

Pacific Rivers new film shows devastation on Oregon's private timberlands

Pacific Rivers has released a new film titled *Behind the Emerald Curtain* and is showing it around Oregon this fall, revealing the outdated and harmful logging practices occurring still in the 21st Century on Oregon's private timberlands.

You can see a preview of the film on our website: www.pacificrivers.org. On the website, you can also sign our petition for comprehensive reform of the Oregon Forest Practices Act, and see an updated list of screenings.

Logging on Oregon's private lands are governed under the Oregon Forest Practices Act. There are 10.6 million acres of private timberlands in Oregon – totaling one-sixth of the states. And Oregon's practices are less protective of human and environmental health than Washington, California, and Idaho. Yet many Oregonians remain unaware of the devastation.

The film pulls back the curtain so everyone can see how outdated Oregon's rules are.

- Oregon allows clearcutting on steep slopes with unstable soils, sending sediment into rivers, which pollutes water for fish, wildlife, and people.
- Oregon allows clearcutting right up to most streams, which also pollutes our water and wildlife habitat.
- Oregon allows virtually unfettered aerial spraying of incredibly toxic pesticides, including several that are known to cause cancer and are banned in many other countries.
- Oregon allows virtually unrestricted road building, and roads are vectors for sediment and chemicals to enter waterways.



Photo by Shane Anderson, North Fork Studios



Photo by Shane Anderson, North Fork Studios

Peter Hayes from *Behind the Emerald Curtain*.

Protect the Best Restore the Rest

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Behind the Emerald Curtain uncovers the need for comprehensive reform

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The stories from *Behind the Emerald Curtain* dramatize the problems and potential solutions to these practices.

Here are some of the stories from the film:

- Kate Taylor moved to Rockaway Beach, Oregon, with her boyfriend to start a travel and fishing guide business. As soon as they arrived, they noticed that their drinking water did not meet federal water quality standards. Read more about her story on page 3.
- John Larison grew up in the Siletz watershed on the Oregon Coast, fishing with his dad. Now he sees clearcuts almost wherever he goes due to rampant logging of the watershed over the last 10 years. Read more on page 4.
- Nancy Webster helped launch the Rockaway Citizens Group for Watershed Protection. Over the last 10 years, she has seen the Jetty Creek watershed go from 8 percent clearcut to 82 percent clearcut. Read more on page 5.
- Jane and Jack Anderson moved to Garibaldi, Oregon from Idaho to retire. They were surprised to find their water and forests were better protected in Idaho. Read more on page 5.

Large, publicly traded companies own the majority of private timberlands in Oregon. And these companies are accountable to shareholders and investors – not local Oregonians. Oregon needs comprehensive reform that promotes responsible logging on private timberlands. Oregonians need:

- Common-sense rules for chemical use to protect human and environmental health, including:
 - » Banning the most toxic herbicides;
 - » Wider buffers around homes, schools, hospitals, and health clinics;
 - » Free, widely accessible information alerting the public when sprayings will occur.
- Wider buffers of standing trees along rivers and streams.

Most streams in Oregon have no standing tree buffers along them on private timberlands. These buffers keep water clean and cool, and they store carbon. We need buffers on all streams that are wide enough – based on science – to keep water clean and cool, and continue to store carbon.
- Stronger rules about logging on steep slopes and unstable soils to prevent landslides.

Clearcutting on steep, unstable slopes causes landslides that send mud and sediment into rivers, streams, and drinking water. This suffocates life in the streams and requires communities to filter and/or treat their drinking water with more and more chlorine or other chemicals.

Kate Taylor:

“They’re spraying pesticides in your drinking water”

Kate Taylor and her boyfriend moved to the Oregon Coast in 2014 to run their fishing and travel business.

She wasn’t surprised by the logging. “I knew there was extensive logging in the region from being around there fishing. What I didn’t realize was how it was impacting the communities,” Kate said.

As soon as they moved in, they received a notice in the mail from their public utility saying that their water exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s guidelines for trihalomethanes.

According to Wikipedia, trihalomethanes (THMs) are a by-product created when chlorine is used to disinfect water for drinking. They result from the reaction of chlorine or bromine with organic matter present in the water being treated. Several studies have shown THMs have adverse health effects, and many governments set limits on the amount permissible in drinking water – including the U.S. EPA.

“That really scared me. And when I turned on my water, it just smelled like a swimming pool. It didn’t taste like good water either. All of these things really got me thinking. I live on the water, basically, so water’s very important to me. Clean water is essential to my livelihood. I thought, what is going on? What’s happening?”

