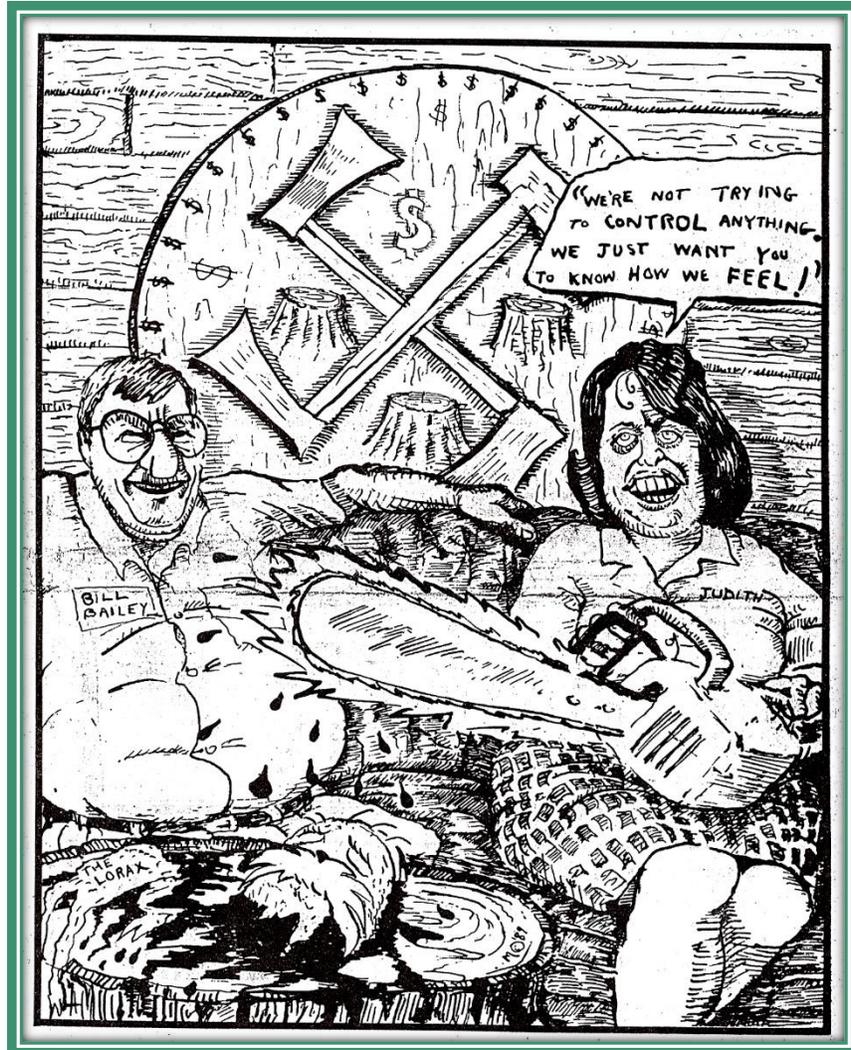


Chapter 16 : I Like Spotted Owls...Fried.



“Then... Oh! Baby! Oh!
How my business did grow!
Now, chopping one tree at a time was too slow.

“So I quickly invented my Super-Axe-Hacker,
which whacked off four Truffula Trees at one smacker,
We were making Thneeds four times as fast as before,
And that Lorax?... *He* didn't show up any more.”

—excerpt from The Lorax, by Dr. Seuss, 1971

Bill Bailey had a problem. The longtime Laytonville resident owned a logging equipment shop and mail order catalog from there and made hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, but for him that certainly wasn't a problem.¹ It wasn't a lack of connections that plagued him. His wife Judith Bailey was the sister of Becky Harwood, who was married to young Art Harwood, whose father ran a profitable, local sawmill in nearby Branscomb.² It wasn't a lack of wealth. Bill Bailey claimed to be just another working stiff, but this description was betrayed by the fact that he owned expensive furniture and several luxury cars, including a \$50,000 Jaguar and a \$100,000 Morgan.³ It wasn't even a matter of political perspective. Bailey had presented himself as conservative, but had been successfully pegged as one of the financial backers of recently exposed neo-Nazi and Mendocino supervisorial candidate, Jack Azevedo.⁴ Bailey took a lot of heat for backing him, but refused to back down, even after being exposed as supporting the reactionary would-be candidate in the local press, but Bailey didn't even *that* as a problem.⁵ No, indeed, Bill Bailey had a *real* problem. It seems that in April of 1989, Bailey's eight-year-old son, Sam, had recently come home from school one day and told his father that, "when loggers fall trees they are taking away the little animals' homes, and they can't live."⁶ *That*, for Bill Bailey was a *huge* problem.

