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Thanks for the chance to comment on your story "United by a River, Divided over Management," which features Columbia Gorge Audubon Society efforts on behalf of the White Salmon and Klickitat National Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Five themes became evident in the Forest Service quotes for this story: to balance protection and private land use; to limit management to the "river area;" there will be no condemnation; there will be no monitoring, except for river use; and the focus of acquisitions will be limited to facilitating white water recreation. The Forest Service has used these themes to subvert the legal requirements of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for the White Salmon and Klickitat National Wild and Scenic Rivers. I've capitalized these themes in the following Forest Service quotes from the story.

"The planning team was challenged to STRIKE A BALANCE between adequately protecting and enhancing the river BY MAINTAINING THE CURRENT CHARACTER OF THE RIVER AREA and providing long-term protection and enhancement of ITS outstandingly remarkable values, without unduly limiting other uses, including private lands, that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of THE RIVERS VALUES." (p. 7 of the story, from the Forest Service Record of Decision, 1991).

The intent of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act says nothing about "striking a balance," it orders the protection and enhancement of the river management corridors Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs), and not just of the "river's area." This focus on "the river area" signaled SDS and developers that all of the private land that is not in the river area is open for clear-cut logging and residential development.

Forest Service quotes in the story add to this theme: "The Forest Service WILL NOT USE CONDEMNATION to acquire Scenic easements on, or fee title to, private land unless that is necessary, as a last resort after all other measures have failed, and then only to prevent imminent, serious adverse affects TO THE RIVER AREA." (p.8-9).

The clear-cut logging of a good portion of the management corridor has not been considered "imminent, serious affects," because only the "river area" of the management corridor was considered. Over the years it has become apparent that the "river area" actually means the river itself, and a few tree overhanging the river canyon, a very small percentage of the management corridor.

"...The CRGNSA Office is directing its limited resources toward monitoring activities ON THE RIVER ITSELF." (p. 9)

And, "... The Federal role primarily is to protect THE RIVER'S FREE-FOWING CHARACTER and the outstandingly remarkable values." (p. 10).