

This tunnel vision management style of the river corridor is why so many clear-cuts have occurred, and it explains why residential development has been an on-going problem and is now becoming an even greater threat in both the riparian and upland areas of the management corridor. If this mismanagement and neglect is allowed to continue, the Forest Service will eventually use the very damage that they are allowing to befall the ORVs as the reason for limiting the Wild and Scenic River Boundaries to THE RIVER AREA. In fact, we believe that has been their plan all along..

Over the previous 33 years of river management, the Forest Service has developed excuses that they offer to "explain" why they must limit their management to the river, instead of protecting and enhancing the ORVs of the entire management corridor, as the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires. These excuses were offer by the Forest Service in the story.

The budget issue is a go-to excuse for the Forest Service every time an acquisition opportunity comes up. The Forest Service refers to "limited resources" (p.9) and having to "work within our budget." (p.10) The truth is, acquisition money comes from the Congressional Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Forest Service requests funds for the National Scenic Area all of the time, but they are loath to request money for the White Salmon and Klickitat National Wild and Scenic Rivers. When funding was flowing like a river during the early years of Gorge and tributary management - even to the point of having to leave money on the table because it could not be spent fast enough in the Gorge - the Forest Service still failed to proactively use some of that money for the tributaries. Budget issues came up again when an old growth forest was on the chopping block along the White Salmon River, and the Forest Service fought acquisition tooth and nail. Conservationist had to go around the agency and went directly to Congress to secure funding. The sad fact is, the Forest Service has only willingly acquired 24 acres of land along this river, the other 120 acres were due to conservationist efforts. Forest Service failure to acquire land, through lack of interest, active resistance and botched deals has thwarted implementation of their management plan, a plan that they say can only be implemented through acquisition.

The Forest Service explains that they are "...not the sole authority in the valley..." and "The key here is that it's a state, local and federal partnership." (p.9) This is an attempt to spread the blame for what has happened since this river was designated. The Forest Service has the sole responsibility of implementing their River Plan, and that plan trumps state and county law. The river was designated, because the counties and state were unwilling or unable to do the job. In fact, by the time the management plan was ready, those entities had declared that they would not be involved in helping to implement the plan. The Forest Service claim that the key to management is partnership is disingenuous. The Forest Service cannot rightfully spread the blame for their willful act of abrogating their legal responsibilities under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The Forest Service says, "It seems to be a common misunderstanding that we have the authority to regulate on private land along the river." (p. 9) The Forest Service is purposefully holding to a very limited definition of the term "regulate" here. It is true