What had happened, apparently, was that one of Sam Bailey's schoolmates had brought a Darryl Cherney tape to class one day, and because it was raining and recess had been cancelled, the teacher allowed the schoolmate to play one, and only one song from the tape.⁷ Later, however, it was also discovered that Sam had been influenced by a teacher's reading of the Dr. Seuss book, The Lorax.⁸ The book was, in fact, already eighteen years old by this time, and it featured a colorful villain known as "The Once-ler", who

cuts down all of the "Truffula" trees in order to obtain the materials necessary to produce "Thneeds". The "Lorax" is the representative of all of the creatures in the Truffula forest whose homes are being destroyed by the Once-ler's greed, but the Once-ler is unrepentant and he destroys the forest. In the end, the Once-ler having realized the consequences of his actions and learning that the Lorax was correct, urges everyone else to heed the Lorax's warning.⁹ The book, published in 1971 (and made into a movie by Universal Pictures in 2012), almost ten years before the founding of Earth First!, and certainly well before Sam Bailey was even born, turned out to be quite prescient, and The Once-ler bore more than a passing resemblance to Bill Bailey.¹⁰ Indeed, the "Once-ler of Laytonville" had a problem, and he was determined to do something about it.

Rather than consider the possibility that there just *might* have been a lot of wisdom in that children's book, Bill Bailey decided to fight back against those who would "unfairly" paint him as a living, breathing Once-ler. First, following the path set by TEAM and WECARE, he and the Harwoods took out full-page paid advertisements in the *Mendocino County Observer* and other local publications to proclaim the virtues of "timber harvesting" and the "wood products industry". Harwood's full page ad was titled, "An Open Letter to [Laytonville School Superintendent] Brian Buckley", and was signed by 300 Harwood employees. It stated "We request the Laytonville Schools start showing respect to the community and the forest products industry that we deserve."¹¹

The Harwoods' alignment with Bailey was somewhat surprising, given the fact that they were one of the more worker friendly, ecologically sustainable employers in the area, but they were related by marriage to Bailey, and Bailey almost literally ran Laytonville as his own fiefdom. His method of choice was philanthropy, but when he couldn't buy respect, he would bully his way into getting what he wanted. Bailey's own advertisements were much more blunt; they made backhanded criticisms of Brian Buckley; they declared that Earth First! (which had no direct connection to The Lorax whatsoever) was "a terrorist organization"; and they also proclaimed in screaming bold type, "**SOME OF OUR TEACHERS NEED**

¹ "Under the Barnum and (Bill) Bailey Big Top: The Mayor of Laytonville", by Lawrence Livermore, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, August 23, 1989.

² "Laytonville Supports Dr. Seuss Book", *Willits News*, September 15, 1989.

³ Livermore, August 23, 1989, op. cit.

⁴ "Bill Bailey and Harwoods Sound the Alarm: Red Alert in Laytonville", by Lawrence Livermore, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, May 24, 1989.

⁵ Livermore, August 23, 1989, op. cit. (Apparently Bailey stubbornly refused to back down, because he was determined to prove that "he couldn't be swayed by the likes of Bruce Anderson.")

⁶ Livermore, May 24, 1989, op. cit.

⁷ Livermore, May 24, 1989, op. cit.

⁸ "Holding Back the Forces of Darkness: The Laytonville Lorax Wars", by Lawrence Livermore, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, October 11, 1989.

⁹ Dr Seuss, The Lorax, New York, NY, Random House, 1971

¹⁰ "Bill Bailey vs. The Lorax: The Once-ler of Laytonville", by Lawrence Livermore, *Laytonville Lookout*, #34, Winter 1990.

¹¹ Livermore, May 24, 1989, op. cit.

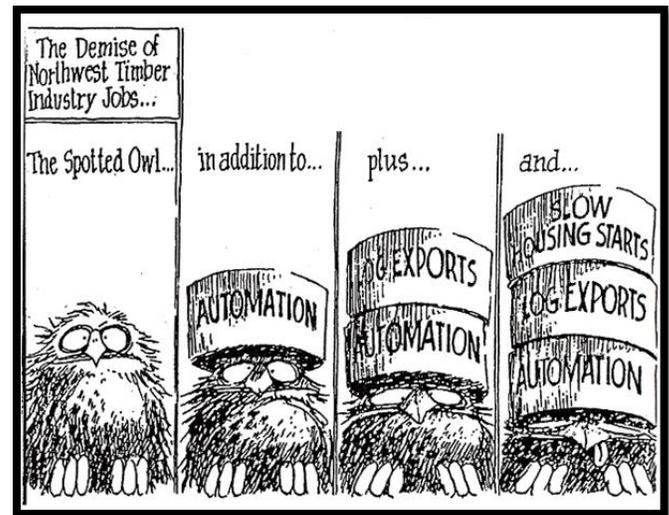
GUIDENCE, NOW!¹² Frank Sanderson, Harwood company spokesperson attempted to give a presentation on the virtues of the local timber industry in the school, (at the school's invitation), the students found his presentation to be less than inspiring. This only made Bill Bailey angrier.¹³

