis put upon watersheds to protect the dwindling native Salmon stocks which are a warning to the overall health of forest and aquatic ecosystems in the Coast Range.

We must also address and explore the relationship between our natural resources and societal needs due to the explosive growth expected on the Oregon Coast in the decades to come. How will we protect our natural resources?

The Association and its Area Organizations are funded by members through the volunteer efforts of its local chapters. The Association acts as supporter and catalyst for the conservation work done by the Area Organizations. It assists by creating tools and resources that focus and improve the ability of individuals and groups to advocate on behalf of the Coast Range ecosystems. The feeling of having little impact on forest policy is a major obstacle to involvement. The Coast Range Association believes the unity experienced through its regional association will help overcome the isolation often felt by local conservation activists.

Environmentalists as a group tend to be of a critical bent. Rightly so given the behavior of our institutions and the condition of our natural world. Yet this critical eye can work against us. Time and again progressive efforts wither due to a lack of emotional strength within the group process. It is far more important to recognize and be supportive of an individual's effort than to focus on their shortcomings. For the most part we are amateur volunteers up against powerful professionals. This is part of the organizational culture we'd like to see flourish in the Association.

The Coast Range Association and its member grassroots chapters have become an effective voice for protecting our coastal forests and aquatic systems. Through innovative programs of forestry reform, watershed restoration, ecotourism, and our nationally recognized conservation plan, we are helping to lead the way in Coast Range conservation. The success of our work may determine the fate of one of the Earth's greatest rainforest regions.

Please take a moment to consider how you can help. Become a Coast Range Association member. Our voice is listened to because it represents people like

yourself. Become involved; the work of the Association and its grassroots chapters depends on volunteers.

If you would like to learn how to become more involved in your area or if you wish to become a pledging member, please fill out the following information:

### I WOULD LIKE TO PLEDGE . . .

\$10 \$25 \$50 \$100

I would like to volunteer for my area organization.

Name

Address

Tel. #

(all pledges are tax deductible)

Coast Range Association

P.O. Box 148

Newport, OR 97365

(503)265-8105 or (503)436-0351


For pledging members, a quarterly newsletter will be mailed to keep you informed of issues affecting your area and the Coast Range ecosystem, as well as notifying you of upcoming Association or affiliated events.

For those non-pledging members, The Upper Left Edge will be providing up-to-date information in upcoming issues. This issue is the first in a series to introduce the concerns and agenda of the Coast Range Association. Next month, you can read about specific projects and work presently being conducted by Clatsop chapters.

Thank you for your support!  
We look forward to hearing from you.

The Coast Range Association

## Muddy Waters



*"Release your mind and float down stream"*

### Exquisite Coffees and Teas

Third and Ivy Streets Tillamook Oregon

A little math. If trees are a renewable resource, how long does the resource take to be renewed? If loggers are an endangered species how do we keep them alive? It takes X number of trees to keep a logger busy X number of days. As the number of trees decrease, the price of lumber goes up, and the number of loggers goes down. (Is this too difficult?) It takes at least 50 years to grow a harvestable tree. It only takes 18 years to grow a logger. So, our problem seems to not be too few trees, but too many loggers. Any questions? (Next time, How many trees does it take to make a forest? [hint, it's a trick question.]