Soon after, she was walking her dog on the beach one morning. Her dog met another dog and did what friendly dogs do, and the dog owners did what friendly dog owners do: started talking.

“I had never met her. We just started talking. And I told her, I’m really concerned about the water here. What’s going on? Where does our water even come from?”

The woman Kate was talking to was Nancy Webster. Nancy pointed to the hills, where you can see the clearcuts very well, and said, “That’s Jetty Creek. That’s where you water comes from.” Nancy told her Jetty Creek was only 8 percent clearcut in 2004 and in 2013, was 82 percent clearcut. She told her about the aerial spraying. “And I literally became terrified,” Kate said.



Photo by Shane Anderson, North Fork Studios

Kate Taylor, Rockaway beach resident, stands on a stump in Jetty Creek watershed, drinking water source for Rockaway Beach.

Kate was excited to be part of the film *Behind the Emerald Curtain* because “it does seem covert. It’s kind of hidden behind the mountains there. And you just don’t really know where your drinking water comes from, and you don’t know they’re spraying pesticides in your drinking water and over your head. There are a lot of people in our community even right now who have no idea.”

There was an environmental assessment done of Jetty Creek before the rampant clearcutting occurred. And the EA showed that clearcutting would harm drinking water. “The companies chose to ignore that. And somebody is responsible. Where is the accountability? Especially with the community having to invest a lot of money in updating their water treatment plants in what was a great water source.”

“It leaves me speechless sometimes that this is even an issue that we’re facing. It seems so simple,” Kate said.

Nancy Webster:

“They were cutting right through the small streams”

Nancy Webster has lived in Rockaway Beach, Ore. for almost eight years and grew up on the Oregon Coast. Her father even worked for Weyerhaeuser in the 1950s. But it wasn't until three years ago that she was aware of a fast-growing problem in her community.

“From my porch, I could look up and see this massive clearcut happening,” she said.

She and a friend who was retired from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality decided to hike into the Jetty Creek watershed to take a look. This was where their drinking water comes from, and they were shocked by what they saw.

“There were massive, massive clearcuts. And my friend thought they must be violating the rules. They were cutting right through the small streams. But when we spoke with two contract loggers working on it, they said this is what's allowed under the law. And they said it would be sprayed soon with pesticides,” Webster said.

Webster has since become the face of reform in Rockaway Beach. She started a citizens group to help reform the Oregon Forest Practices Act. She learned that in 2003, Jetty Creek watershed was only 8 percent clearcut; in 2013, it was 82 percent clearcut. Some of the land is owned by an Oregon-based company, and some of it is owned by a large, publicly traded corporation with international investors who are not accountable to local residents.

Rockaway Beach residents began receiving notices in the mail that their drinking water was contaminated and that the city was working on it. After two upgrades to the treatment plan, at taxpayer expense, Webster is uncer-



Photo by Shane Anderson, North Fork Studios

Rockaway Beach drinking water source.

tain if they are meeting requirements yet. “The city is in total denial that the turbidity in our water is caused by logging. But the city has had to add more chlorine to get it clean,” she said.

Webster is also frustrated by how difficult it is to learn if and when pesticides will be sprayed. “I can smell it at our house from about half a mile away when they spray,” she said. She's also frustrated by how inadequate and unreliable the water testing has been, and by the absolute lack of air monitoring.

Many other communities on the coast are concerned they will be next: Nehalem, Arch Cape, and Oceanside, to name a few. Most communities use surface water because wells don't work in most areas of the coast.

“My father worked for Weyerhaeuser in the 50s and thought they were overlogging even then. I don't wonder what he would think now.”

John Larison:

“Why do we need to be cutting like we're cutting?”

John Larison grew up outside Philomath, Oregon – timber town USA, as he calls it. He went to school with children from several prominent logging families. His parents made films for National Geographic.

They made a film about Alaska's ancient forest – the Tongass – in the early 1990s, when the spotted owl war was raging. “And we started getting death threats from

our neighbors. That's when my eyes were opened to how contentious everything was,” he said.

John is interested in balance. “Here we were, living in a wood house and using paper. And it wasn't that I've ever been anti logging. It was more like, why do we need to be cutting like we're cutting?” he said.

“We’re fighting for the environment for our children”

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At that time, the early 1990s, the rotation for cutting timber was still 60 or 70 years. Now it’s 37.

Since then, he has only become more passionate about the issue, because he has seen some of the places he loves destroyed. “Every time I go to the river, I see a new big cut above a spawning tributary,” Larison said.