So Bailey escalated his attacks on his perceived enemies. He devised a symbol, called the "Woodsman Coat of Arms", which depicted a crossed saw and axes, two muscular arms surrounding a baby fir tree, adorned with the slogans "People in Unison with Nature" and "Reforestation – Professionalism – Harvesting." The symbol was intended to "help unify those who are "resisting the radical preservationists." Several observers noted, however, that the symbol bore an uncomfortable resemblance to a Nazi swastika, and most Laytonville residents scoffed at Bailey's attempt to use symbolism to divide and conquer.¹⁴ One anonymous satirist responded by creating a knockoff of the symbol, "Woodsman's Cut Off Arms", which depicted the tree lying on its side after having been cut, and blood on the axes and saw.¹⁵

Bailey was not at all amused, but, being as influential as he was, he was able to convince the nominally progressive *Mendocino Coast Observer* to feature a regular, weekly "guest editorial", written by him. In it Bailey excoriated the *Observer's* own "bored or the unemployed or unemployable" who "call themselves writers" and denounced those who didn't share his views as not being "real Laytonvillians". He attempted to sway opinions by sending every resident in the small, northern Mendocino County town a personal form letter "from Bill and Judith", printed on Bailey company stationery, complete with the Coat of Arms, denouncing "radical preservationists" and "professional protesters". Also enclosed were two copies of a petition instructing the BLM to approve timber sales (such as those in the Cahto Wilderness Area) without delay, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Most residents declined to return the petition, and residents joked about sending Bailey drug tests, roadkill, or simply reusing the envelopes for their own needs.¹⁶ Evidently there just weren't enough "real Laytonvilli-

ans" willing to kowtow to Corporate Timber's thought control.

* * * * *



The controversy was much wider and deeper than Bill Bailey's ego, however; it was a microcosm of the growing battle over the status of the Northern Spotted Owl. The two pound bird was already managed as a "sensitive" (one step below "threatened") species by the United States Forest Service (USFS), but environmentalists had argued for years that it should be listed as "endangered".¹⁷ By 1988, only 1,500 pairs of the bird were said to exist and it was determined that it depended on the existence of the old growth forest habitat for its survival—habitat that was disappearing fast at a rate of 60,000 acres annually. A mere 3,000,000 acres of such habitat had been estimated to still exist—according to USFS reports at any rate—but according to environmentalists, even those numbers were likely overoptimistic.¹⁸

Efforts by environmentalists to convince the federal government to merely list the owl as a *threatened* species had been complex and often frustrating. In 1984, National Wildlife Federation appealed the Forest Service Regional Guide for Region 6 (the Pacific Northwest) over the status of the owl. The appeal went all the way to then Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Douglas McCleary, a Reagan appointee who (as was to be expected) had very close ties with Corporate Timber. McCleary decided that the agency would have to do an environmental impact statement on the Spotted Owl, but that all other points in the appeal would be dropped. Then, in 1987, the US Fish

¹² Emphasis in the original.

¹³ Livermore, May 24, 1989, op. cit.

¹⁴ Livermore, May 24, 1989, op. cit.

¹⁵ Livermore, August 23, 1989, op. cit. Livermore joked, "As is well known, environmentalists are not allowed to have jobs, and among those few environmentalist women who are not lesbians, abortions are mandatory."

¹⁶ Livermore, August 23, 1989, op. cit.

¹⁷ "Judge favors Owls and Old Growth", by Tim McKay, *EcoNews*, December 1988.

¹⁸ "Owl Saves Old Growth", by Tim McKay, *EcoNews*, May 1989.

and Wildlife Service refused to list the Spotted Owl as Threatened or Endangered.¹⁹

In response, two things happened independently of each other. First, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (SCLDF) filed suit against the FWS on behalf of at least 25 environmental groups.²⁰ These included the Sierra Club, Audubon Society, and the Oregon Natural Resources Council (ONRC) as well as numerous local environmental groups, including the North Coast Environmental Center. The plaintiffs charged that the FWS had buckled under to pressure from Corporate Timber.²¹ Adding weight to their contentions, a leading spotted owl researcher declared, “All the evidence points to the fact that the species is at least threatened, if not endangered.”²² Even an unreleased Bureau of Land Management report supported this conclusion.²³

