



Biscuit Boondoggle

Taxpayers lose big on the timber salvage project.

In July 2002, the Biscuit Fire blazed through 500,000 acres in the Siskiyou National Forest in southwest Oregon, sparking an intense controversy over post-fire forest management. The Forest Service adopted a plan to log 372 million board feet from the burned areas — the largest salvage opera-

tion in the agency's recent history — prompting a slew of lawsuits from environmental groups and ongoing protests at the site. The Forest Service claims that the logging is imperative for the struggling local economy, but early sales indicate that taxpayers will lose big on the project.

Using a loophole created by the Bush administration, the Forest Service declared an economic emergency to allow sales to move forward despite public appeals. But the 12 sales now under contract — comprising 67 million board feet of timber over 3,500 acres of old growth and mixed-growth forest — fell dramatically short of agency expectations. A non-partisan watchdog group, Taxpayers for Common Sense, calls the Biscuit salvage project "one of the biggest money losers in our nation's history."

So far, Biscuit salvage timber has fetched an average of \$75 per thousand board feet, compared with earlier Forest Service estimates of \$187 to \$250 per thousand board feet. The total sales to date have a contract value of about \$5 million, but Forest Service Spokeswoman Patty Burel says that the Forest Service has spent roughly \$5 million planning them.

In March 2004, the economic consulting firm ECONorthwest completed an analysis of the financial consequences of the Biscuit salvage project. The report estimates that taxpayers would lose \$22 million on a 300 million board foot salvage project, including planning, administration and cleanup. But costs are proving to be even higher, because

the report assumes an optimistic selling price that is four times the actual selling price for the initial sales. And the report doesn't factor in the costs of long-term recovery efforts or losses to the local tourism and fishing industries.

Retired forester Bob Wolf, who helped draft the National Forest Management Act of 1976, did a 13-year cash flow analysis on Forest Service timber sales. He says that taxpayers have lost an average of \$985 per acre on every timber sale in the Siskiyou National Forest since 1992. In regards to the Biscuit salvage sales, Wolf says, "It doesn't take a genius to see that if you're only getting \$75 per thousand board feet, you're losing your shirt."

Why would the Forest Service intentionally lose money? Andy Stahl, executive director of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, says that the agency *doesn't* lose out — the public does. The Forest Service keeps income from timber sales in a slush fund, but taxpayers foot the bill for planning and administration. "To the Forest Service, there's no such thing as a cost," he says. "What it costs to you and me, to them is a bigger budget. They get to pay themselves bigger salaries, hire more people, build a big-

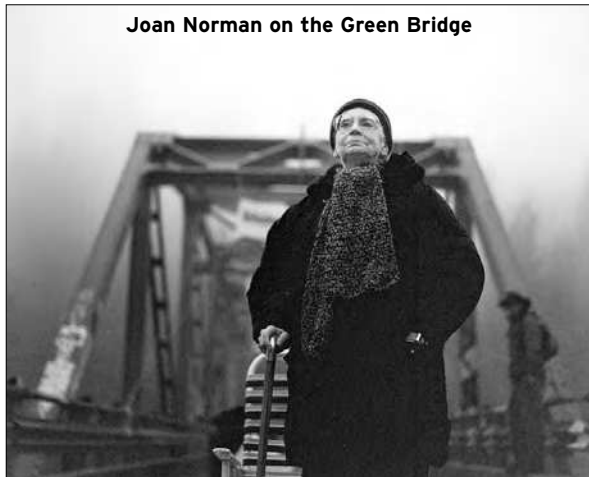
Out in a Blaze

Forest defender Joan Norman passes on.

At 4:30 am on March 7, 72-year-old Joan Norman sat in a lawn chair in the cold and fog with her cane and her glaucoma medication, smack in the middle of a bridge that logging trucks would have to cross to begin cutting old growth trees scorched by the Biscuit Fire. When enforcement officers tried to remove her, Norman slithered through their hands. They put her back on the chair and carried her to the paddy wagon, then left her there as they arrested other activists. "There was no one around me, so I just took my chair and put it back on the bridge and sat down," she told *EW* from the Josephine County Jail in late March. "Then they put the handcuffs on."

