

PacifiCorp, the developers, the Forest Service and the Portland group The Friends of the Gorge. All of these groups resisted Wild and Scenic River designations, and they still oppose proper funding of them. When the Forest Service tried to reduce the boundaries of the Wild and Scenic Rivers, when they refused to confront inconsistent land uses, when they bungled a land exchange, when they diligently avoided pursuing acquisitions that would have implemented their management plans, when they ignored threatened sections of the rivers that are not yet part of the Wild and Scenic system, what they were really doing was avoiding the proper funding of these rivers. This combination of powerful interest groups, allied with the Forest Service, have effectively blocked the proper funding of our National Wild and Scenic Rivers for 33 years. The Wild and Scenic Rivers share of Land and Water Conservation funding has almost always been redirected by the Forest Service to the National Scenic Area. How much longer must the tributaries wait in line for their turn? WITHOUT INTERVENTION, WE BELIEVE THAT THE FOREST SERVICE WILL EVENTUALLY COLLAPSE THE WILD AND SCENIC RIVER BOUNDARIES, A COLLAPSE THAT WILL BE JUSTIFIED BY THE VERY DEGRADATION THAT THEY ALLOWED. THAT WOULD BE A GREAT DISSERVICE TO THE PUBLIC AND WOULD AMOUNT TO A SUBVERSION OF CONGRESSIONAL INTENT.

We must give some credit to the Forest Service. When it looked as if they would be chosen to administer the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and the Wild and Scenic Rivers, the Forest Service wrote to then President Reagan and pleaded that they not be given the job of lead agency. At least they realized they were not the agency for the job, and tried to avoid the lead agency role they knew they were ill-suited for. But politics overcame good judgment and they got stuck with the job anyway.

With this history in mind, COLUMBIA GORGE AUDUBON SOCIETY REQUESTS A CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION OF FOREST SERVICE MANAGEMENT OF THE WHITE SALMON AND KLICKITAT NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS. IF MISMANAGEMENT OR NEGLECT IS UNCOVERED, WE ASK THAT THE MANAGEMENT OF THE WHITE SALMON AND KLICKITAT WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS BE HANDED OVER TO THE US PARK SERVICE FOR ADMINISTRATION. THIS CHANGE WOULD BREAK THE DAM OF MUCH NEEDED ACQUISITIONS FUNDING AND BRING IN A CULTURE AND TRADITION OF CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT FOR THE PUBLIC THAT THE FOREST SERVICE HAS FAILED TO DEMONSTRATE.

A HANDFUL OF LOCAL PEOPLE:

Contrary to a revisionist history that is now becoming popularized, Chuck Williams of the Columbia Gorge Coalition (a local environmental group at the time) and a handful of local people (including us) initiated the effort for federal Columbia River Gorge legislation. We wanted a Columbia River Gorge National Park, but the Friends of the Gorge later supported a National Scenic Area with Forest Service administration. We