Meanwhile, Congress’s General Accounting Office, at the request of a House committee, opened an investigation of the agency. Evidently the FWS’s negligence on the issue was so blatant that in November of 1988, Judge Thomas Zilly, a Reagan appointee to the Seattle Circuit Court, ruled that the FWS had been ‘arbitrary and capricious’ in their decision to not list the species. No biologist—including the agency’s own experts—had agreed with the decision to not list.²⁴ According to Zilly’s ruling, the FWS had 90 days to either list the owl as endangered or provide sufficient cause for not listing it as such.²⁵ One month later, the USFS Chief finally signed a Record of Decision on the Spotted Owl EIS and claimed that it was changing its position.²⁶ In a news release, Marvin L Plenert, director of the FWS region headquarters in Portland, Oregon declared:

“In light of our analysis of the new data that we have reviewed since the first status review was performed, we believe a threatened classification for the northern spotted owl is the most

accurate judgment that currently can be made about the species and the threats that it faces.”²⁷

However, examination of the USFS’s apparent reversal revealed that even this was still mostly just smoke and mirrors designed to deflect the fact that the agency was still very much marching to the beat of Corporate Timber’s drum. What the agency was *actually* agreeing to protect amounted to a mere nine percent of the spotted owl’s rapidly disappearing habitat in Oregon and Washington.²⁸ The agency had adopted a strategy of maintaining the owl’s “minimum viable population” (an obvious attempt to place the economic needs of capital ahead of the long term viability of the species). The environmental groups appealed the decision submitting numerous scientific studies, including affidavits from some of the world’s premier conservation biologists (with degrees from Cornell, Harvard, Oxford, Stanford, and the University of California at Berkeley) arguing that the USFS’s strategy was based on junk science and that any further significant reductions in the owl’s population could cause the entire species’ population to crash.²⁹

One month later, US District Judge William Dwyer ruled in favor of the environmentalists halting almost 20 percent of the timber sales in 13 National Forests in Oregon and Washington until May 15, 1989.³⁰ The following week, fellow US District Judge Helen Frye ruled that, “destruction of owl habitat without compliance with the law is a significant and irreparable injury... Old-growth forests are lost for generations and no amount of monetary compensation can replace the loss.” Finally, then-President Bush’s Secretary of the Interior, Manuel Lujan announced that he would support the decision to protect the owl, though he gave no specifics on how he would do so.³¹ The decision temporarily halted timber sales on public land in an area covering at least 100,000 acres in northwestern California, including Klamath, Mendocino, Shasta-Trinity, and Six Rivers National Forests, as well as Redwood and Point Reyes National Parks. Additionally, some 8,000 acres of privately owned forestland in California was likewise affected.³² The temporary halt issued on behalf of the

¹⁹ “Old Growth vs. Old Mindsets”, by Mitch Freedman, *Earth First! Journal*, Beltane / May 1, 1989.

²⁰ “Spotted Owl Controversy Heats Up in Northwest”, by Thomas Johnson, *Humboldt Beacon and Fortuna Advance*, July 6, 1988.

²¹ “Who’s In Court”, *EcoNews*, June 1988.

²² “Owl On its Own”, *EcoNews*, January 1988.

²³ McKay, May 1989, op. cit.

²⁴ Freedman, May 1, 1989, op. cit.

²⁵ “Judge favors Owls and Old Growth”, by Tim McKay, *EcoNews*, December 1988.

²⁶ Freedman, May 1, 1989, op. cit.

²⁷ Johnson, July 6, 1988, op. cit.

²⁸ “Spotted Owl: 9% Solution”, by Tim McKay, *EcoNews*, January 1989.

²⁹ “Experts Speak Up for Northern Spotted Owl”, by Tim McKay, *EcoNews*, March 1989.

³⁰ “Bench Likes Owl; Industry Hoots”, by Tim McKay, *EcoNews*, April 1989.

³¹ McKay, May 1989, op. cit.

³² Johnson, July 6, 1988, op. cit.

Spotted Owl gave far more weight to the possibility that environmentalists might file even more lawsuits.

Corporate Timber's reaction to the decision was, naturally, one of consternation. They cried "foul", declared that the USFWS reversal on the status of the owl was "politically motivated" (in spite of the fact that the courts had ruled that the agency's initial contrary decision *not* to list it as threatened or endangered had been).³³ They then regurgitated the same talking points trotted out the previous year when Jerry Partain had denied the three THPs contested by EPIC and Judge Buffington had granted the environmentalists a TRO against Maxxam's attempts to log All Species Grove.

