

The White Salmon River received Congressional recognition when it was designated a National Wild and Scenic River. Is it your intent to ignore the national significance of this river? Certainly, your sensitively located property straddling this National Wild and Scenic River and management boundaries qualifies on four of these attributes: visual, recreational, forestry, and wildlife. Most of the property that is outside of the river management boundaries are within the alternative 2 proposed management boundaries, the proposal that was supported by both state and federal wildlife agencies and by almost all of the many public comments. And now that we know of the global warming crisis, and the role that trees play in moderating it, there is a human survival component to doing the right thing with this property.

Copper West has told us that they have "letters of intent" (offers, not yet accepted), from at least one developer, indicating that we are now a step closer to the conversion of this land from forest production and wildlife management to residential development. This is not what the local people want, nor is it what the river users want, and this river has become one the most popular white-water recreational rivers in the Northwest. If you allow this land to be sold to developers, conversion will soon follow. We believe that this would amount to a subversion of the intent of Congress, and would also constitute a major abuse of this National Wild and Scenic River.

Now is the time to be considering options on how to save the 240 acres. We are working with the Forest Service and they have indicated some interest in at least 30 acres of the property, and, with public pressure, we believe they can be convinced to acquire more. (Apparently there was a misunderstanding leading the Forest Service to conclude that some of the land was already sold, but that turned out not to be true.) The editor of the Enterprise Newspaper in White Salmon suggested to us that perhaps the Department of Natural Resources may be able to purchase some of the property through their Community Forest Trust Program. If Weyerhaeuser showed a real interest in bringing this land into public ownership, this would likely stimulate more interest and encourage land mediators to step in and facilitate the deal.

Perhaps you have your own ideas about how this sensitively located property can be brought into public ownership, and we would certainly like to hear of them, if you do. Would you consider donating all or part of the land to the Forest Service? This would leave a great legacy as you depart from the region, and it could happen quickly. Not only would the property remain in forest production, but we would not have residential development so close to the river. (By the way, the Forest Service has previously amended the management boundaries to bring in at least one significant property.) I'll bet this would be a valuable PR coup for Weyerhaeuser Corporation.

So far the media coverage we have received has been local, but now larger media companies with wider coverage are beginning to show an interest in this story. You do not know the full extent of this story, but it is a story with everything, and we believe it will receive regional coverage, and perhaps even farther, since the White Salmon is a river of national interest. When that happens, we would prefer to put a more positive slant to this story than we now can. But we cannot do that without your help.