Just a few years ago – Larison thinks it was 2009 – a large timber corporation built a new road along the 2nd most important spawning tributary to his local river, the Siletz. Immediately there were landslides, similar to the ones seen in Pacific Rivers’ new film, Behind the Emerald Curtain. When the rains came, the river ran brown and fish suffocated. Few steelhead returned to spawn.

“It was one data point, but it seemed pretty obvious to us that that road and the landslides affected the success of the spawning that year. And you sort of magnify that on a bigger scale, look at all the private land owners on Oregon’s most important salmon streams, it’s no wonder that our fish are in such trouble,” he said.

John is a fishing guide turned novelist and professor. He’s also a father of three children. As a kid he assumed the 1990s were as bad as it was going to get. But now, they are worse.



Photo by Shane Anderson, North Fork Studios

John Larison stands on a stump overlooking a landslide area.

Nevertheless, Larison is optimistic. “I feel like Oregon has more people now who value healthy wild places and sustainable harvest. We finally have momentum,” he said. “And having kids makes it easier to keep fighting for what’s right, because we’re fighting for the environment for our children, not just for us,” he said.

“This film is part of a bigger wave of momentum that is going to change things. I’m stoked for the future. I think it’s going to get bloody for a little while, but I think we’re gonna win,” he said.

We think so too.

Jack and Jane Anderson

“Nobody has the power to do anything ...”

Jack and Jane Anderson moved from northern Idaho to the north coast of Oregon 12 years ago to retire.

“We always thought north Idaho was one of those backwards states that had no environmental laws, and Oregon was such a wonderful, green place, and we were going to a place where our water would be much cleaner and we’d be safer,” Jane said. “We were shocked to find out that we were better protected in Idaho.”

They lived on 20 acres in the woods in Idaho, adjacent to private forests, and moved to Garibaldi, near Tillamook. They first became aware there was a serious problem 15 months ago.



Photo by Shane Anderson, North Fork Studios

Jack Anderson surveys a barren area near his home in Garibaldi.

“I think this is going to be a wakeup call”

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“We were walking our dogs a year ago July, in the woods, and we noticed signs about a company planning to spray pesticides some time between July 1 and July 31. First of all, I don’t want pesticides sprayed in my watershed, and then to have it open for a month, it could happen any time. People walk in the woods. It seemed not right,” Jack said.

Garibaldi is one of the rare towns on the coast that uses well water not surface water, meaning their water is safer than others. But the aerial pesticide spraying, clearcutting, and muddy streams bothered them.

They called the state for answers, and found them hard to find. Most people answering the phones didn’t have all of the information, because departments are siloed – fish are managed in one, water and air another, forests yet another. “They’ve split and divided them all up so much that nobody has any power to do anything,” Jack said.

Jane calls it a “structured lack of accountability in the agencies.”

They were pleased to be part of Pacific Rivers’ and Shane Anderson’s new movie, *Behind the Emerald Curtain*, to draw attention to the matter. “Just the title itself. That’s exactly the problem we have here: people don’t get out of their cars, they don’t walk the half mile into the woods, they really do think Oregon is such a green state. To just see the aerial views I think is going to be a wakeup call. This is out of control,” Jack said.

Jack and Jane have become activists seeking comprehensive reform of the Oregon Forest Practices Act for their own health, the health of their friends and neighbors, and their grandchildren. “People need to understand that the results on our children are going to be devastating. It has to stop. It is out of control,” Jane said.

O&C LANDS UPDATES

Pacific Rivers and three other river-related non-profits -- Wild Salmon Center, American Rivers, and Trout Unlimited -- submitted comments in August asking BLM to fully analyze the impacts their proposal or O&C Lands would have on water. The current plan does not adequately assess how water – including rivers, streams, water quality, and aquatic fish and wildlife habitat – would be affected.

These lands are managed under the Northwest Forest Plan, which has a clear way to protect healthy rivers and clean water. It is called the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, and it is working. Our water is cleaner, our rivers are healthier, and fish and wildlife, including salmon, have at least been holding the line and in some places rebounding. Now BLM is proposing to dismantle this proven and effective strategy.

“Nearly half of all Oregonians get their drinking water from streams and rivers that flow through O&C Lands. These lands occur in almost every county in Western Oregon. Some of them are practically in our backyards. They are important, and we need to make sure they continue to help keep our water clean and rivers healthy.

Oregon has 2.5 million acres of so-called **Oregon & California railroad lands – the O&C Lands**. These are forested federal lands in western Oregon managed mostly by the Bureau of Land Management. They are interspersed with private lands in a checkerboard fashion, making management challenging.