They claimed that the environmental studies underestimated the number of owls. They would often cite, as proof, anecdotal account after anecdotal account that other studies (usually carried out by the industry itself, in a very short span of two months or less), found hundreds, if not thousands of pairs of owls living in second growth forests. For example, in a paid advertisement, Pacific Lumber management argued that they had conducted their own study of spotted owl populations in its young growth timberlands, and that they had found that a large number of owls were capable of living and reproducing there, in contrast with the environmentalists' supposed argument that such birds could only live and reproduce in old growth forests.³⁴ Pacific Lumber also made a video trying to create the visual impression of this phenomena as well.³⁵ Shep Tucker indicated that Louisiana Pacific had hired a wildlife biologist to conduct a similar survey.³⁶ Indeed, this argument was repeated ad nauseum, but it was quite distant from the truth.³⁷

³³ "Timber Reps Express Concern", by Glenn Simmons, *Humboldt Beacon and Fortuna Advance*, July 27, 1989; "Proposal Example of Extremists", editorial, *Humboldt Beacon and Fortuna Advance*, August 10, 1988; "Spotted Owl Myth Vs. Reality", editorial by Glenn Simmons, *Humboldt Beacon and Fortuna Advance*, August 10, 1988. It's unclear who wrote the first editorial in this publication on this date, though both say essentially the same thing, which suggests that the perpetually eager and willing propagandists for Corporate Timber who edited and owned this publication saw little risk of being accused of pouring their dubious arguments on too thickly.

³⁴ "Do Owls Live in the Forest? They Do in Ours!", paid advertisement by the Pacific Lumber Company, *Humboldt Beacon and Fortuna Advance*, September 71, 1989.

³⁵ "Timber Reps Express Concern", by Glenn Simmons, *Humboldt Beacon and Fortuna Advance*, July 27, 1989

³⁶ Johnson, July 6, 1988, op. cit.

³⁷ "Proposal Example of Extremists", editorial, *Humboldt Beacon and Fortuna Advance*, August 10, 1988; "Spotted Owl Myth vs. Reality", editorial by Glenn Simmons, *Humboldt Beacon and Fortuna Advance*, August 10, 1988.

To begin with, the timber industry's own studies could not be taken as scientific, because there was an inherent conflict of interest in policing oneself. The results of many of their "studies" proved to be heavily biased in favor of maintaining the same level of timber harvesting, if not increasing it, and were based on extremely flawed methodology. The technique used for determining the presence of the owls consisted of listening to responses from (unseen) live owls responding to recorded owl calls.³⁸ This approach, described as "self-serving pseudoscience" by ONRC member Andy Kerr, vastly overestimated the industry's findings.³⁹ Corporate Timber's assertion that owls were found in "managed forests" was spotty itself. For example, in the case of Pacific Lumber's claims of finding owls among its second growth woods, there was old growth nearby, albeit increasingly smaller and smaller patches. Furthermore, it was assumed that P-L's second growth continued much residual old growth.⁴⁰ Even if spotted owl pairs *were* actually being found in second growth groves, it was more an indicator of their immediate adaptation to increasingly adverse conditions—primarily the loss of old growth habitat—than the long term viability of their species. Either way, without immediate action, the owl's population would almost certainly crash.

Corporate Timber (once again) predicted the loss of 10,000s of jobs ultimately leading to the economic collapse of the entire Pacific Northwest. USFS chief Dale Robertson identified the decision on the owl as the reason for blocking 1.5 bbf of timber sales, approximately one seventh of its annual sale volume at the time.⁴¹ James Gessinger of the Northwest Forestry Association argued that the timing of the injunction would create a "very, very ugly fall and winter" for the timber dependent communities within his region.⁴² Speaking for Pacific Lumber, David Galitz opined:

"We're managing our land for the lumber production, while giving consideration to wildlife. The courts seem confused. It is having a dramatic impact on those of us operating on private land. (Environmental) groups are going into court. The court's saying, 'We don't know,

³⁸ "Who's the Prey?", by Tim McKay, *EcoNews*, September 1989.

³⁹ "Who Knows Where Owls Are?", by Tim McKay, *EcoNews*, January 1990.

⁴⁰ "Experts Speak Up for Northern Spotted Owl", by Tim McKay, *EcoNews*, March 1989.

⁴¹ Johnson, July 6, 1988, op. cit.

