

Article from late 1991 about Kalmiopsis Audubon Society (KAS), Port Orford Oregon explaining the organization's forest, ocean and land use programs and its conservation strategies and philosophy. In the 90's under Brock Evans, The National Audubon Society was an aggressive and combative wilderness preservationist organization and KAS one of its most aggressive west coast chapters. The "Audubon Papers" discuss chapter-national conflict as National adopted more "corporate -friendly" policies. My article on this chapter's founder is here. KAS'S current website is here.

# Kalmiopsis Audubon Society

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This article describes the activities of the Kalmiopsis Audubon Society, gives our views on some current issues in the activist community, and offers some ideas about how regional and national organizations can better support local groups. Kalmiopsis Audubon was recently named outstanding environmental organization of the year by the Oregon Natural Resources Council.

Our chapter is the major environmental organization in Curry County, in the southwest corner of Oregon: a 1700 square mile area of mostly federal forests, with a human population of 20,000, and 70 miles of coastline. Our membership is steadily increasing, probably due to an influx of new residents who are more environmentally aware than the long-time residents. Our board of directors has an average age of over 60 and several of our most active members are over 70. Typical activists in Kalmiopsis Audubon own their own homes, have grandchildren, and are involved in a wide variety of community activities.

## WHAT WE DO

Our chapter has evening programs with

speakers at least once a month and sponsors hikes and birdwalks. We have an active school program, building birdhouses and taking children on birdwalks. In cooperation with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife we conduct surveys of certain rare birds, such as the Peregrine Falcon.

Our corner of the state still has ridge to ridge old-growth outside Wilderness Areas; typically steep and rugged, which is why it has not yet been entirely logged. We cover three ranger districts and three BLM resource areas and are involved in about 25% of the roughly 200 million board feet of timber sales offered yearly in this area. We have a good track record at stopping or modifying timber sales. From our formation about ten years ago, we have probably always had at least one appeal or lawsuit in progress. We were plaintiffs on all the recent Spotted Owl and Section 318 lawsuits. The lobbying of our chapter's founders was responsible for the creation of Grassy Knob Wilderness, a low elevation old-growth forest near Port Orford.

Although forest activism is our primary focus, we find ourselves continually involved with fishing and ocean issues, as Port Orford

## Strategy

is the westernmost town in the contiguous 48 states. Last fall we cooperated with Greenpeace to protest a government research ship gathering data for possible ocean mineral mining.

We take an active interest in county land use decisions that may affect sensitive areas, particularly wetlands and coastal high hazard areas. We try to have observers at county and city government and planning commission meetings. Recently we successfully appealed a decision that, if unchallenged, would have opened an area of fragile coastline to development. We have begun mapping wetlands, as we find that without maps on file with planning departments, wetland laws are ignored. We are trying to get the ordinances governing building in coastal high hazard areas changed to be more restrictive.

We deal with an alphabet soup of federal, state, regional and local agencies. Judge Dwyer in his recent Spotted Owl decision clearly brought out the fact that the Forest Service is not obeying the laws where they find them inconvenient. As one descends the government ladder from the federal to the city level, the amount of ignorance and avoidance of environmental laws just goes up.

In approaching issues we are pragmatic. We are not against all logging; it is necessary to modern life, and acceptable if practiced respectfully on the proper scale. But we vig-

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Jeffrey Pine (*Pinus jeffreyi*) by Tony Ullian — at the northern extent of its range in the Siskiyou, it is found elsewhere only in northern California and the eastern Sierra.

ously oppose clearcutting under all its cute euphemisms, roading roadless areas, and degrading fish habitat. We support the reintroduction of locally extirpated species such as the Gray Wolf.

We cooperate with setting up timber sales that take a light touch and use thinning and true selection cutting. Our group includes foresters who know how to conduct logging with environmental sensitivity. Kalmiopsis Audubon often brings more tree-cutting experience to the negotiating table than does the Forest Service. We want our local sawmills to stay in business and would like to see timber sales offered in small volumes with low bonds so small mills could bid on the sales.

Because we reject crocodile tears and trickle down economics, we reject the popular delusion that the only way to save jobs is to subsidize clearcutting old-growth by big timber companies. Protecting jobs requires a complete ban on log exports.

#### ANCIENT FOREST LEGISLATION & THE NATIONALS

We support Representative Jim Jontz's efforts. He has been out in the woods with us and understands our problems. We trust him to lead us to the end of clearcutting old-growth as fast as the political process will allow. We support the Jontz/Audubon legislative strategy because it was drafted by the Northwest Audubon chapters working together, and in consultation with National Audubon Society, which usually consults us when they make decisions. We are as much a part of the process as we want to be.

We support the national environmental

organizations because it is impossible to pass legislation without them. Moreover, when we have local problems that we cannot solve by ourselves, the nationals often step in and help. Some local activists have negative attitudes toward the nationals—we don't. To us, nationals are part of the diversity of the ancient forest political ecosystem. We do, however, question their policy of fighting "bad corporate America" with money raised from "good corporate America." Now that the timber companies and labor unions have formed an unholy alliance to fight ancient forest legislation, a natural line of counterattack would be to expose the abysmal safety records and union busting activities of these companies. Can corporate environmentalists ever raise essentially class issues? Is the nationals' agreement not to raise these sorts of issues that corporate America is really buying with their so-called "corporate giving."

We support Judi Bari's ideas about the need to forge alliances with workers. Whether it is the big timber companies clearcutting the trees or the factory trawlers mining the ocean of 220,000,000 pounds of whiting per year off our local coast, we see extractive industry at war with the environment and with working class people. Environmental laws are being avoided or evaded at every political level. Activism must proceed on two fronts; we must be vigilant about the enforcement of existing laws as we work to pass new ones.

When the ancient forest campaign is won, the next frontier is to regulate logging on private lands. We have participated in two major newspaper stories that explored the abusive logging on private land in the Pistol River drainage nearby.

#### WHAT LOCAL ACTIVISTS NEED

Here are a few things that regional and national groups and grant-making organizations could do to support local activist groups (besides sending money):

- Provide technical support on filing appeals, obtaining non-profit status, setting up mailing lists, using bulk mail, and obtaining computers.
- Help locals navigate the grants maze. We badly need professional help in developing grant proposals and funding applications.
- Provide scholarships when meetings and conferences require entry fees. Even small fees often screen out the people who need the conferences the most.
- Provide a system allowing activists to talk to each other without running up huge phone bills. This would save at least 5000 acres of old-growth in the first year. At a minimum, when locals call professionals, offer to call back to save the activist the cost of the call.
- Start a reprint and distribution service for technical material so we can keep better informed. Local groups cannot easily obtain a wide range of Northwest newspapers and journals, nor do we have time to read through them all. Environmental journals should be furnished to activists at low rates. Setting up a clipping service would fill an important need.
- Urban professional groups could "adopt" grassroots activists. The areas that still have old-growth don't have many liberals with money.

#### THE LONG TERM

Our chapter, because of our remote location and diversity of issues, has developed relationships with many organizations. We think watershed and local groups need to network better both with other environmental organizations, and with local, state, and federal government entities. Telephone trees should be formally organized and coordinated. Environmental activism, if based on a spiritual foundation and if combined with "outdoors" activities, provides a sense of community and purpose which is sadly lacking from modern life.

— Jim Britell, Conservation Chair