One week later Norman was back on the bridge, this time forming a soft blockade against logging trucks with 17 other women. She was arrested a second time and remained in jail for several weeks, the only activist in her party to refuse bail. Norman told *EW* that it was worth it. "You have to stand up for something or you'll fall for anything," she said.

Norman was killed July 23 in a head-on car crash on Highway 99 near Cave Junction. She had spent her last months defending



Joan Norman on the Green Bridge

the Siskiyou National Forest from the Biscuit logging operations, and today forest activists carry on the effort in her honor.

Defending the Siskiyou was not Norman's only act of civil disobedience. She was arrested more than 100 times in her life for standing up against injustice. She protested for equal rights in the South in the 1960s and met Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., then joined the Vietnam War protests. She stood up against nuclear testing in Nevada and protested the School of the Americas in Georgia. She was in Seattle during the protests against the World Trade

Organization in 1999, and she demonstrated in Washington, D.C., against the powerful bloc of industrialized nations known as the G8.

But she was not a lifelong activist. Norman told *Z magazine* that she was born into a Republican family in an oil town in 1933, and as a young woman she married a "rich corporate industrialist." Then one day, she said, "the fire grew in my belly," and she began working to get JFK elected. Soon after, she left her husband, sold most of her belongings and "joined in to defend the earth and its people against the war against the people and the natural world."

Norman is survived by four children, four grandchildren, one great-grandchild and an extended family of environmental activists. Her daughter, Sue Norman Jones, described her mother as a no-nonsense woman who would like to be remembered "actively, not passively."

Norman's "walk the talk" attitude was contagious, inspiring others to stand up for their beliefs. Asked if she was ever afraid to go to jail, Norman told *Z*, "NO! No, I am not afraid ... I would rather go out in a blaze, defending the world I love ... I am more afraid that my grandchildren will think I did not try hard enough to leave them a legacy of peace, and a world worth living in."

— Kera Abraham

For more information about Norman's last campaign to stop the Biscuit salvage project, visit www.o2collective.org or www.kswild.org or www.siskiyou.org

BEST OF EUGENE

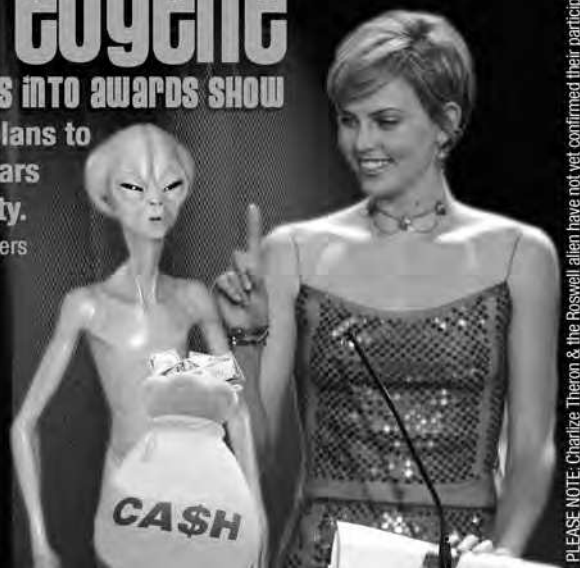
READERS' POLL MORPHS INTO AWARDS SHOW

Eugene Weekly event plans to raise thousands of dollars for Food for Lane County.

Featuring: local celebrity presenters and some of the areas hottest musicians and bands.

OCT. 15

McDONALD THEATRE



PLEASE NOTE: Charize Theron & the Roswell alien have not yet confirmed their participation.

The Fertility Center



of OREGON



WOMEN HELPING WOMEN

MAKE A DREAM COME TRUE. BECOME AN EGG DONOR.

Since 1978, The Fertility Center of Oregon has helped many women become mothers. You can help us to continue to change lives by becoming an egg donor for infertile couples.

Procedures are done in a local clinic over a six-week period, requiring 8 to ten visits. Donors are compensated \$2,500 for their contribution. If you are a healthy woman aged 21-31 and want to help make a dream come true, call 683-1559 or visit our Web site at www.fertilitycenteroforegon.com.