⁴² McKay, April 1989, op. cit.

so let's hold (the sales) up.' What they're doing is delaying the process. That means jobs. In order to protect those jobs, we're going on lands we preferred not to go on this soon."⁴³

Speaking for Louisiana Pacific, which relied on timber harvested from federal land for approximately ten percent of its revenue, Shep Tucker declared:

"It's really put the national forests on hold. Everybody's afraid to do anything. (There is a) fear of lawsuits and a lack of information (regarding the spotted owl). This adds to the cost of purchasing timber. In the worst-case scenario when things get tight, you start to lay off shifts."⁴⁴

P-L's David Galitz offered similarly gloomy projections, stating,

"We have no projection for a decrease (in harvesting). But we have concerns that may eventually happen—that's going to mean jobs. It (could) have negative impacts on timber supply, and that would mean higher priced timber and homes, and it usually means jobs. I question whether (those who would limit old growth harvesting) realize the significance and the havoc it would have here on the North Coast. It (would) mean very substantial job losses throughout the industry. We've only got one young-growth mill, the one in Fortuna."⁴⁵

Related to this concern was the potential for the number of set asides for spotted owls to increase as more owls were discovered. P-L representative and TEAM spokesperson Dennis Wood declared that because of this uncertainty, the impact of a moratorium could be far worse than the expansion of Redwood National Park.⁴⁶ What Wood had failed to admit, however, is that the job losses due to RNP's expansion—if any—were negligible, in spite of Corporate Timber's warnings that economic Armageddon would result.⁴⁷ There was no reason to think that the same held true if the spotted owl was declared endangered,

and thus far, no peer reviewed studies had been conducted one way or the other.

A related talking point was that the listing of the owl as threatened would result in increased cutting, because if public timber was declared off-limits to logging, there would be more pressure to log on private land, although this was more of a threat than a warning. For example, Don Nolan Sr., declared, "If the old growth is removed from harvesting, private companies may have to turn to cutting forests intended to be managed on a sustained-yield basis. The cuts will be too soon."⁴⁸

Representing Eel Rivers Sawmills, which depended upon timber logged from federal lands for forty percent of its income, vice-president Dennis Scott pessimistically opined:

"We're not disputing that the habitat (of the spotted owl) will be disturbed, but you've got to cut the tree to replant the tree. I don't think you can go back to the clearcut days either. I think this will end with a compromise, but that takes time in the system... The question is, 'Will there be any mills left?' It would be very difficult if the volume (of timber) was shut down."⁴⁹

Left unspoken was the fact that such increases were only necessary to meet the demands of the Corporate Timber bottom line which could have been eliminated by a whole scale reprioritization of timber harvesting priorities towards need rather than profit. In spite of these dire forecasts, throughout the industry, timber corporations were recording record profits to their stockholders.⁵⁰ All of the alleged job losses that might actually occur from logging limitations imposed to protect the owl could easily be offset by curtailing raw log exports.⁵¹

At the same time, Corporate Timber was, as usual, declaring that there was plenty of old growth forests protected (or "locked away" in their more candid expressions of their prevailing opinions on the subject) in parks, and other public lands.⁵² There were numerous problems with that argument, however, not the least of which was that environmentalists and not

⁴³ Johnson, July 6, 1988, op. cit.

⁴⁴ Johnson, July 6, 1988, op. cit.

⁴⁵ Johnson, July 6, 1988, op. cit. Evidently, retooling the Pacific Lumber company for a return to its pre-Maxxam harvesting levels was out of the question, as far as Galitz was concerned.

⁴⁶ Simmons, July 27, 1988, op. cit.

⁴⁷ "Timber Outlook", by Bob Martel, *Country Activist*, June 1988.

⁴⁸ Simmons, July 27, 1988, op. cit.

⁴⁹ Johnson, July 6, 1988, op. cit.

⁵⁰ McKay, April 1989, op. cit.

⁵¹ McKay, May 1989, op. cit.

⁵² Editorial and Simmons, August 10, 1989, op. cit.

too few biologists disputed the appropriateness of the adjective “plenty”. With less than five percent of the ancient forests still remaining, “plenty” was a rather dubious description. However, even within the context of what remained, it wasn’t entirely clear that the actual standing timber matched the known figures. In discussing the controversy over the spotted owl, Earth First!er Mitch Friedman explained:

“‘Old growth’ is a troublesome term. Rarely is it clear to what people are referring when they say ‘old growth,’ or worse, and more recently, ‘ancient forest.’ The FS set up an ‘old growth definition task force’ to finally define it. The task force published its findings in 1986, yet the FS, even in forest plans released after that year, failed to use its definition. The FS instead left each National Forest to provide its own meaning, generally based on timber inventory data, such as ‘largesaw timber’ (greater than 21 inch diameter at breast height [dbh]). Moreover, there has been no formal effort to define ‘old growth’ for forests in the eastern two-thirds of Washington and Oregon.

“This isn’t just a matter of semantics. It’s the difference between millions of acres of natural growth (never logged, though perhaps otherwise disturbed), and about 350,000 acres of classic old growth (contains several trees over 40’ dbh per acre). A recent report published by The Wilderness Society found that the FS had, through inconsistent definitions and old data (disregarding recent logging), overestimated existing old growth by as much as 125 percent. Furthermore, most of what’s left is high elevation and/or heavily fragmented. The Wilderness Society report estimated a total of 1.2 million acres of old growth on the six National Forests in the Pacific Northwest that contain the bulk of the remaining stands. Most of this is fragmented beyond usefulness as old growth habitat.

