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Rafters with Wet Planet get a taste of Husum Falls. *Photo by Jurgen Hess*

"We also have to work within our budget," Pawlitz says, "and we recognize that there's a balance between community needs, private landowners and the White Salmon River. The federal role primarily is to protect the river's free-flowing character and the outstandingly remarkable values."

## Funding: the other F-word

For Thies and White, the controversy surrounding the Weyerhaeuser property is merely a symptom of a much larger problem: that the Forest Service has been either unable or unwilling to acquire enough private land to properly manage the Wild and Scenic River Corridor.

They also bring up the fact that in 28 years, the agency has never updated its Management Plan, even though the initial Record of Decision from '91 explicitly states that *"the Plan will be revised no later than 15 years from the date of this Record of Decision."*

"The only way the Forest Service can implement their Management Plan is through land acquisition, fee title or conservation easements. With that in mind, they have failed miserably in acquiring necessary fee title lands and easements," White says.

"Their record speaks for itself. 144 acres in almost 30 years, and not a single conservation easement."

He says the management situation is even worse on the Klickitat River, where the Forest Service has only acquired one parcel of land that is within the Wild and Scenic Corridor but outside of the Scenic Area boundary.

Getting back to the White Salmon, though, Thies says he is still holding out hope that Weyerhaeuser will "do the right thing" and donate or sell the land to the Forest Service. He points to the corporation's website, which states:

*"We recognize that some lands have special value to the people who live in communities surrounding them. Respecting that, we seek opportunities to protect areas that have exceptional historic, visual, recreational, forestry or wildlife habitat attributes. We work with organizations like the Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land and other environmental, recreational and wildlife organizations to complete conservation transactions. These transactions include conservation sales, conservation easements, land exchanges and the transfer of development rights."*

"If Weyerhaeuser were to say: 'We really might be interested in bringing this property into public ownership, and we have already stated that we like to save special lands for communities.' If they did that, well the Forest Service would have to start thinking about stepping up a little bit more. And conversely, if the Forest Service would say, publicly, 'we're interested,' that would put Weyerhaeuser on the spot. But, so far, neither of them really want to go there," Thies says.

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