

*Pacific Biodiversity Institute's
Unprotected Wilderness Report*

Foggy Dew – July 9, 2000



Preface and Wilderness Potential

This report describes an exploratory outing on July 9, 2000 in an unprotected wilderness area southeast of the Lake Chelan -Sawtooth Wilderness in the Okanogan National Forest. The Pacific Biodiversity Institute (PBI) executive director, Peter Morrison; board member, Aileen Jeffries; and three PBI interns: Kirsten Harma, Rebecca Schultze, and Pamela Becwar, explored the Foggy Dew area in an effort to collect information and to determine the general wilderness characteristics of the area.



Other questions that have come up on the wilderness trips include what the definition of a wilderness is and what is allowed in wilderness. The next step for these Wilderness Reports is to include information as to how can we work to protect these remaining wildlands. President Clinton's Roadless Initiative is a wonderful opportunity for conservationists to hold the Forest Service accountable what protection is given to these remaining lands.

A wilderness area, by definition, must be at least 5000 acres in size. The roadless area from Raven Ridge down to Gold Creek (FS road 4330), which includes Foggy Dew near the middle, is approximately 50 square miles or about 32,000 acres! This area is a likely addition to the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth

Wilderness. It could be argued that because some of this area has been logged it is not of wilderness quality. This argument is not consistent with what we found in the Foggy Dew area. Areas that were selectively cut approximately 40 years ago (estimate by

ecologist, Peter Morrison) exhibit a high level of forest health. We found huge old growth Ponderosa pine, well spaced, with lawn-like Pine grass.

Location and Access

The unprotected wilderness area is south east of the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness area in the Okanogan National Forest. Foggy Dew can be accessed from I-5 at Burlington by taking the North Cascade Highway (Hwy 20) to the Methow Valley. Go south from Winthrop to Twisp and at Twisp take Highway 153 south to the Gold Creek Road (FS road 4340), which is just south of Calton, Washington on Highway 153. From Gold Creek Road take a left on FS 200 up Foggy Dew Creek. From the east, take Highway 97 to Highway 153 from Pateros to the Gold Creek Road and follow the directions above. Just past mile marker 2 we parked at the trailhead. There was no parking lot at this trailhead.

The first several hundred yards of the route is not a trail but instead a very steep, wide, heavily eroded scar made by motorcycles that runs up the hillside. We observed two hikers that followed the motorcycle made swath up to a dead end. They failed to find the hiking trail, returned to their car and left. We had to search around to find the hiking trail farther up the hillside. The trail then followed an over grown logging road for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. In areas the trail was intermittent but as we continued toward the top of the ridge trail conditions improved.

Land Use

Logging

Most of the route we took was in old growth ponderosa pine. This area of ponderosa pine was selectively cut up to an elevation of about 4300 ft (GPS coordinate 704682 E and 5341749 N). Forest health was very good in the area west of Trail 405 and south of Foggy Dew Ridge.

Grazing and Mining

There was no evidence of grazing or mining.

Recreation

There was a huge amount of forest floor disturbance within the first mile of the trailhead as a result of motorized vehicle use. Motorcycle riders are not staying on established trails and are instead carving out new trails, doing much damage in terms of erosion and disturbance.

There was evidence of horse travel along with campsites and fire rings on Foggy Dew Ridge Trail #438.

Flora

While driving along Foggy Dew Creek there was knapweed along the road. Knapweed is a weed that often invades disturbed areas. Seed dispersal occurs along roads as a result

of motor vehicle use. The knapweed thinned out as we continued up the road. We do not have any information about weed control practices in this area. The road was lined with a Grand fir population.

Trees

Ponderosa pines were well spaced, with a ground covering of pine grass (*Calamagrostis rubescens*). In chapter 5 of *Search for a Solution*, Rickey Harrod et. al describes this type of area by saying, “Many pioneers reported park like ponderosa pine stands with dense grass and little brush in the under story.” Forest fire suppression is not a problem as in evident by the small amount of fuel. Lower in the valley there were much smaller trees, brush and more fuel.

Checklist:

- Lodgepole pine
- Douglas fir
- Western white pine
- Englemann spruce
- Subalpine fir

Wild Flowers

Check list:

- Lupine (*Lupinus latifolia*)
- Sedges (*Carex hoodii*)
- Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
- Larkspur (*Delphinium*)
- Heart-leaf arnica (*Arnica cordifolia*)
- Indian-paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.)
- Death camus (*Zigadensis venenosus*)
- Cats-ear (*Calochortus lyallii*)
- Scarlet Gilia (*Gilia aggregata*)
- Pine drops (In the field it was identified as *Pterosora fimbriata*, but *Flora of the Pacific Northwest* named it as *Pteropsora andromedea*)
- Stone crop (*Sedum* spp.)
- Alumroot (*Heuchera cylindrical*)
- Sandwort (*Arenaria capillaries*)
- Penstemon (*Penstemon pruinosus*)
- Hawkweed (*Hieracium albaflorum*)
- Silene (*Silene* spp.)

Fauna

Birds

One grouse was seen and several calls were identified as Nuthatches and thrushes

Mammals

We found hair on a tree along with scratch marks made by a bear near the trail. We were unable to determine what kind of mammal the hair came from.

References

Cronquist, Arthur and C. Leo Hitchcock. 1973. *Flora of the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Spellenburg, Richard. 1988. *National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Wildflowers*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Udvardy, Miklos. 1977. *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.