“In a 1988 appropriations bill, Congress instructed the Forest Service to find its old growth. But we won’t have the benefit of that information for a couple years, and our protection efforts must happen now. To maintain a viable ancient forest ecosystem will require more than just saving the majestic big trees; we must save all unfragmented mature stands, and restore those degraded, to achieve a matrix of habitat capable of supporting populations of

old growth dependent species in perpetuity. This will be difficult, not knowing where the forest stands are.”⁵³

Management of public forestlands in California didn’t exactly inspire confidence among the environmentalists in any case. The state’s region of the USFS was required to maintain a “viable population” of spotted owls by establishing networks of Spotted Owl Habitat Areas (SOHAs) for each pair of owls throughout its forestlands. Each SOHA was to be approximately 1,000 acres in size (though many environmentalists considered that number too small for the sustainability of the owl), and each was required to include a 3,000 acre old growth “core area” and at least 650 acres of suitable replacement habitat within 1.5 miles of the nest. According to the Marble Mountain Audubon Society, a review of the SOHA network in the Klamath National Forest revealed that out of 83 such SOHAs in that forest’s 92-territory “interim network,” *all but one* had no management plan in place at all, and the one that did needed substantial revision. So, in other words, the USFS wasn’t even meeting its own established standards, such as they were, for maintaining the owl to begin with.⁵⁴

Contradicting all of the facts, Corporate Timber continued to assert that the environmentalists cared about the fate of the lowly owl more than they did about the supposedly threatened timber workers’ jobs and by extension the rural “way of life.”⁵⁵ This was due to the misunderstood status of the Northern Spotted Owl as an “indicator species.” Indicator Species were specific animals or plants found in a given habitat which gave an easily accessible and fairly accurate reading on the viability of populations of other interrelated flora and fauna of a given ecosystem. If the owls were flourishing *in their native habitat* (meaning *old growth* conifer forests in California, Oregon, and Washington), then their native habitat was viable and well protected. On the other hand, if the owl was threatened, or if much of its population was seeking surroundings other than its native habitat—which it certainly seemed to be, given the insistence by Corporate Timber that owls were plentiful in *second growth* forests, then that was an indicator that *other* species *also* found in the owl’s native habitat were *likewise* endangered, and quite possibly the habitat *itself* was en-

⁵³ Freedman, May 1, 1989, op. cit.

⁵⁴ “Management is Spotty”, *EcoNews*, June 1989.

⁵⁵ Editorial and Simmons, August 10, 1989, op. cit.

dangered.⁵⁶ Wendell Wood, of the ONRC elaborated, “The northern spotted owl is like a canary in a coal mine. The fact that it is in danger of extinction tells us that something is seriously wrong with the management of our forests.”⁵⁷ Most ironically of all, it was the USFS itself that had chosen the owl to be the indicator species *in the first place*.⁵⁸

In no case did environmentalists or scientists wax gleeful about the potential loss of timber jobs. For example, on the matter of balance between economic and environmental concerns Humboldt State University wildlife management professor Rocky Gutierrez declared:

“I am concerned about the livelihood of people. The timber industry may be affected (But we (scientists) are trying to do what is objective—that is the essence of science. The spotted owl represents the integrity of the ecosystem. If they (become) extinct, that represents an imbalance of the ecosystem. It becomes all of our problem. Being a scientist, it is very shocking to see an animal pushed to the verge of extinction knowingly.”⁵⁹

All of the Corporate Timber talking heads who were howling mad about the owl had been deafeningly silent about the fact that 90% of the timber jobs had *already* been lost since their historic high in the 1950s. These jobs disappeared due to economic practices enacted by Corporate Timber for the sake of their bottom line, including automation, raw log exports, union busting, outsourcing, and over cutting. When environmentalists had promoted timber harvesting practices that would have saved jobs or even increased them, such as manual release instead of aerial herbicide spray, Corporate Timber, their spokespeople, and front groups said nothing, other than to declare such ideas as nothing more than “pie in the sky”. Meanwhile, there was no way to conclusively prove that the listing of the spotted owl would cost anywhere near the number of jobs Corporate Timber said it would, especially given the fact that none of the studies they commissioned were peer reviewed. Finally, environmentalists had been arguing for years that business as usual left unchecked would ultimately re-

sult in the long term elimination of timber jobs anyway, because any timber harvesting that wasn’t done at a strictly sustainable rate, where logging didn’t result in the depletion of inventory was going to result in the loss of jobs independent of automation, exports, and outsourcing.