By law, a significant percent of timber revenues from O&C lands has gone to the counties with O&C lands – 18 of the 19 counties west of the Cascades. Currently there are efforts to increase timber harvests on O&C lands. Pacific Rivers is working to ensure that if timber harvests do increase, land managers are still protecting clean water, healthy rivers, and biodiversity.

The BLM’s current proposal will not do that,” said John Kober, executive director of Pacific Rivers Council. Pacific Rivers supports responsible logging in places that will still protect clean water and healthy rivers. BLM’s current proposal provides lip service to the need for clean water, but does not include the protections needed to maintain it.

Wyden proposes Frank Moore sanctuary

Frank Moore is legendary — a legendary flyfisherman, conservationist, and World War II veteran, and a legendary husband, father, and friend. Anyone who meets him does not soon forget him. When he talks to you, you know you matter.



That's a rare gift. And now, all of us have a chance to give something back.

Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon has introduced a bill in Congress to protect the 104,000-acre Steamboat Creek watershed as the **Frank Moore Wild Steelhead Sanctuary**. (Jeaune Moore has spent her life identifying the myriad native plant species in the Steamboat Creek watershed and there is strong local support to honor her as well as Frank in this designation.) The bill is one piece of the larger puzzle to protect rivers and clean water in western Oregon's forests. But it is an important piece.

The Steamboat Creek watershed is one of the most important ecological areas in the Pacific Northwest, providing over 50 river and stream miles of high-quality habitat

for summer and winter steelhead, Coho salmon, rainbow trout and other native species. It is the most productive salmon and steelhead tributary in the North Umpqua Basin.

Yet, the area is not well protected. The forests around Steamboat Creek have been logged — in certain places, quite heavily. It still has relatively large trees that provide great habitat for fish and wildlife, and support clean air and clean water. The proposed sanctuary seeks to maintain that.

Senator Wyden's bill proposes permanent, legislative protections that will let federal agencies manage the watershed to benefit fish, water, and education. Timber harvesting will still be allowed when it fits with these other management goals.

We're grateful to Senator Wyden for proposing this bill, and for securing a hearing earlier this month. We will be encouraging its passage through Congress — and also encouraging that the bill include the 40,000-acre Canton Creek watershed, because it is one of Steamboat Creek's most productive tributaries. Currently, it is excluded from the sanctuary.

Portland premiere:

Behind the Emerald Curtain

On Oct. 22, 2015, Patagonia Portland graciously hosted us for a screening of *Behind the Emerald Curtain*. More than 200 people came! And the discussion after the film was vibrant and energetic. We are optimistic that with all of you, your families, and your friends behind us, we can and will reform the Oregon Forest Practices Act. Make sure to join our e-mail list and like our Facebook page if you want to stay up to date on upcoming screenings, the release of the full film online,

and ways you can help us reform the forest practices act. Thank you to Patagonia, Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund, and the Jubitz Family Foundation for making this film possible.

Top: It was standing-room only at Patagonia. Bottom left: Panel discussion with people from the film. Bottom right: Filmmaker Shane Anderson and Executive Director John Kober introduce the film.



Your employer can help Pacific Rivers Council

The effects of climate change are growing, putting stress on the rivers, land, and other resources people and wildlife need to thrive. But Oregonians can do more to protect our way of life. Pacific Rivers Council has partnered with EarthShare Oregon to make that happen.

EarthShare engages people at their workplaces to strengthen environmental efforts locally, across Oregon, and around the world.

Pacific Rivers' membership in EarthShare also enables us to reach employees across Oregon who might not know about our work. The more workplaces offering EarthShare, the more financial support, volunteers and outreach we receive!

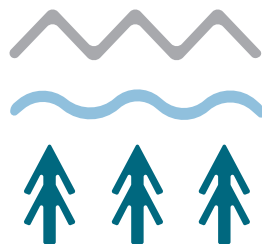
Does your workplace offer EarthShare? Find out online at <http://earthshare-oregon.org/campaigns/workplace-partners>



If not, talk to your boss or human resources personnel about offering EarthShare. Meghan Humphreys from EarthShare will meet with your employer to discuss the benefits of a partnership and get started right away.

To learn more about bringing EarthShare to your workplace, contact Meghan directly at 503-223-9015 or meghan@earthshare-oregon.org.

There are lots of changes here at Pacific Rivers. We have a new website (check it out at www.pacificrivers.org), a new logo, and a new (shortened) name. But our work remains the same. Pacific Rivers' continues to build support for and advance scientifically sound policies that protect rivers and clean water by promoting healthy watersheds.



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