

**The “wise use”
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Trees cause
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Ecology creates
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PUBLIC RELATIONS “spin doctors” are at work again, this time trying to undo the Endangered Species Act, and much more. Their ambition?...to control the public debate over the management of this country’s natural resources and public lands. To do that, they’re rolling out a campaign around the phrase: “wise use” of resources. They want the public to believe that they are promoting rational and reasonable resource management, and that they represent a grassroots backlash to elitist, bird-loving, people-hating, cow-worshipping, big government, neofascist pagan neo-post-ultra statist environmentalists.

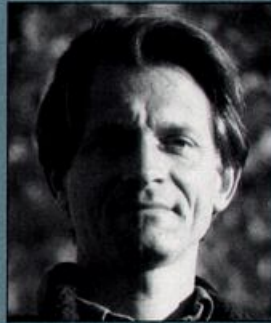
Their words. Big words, button words. Complex, multisyllabic, rootin’ tootin’ fightin’ words. Distill it to their the basic message, direct from one of their figureheads:

“We are going to destroy the environmental movement once and for all.”

The truth is that the only wise use this effort really entails is of the looters’ media consultants. And grassroots? The only green stuff they’re rooted in is desperate dollars trying to hold back progress toward a sustainable relationship between the environment and its human inhabitants. Ironically, the chief beneficiaries of the wise use movement are not the local communities beset by economic problems generated by decades of living beyond environmental limits—local people now spun by the media consultants into believing that “ecol-

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FACTS, INFERENCES AND SHAMELESS SPECULATIONS



**“Wise Use”...
or
Dumb Abuse**

ogy is the source of poverty”—but instead a few irresponsible, aggressively vocal corporations attempting to squeeze every last bit of chlorophyll out of the ecosystem.

Under their definition, “wise use” of natural resources is supposed to “put people back into environment.” What they really mean is business as usual: timber mining far in excess of the forest’s ability to regrow; water consumption draining million-year-old aquifers far faster than they are being replenished; hard-rock mining lacing the west with pockets of toxic wastes; and grazing inexorably decreasing the productivity of public lands. If that amounts to wise use, then Attila the Hun made wise use of military force and Charles Keating of his savings and loan’s assets.

The policies these people advocate offer

this country no more hope than the economic agenda that brought us the deregulated S&L crisis, a major economic downturn, and funding shortages for crucial domestic needs. Their real message isn’t wise use of natural resources, its unfettered economic greed, brought to you by the same folks who sponsored the decade of the 80s. Even Ollie North is out on the hustle speaking before conservative audiences about land use and how environmentalists are the latest threat to the American way of life, now that Communism has collapsed. I can’t wait to see what sort of deal he’s cooking this time, and with whom,

and over which of our National Forests. Perhaps there's a plus: perhaps he could concoct a deal financing timber roads with drug money, then at least the taxpayer wouldn't get stuck with the costs.

Far from being the way to put humans back into the environmental equation, their agenda offers a quick and irreversible way guaranteed to take us out. Just ask the timber-based communities of Michigan—if you could. They disappeared when the trees ran out eight decades ago. Ask the folks of Grayling, Michigan, why their town is named for a fish that can't be found anywhere in the state. You'll discover that grayling were extirpated from the region by the timber industry, whose impacts so changed the streams and waters of central Michigan that grayling can't even be re-introduced despite diligent efforts by fish and game experts. And you will learn that Grayling, the town, then staggered through a half-century of regional economic depression produced by logging's devastation.

Go to Oregon. Talk to the fishermen whose families no longer can support themselves fishing for salmon because a combination of big dams and widespread clearcutting in nearby watersheds has cut salmon numbers by 90%. Listen to folks in Oregon sawtowns whose mills have already shut down, not because of environmentalists but because companies have already taken their one-shot profit from all the forests in sight—not because of Spotted Owls or Marbled Murrelets or the Endangered Species Act—but because logging has run into the Pacific Ocean. We've got to develop ways to use forest resources for wood products that support local communities and sustain the ecosystem. But take your lead from the "wise-use" gang and we never will.

The ultimate irony in this battle over "wise use" is that the American taxpayer pays for the environmental



Contrary to what wise-use groups believe, birds such as the Marbled Murrelet are not causing the economic crisis.

and economic mismanagement. Taxpayers subsidize grazing on public land, grazing so fierce it has turned countless acres of productive grassland into degraded desert. The U.S.

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Forest Service spend hundreds of millions of tax dollars building roads in our National Forests (eight times as many road miles as exist in the interstate highway system) so that loggers can clear-cut publicly-owned forests for private profit. Similar fiscal absurdities abound in hard-rock mining and irrigation.

Stop for a moment. Pause in the Twilight Zone...taxpayer dollars subsidizing environmental destruction

of public resources on public land for private profit—and the "wise use" movement claims they are the ones who are being rational, reasonable and balanced?? War is peace. Trees cause pollution. Ecology creates poverty.

Depleting public natural resources at taxpayer expense for private profit isn't wise use. Its abuse—dumb abuse. In fact, it's absurd. We don't need to put people back into the environment—they're already there. What we really need is a Taxpayer Protection Act that puts these profiteering scams where they belong, somewhere under a very large, lichen-encrusted stone. We need a spotlight, not a spin doctor, to expose the reality that "wise-use" rhetoric is rooted in private greed feeding at the public trough. ▶