The opposition to the Spotted Owl’s listing came from Corporate Timber and much of the opposition was organized front groups speaking on their behalf. In the Pacific Northwest, an organized campaign under a umbrella group called the “Oregon Project”, involving lobbyists, chambers of commerce, timber dependent local governments, gyppo operators, and the officialdom of what few organized timber unions took the lead in whipping up mass hysteria in response to the potential listing of the bird, however this was but the tip of the iceberg.⁶⁰ In March, Corporate Timber representatives from across the United States and Canada met in Williamsburg, Virginia to organize opposition to environmental efforts and established a \$10.5 million campaign chest for that purpose.⁶¹ One Oregon legislator proposed paying a \$500 bounty for the capture of live owls for the purpose of relocating them to releasing them in designated wilderness areas or state game farms. Oregon State Senator Peg Jolin went one step further declaring that the only appropriate habitat for the maligned bird was “in a logger’s frying pan”.⁶²

The situation had become so volatile that it made it increasingly difficult for federal legislators to enact protections for the old growth redwoods on the North Coast. While the storm clouds gathered for what was sure to be open warfare over the owl, forty three US congressmen, including seven Republicans, and 24 of whom represented districts in 19 states other than California signed a letter asking the Board of Forestry to adopt protective measures, including imposing an immediate moratorium on the cutting of historic stands of old growth redwoods, regardless of their acreage; beginning a check of the remaining redwood forests to determine to what degree plants and wildlife depended upon them; ensuring a means to mitigate the impact of timber harvesting on flora and fauna therein; and establishing a public appeals process (beyond the existing demonstrably limited and faulty THP review process) allowing for public

⁵⁶ “Who Gives a Hoot for Spotted Owl?”, by Nancy Boukton and Tim McKay, *EcoNews*, November 1986.

⁵⁷ “Who’s In Court”, *EcoNews*, June 1988.

⁵⁸ Boukton and McKay, November 1986, op. cit.

⁵⁹ Johnson, July 6, 1988, op. cit.

⁶⁰ “Owl Scapegoated While Habitat Disappears”, by Tim McKay, *EcoNews*, June 1989.

⁶¹ McKay, April 1989, op. cit.

⁶² McKay, May 1989, op. cit.

oversight.⁶³ The BOF rejected the proposal, arguing that sufficient protections already existed or were in the process of being enacted, and repeated the familiar Corporate Timber talking point that “there were plenty of old growth redwoods already protected in parks.”⁶⁴ If WECARE and its ilk weren’t writing the script for the BOF, they may as well have been, The Lorax and Spotted Owls be damned.

* * * * *

Such political currents no doubt influenced Bill Bailey’s thinking. Lorax or spotted owl, he wasn’t going to give up. While he may not have enjoyed much support among his fellow Laytonville residents or rank and file timber workers, he could always count on TEAM and WECARE to invent the appearance that there were, and write scores of letters to the editor of local publications about communists hiding in the school library or “unwashed-out-of-town- jobless-hippies-on-drugs” controlling the minds of the Laytonville teachers. Behind the Redwood Curtain, Corporate Timber and those small “petit bourgeois” businessmen (like Bailey) who rode the gravy train considered any threat to their absolute power reason to convene a witch hunt. However such corporate backed vigilante mobs tended to be more subtle and nuanced than those that organized the witch hunts of old. Prudently compartmentalizing the Corporate Timber fronts, those specifically concerned about the presence of such “dangerously subversive” “godless communist” children’s books like The Lorax formed a new group with a wholesome sounding name to appear separate from TEAM and WECARE. This new organization was called “Mothers’ Watch”.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, Corporate Timber organized its backlash against the listing of the Spotted Owl—even though he decision was not likely for at least another year—in the form of more manufactured dissent. The FWS planned four public hearings to receive evidence and testimony on the issue. These would take place on August 14 in Portland; August 17, in Redding, California; August 21 in Olympia, Washington; and August 26 in Eugene, Oregon. David Galitz made it clear that Corporate Timber would be fully represent-

ed, declaring, “I expect the lumber products industry to show up in force.”⁶⁶ No doubt they would. There were literally thousands of Bill Bailey-esque “Once-lers” in the Pacific Northwest alone, and Corporate Timber was only too happy to whip them up into a vigilante mob.

⁶³ “Lawmakers Seek Ban on Cutting of Old Growth Redwoods”, by Jeff Pelling, *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 28, 1989. Doug Bosco proudly trumpeted the fact that he had refused to sign the letter.

⁶⁴ “Forestry Board Rejects Redwood-Cutting Ban”, by Jeff Pelling, *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 19, 1989.

⁶⁵ “Mothers’ Watch Works”, letter to the editor by Diana Mendes, *Willits News*, August 29, 1990.

⁶⁶ Johnson, July 6, 1988, op. cit.