



A summer steelhead jumps Husum Falls on the White Salmon River. *Photo by Jurgen Hess*

But two of the White Salmon's longtime champions will tell you that the river is still in jeopardy. They point to a combination of corporate greed, increasing demand for residential development and a history of mismanagement by a federal agency, and say that the White Salmon River is Wild and Scenic "in name only".

Dave Thies, president of the Columbia Gorge Audubon Society, and Dennis White, the Society's Washington Conservation Chair, have fought for the protection of the White Salmon River for over 30 years now. White, along with his wife, Bonnie, and other residents of the Trout Lake Valley, founded Friends of the White Salmon in 1976 when the river was being threatened by hydropower development. And he was directly involved with efforts to add the White Salmon River — and also the nearby Klickitat River — to the National Wild and Scenic River System.

Securing that designation, though, was only the first in a series of contentious battles over how the river and its surrounding forests should be managed. Over the course of the last few decades, Thies and White have squabbled with developers and timber companies, as well as the US Forest Service, the federal agency that was chosen by Congress to manage the Wild and Scenic River.

"We've earned our reputation. And there's a lot of opinions about us out there, some of which aren't very nice," says the soft-spoken Thies, a White Salmon resident who takes pride in having worked in nearly every phase of the wood product industry. "I've been a logger and a carpenter, and I've worked in tree nurseries and sawmills," he continues.

Thies has also, at times, resorted to using his imposing 6' 3" frame as an obstacle. He and White recall a battle in the late 1980's over a tract of privately owned forest surrounding Spring Creek, which falls within the federally protected Wild and Scenic Corridor. The creek is one of the major fish-bearing tributaries of the White Salmon, and it flows through an area where the Forest Service was (at one point) planning to develop hiking trails and a picnic area. But the land was — and still is — owned by SDS, and the timber company intended to log the second-growth forest, just as it had done with many of its other holdings scattered throughout the White Salmon Valley.

So White and Thies dug their heels in. They picketed the Heathman Hotel in Portland, which, at the