Cover Story

the BPA less stable and contributes little or nothing to the regional economy. (See "A Relic of History," Page 13-14.)

Direct subsidies, special programs and tax exemptions along the river benefit the farming interests who use the Columbia to irrigate their fields. Most of these are large agribusiness corporations such as Simplot, McDonald's and ConAgra. Over the next five years, the taxpayers and ratepayers will subsidize water for their crops to the tune of about $1.5 billion.

It will also cost U.S. taxpayers about $350 million in subsidies to sustain a navigation system on the Columbia to support a deepwater port at Lewiston, Idaho — in an arid region already served by excellent highway and rail transportation systems.

U.S. Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary saw the 1995 power deals with aluminum corporations as against the best interests of the region and the nation, and tried to kill them before the ink was dry. But Sen. Mark Hatfield, then in the last 16 months of his Senate career, threatened a congressional investigation of the regional panel set out to craft a fish recovery plan, and as for the BPA, other members of Congress may be hostile toward salmon—no one more so than Sen. Slade Gorton, R-WA. He has offered a bill that would block any effort to change operations on the Columbia.

Gorton's measure, introduced as a "rider" to an appropriations bill, would prohibit any further water releases to aid the outbound migration of tiny salmon — in defiance of the Federal Power Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act and the Northwest Power Planning Act.

As Gorton recently wrote in an op-ed to the Seattle Times, "I can't begin to imagine the economic damage to Eastern Washington if those dams are breached. That won't happen on my watch."

BPA customers of trying "to drain BPA dry and then slip out," while limiting BPA's authority to look to transmission revenues as a backup.

The region has just a few months to do better "if it has any hope of standing up to a hostile Congress," he said.

"If you look at the four dams as dams, they are not cost effective and make no sense."

— Glen Spain

Engineers.

And a smart new study by a coalition of conservation groups suggests breaching the four dams may actually save $82 million a year. The report, written by Boise economist Phil Lansing, shows:

The four dams are not the most cost-effective source of electricity. They produce it at a cost of 2.44 cents per kilowatt-hour. If the dams were removed, the BPA could buy power on the open market for 1.87 cents per kilowatt-hour, or even build new, efficient gas-fired power plants at a lower cost.

The Extinction Scenario

While some members of Congress may be hostile to the BPA, others are equally hostile toward salmon — no one more so than Sen. Slade Gorton, R-WA. He has offered a bill that would block any effort to change operations on the Columbia.

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coal, nuclear or gas sources. He says farmers and river navigators would be hurt, recreational opportunities would diminish, and flooding would threaten communities.

Recent work by the Northwest Power Planning Council, however, supports the contention that Gorton is way out of whack with reality, showing system impacts around half the size of what Gorton claims, at a cost roughly comparable to the high-tech engineering and barge scenarios favored by the Army Corps of Engineers.

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per kilowatt-hour, or even build new, efficient gas-fired power plants at a lower cost.

- Shippers pay only $1.23 per ton to send goods from Lewiston, Idaho, to Kennewick, Wash., via the Snake River. But the total cost is $13.89. Taxpayers and electric ratepayers pay the $12.66 difference.

- Thirteen agribusinesses pump water from the Ice Harbor reservoir to their fields. Together, these farms earn a net $1.9 million per year. But much of the water goes to grow low-value crops, such as alfalfa hay for export to Japan. Taxpayers and electric ratepayers subsidize these farms to the tune of $11.2 million per year. If the farms paid their full costs, they would lose $9.3 million per year. It would be cheaper to buy these farms outright and end their production altogether.

"If you look at the four dams as dams, they are not cost effective and make no sense," said Glen Spain of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Associations.

"The Snake River used to provide 40 percent of the Columbia River's salmon runs. Their loss was caused by the dams, costing $100 million a year in recreational use and angler fees. That's a lot of fish, and a lot of jobs."

What happens if the salmon go extinct? Will the salmon costs then disappear? Not likely. Instead, there may be hell to pay.

The U.S. government has promised to deliver Columbia River salmon to Indian tribes, the state of Alaska and Canada in various treaties. If there are no salmon, participants in these treaties are likely to seek reparations in court. The potential costs could be enormous.

For example, the four Indian tribes with reserved treaty rights to Columbia River salmon could claim that their exchange of land for these rights has been violated. In 1855 treaties, they ceded 40 million acres, while the U.S. government promised them fishing rights in perpetuity.

"There certainly have been discussions over major litigation," said Rick Taylor, a spokesman for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. "Forty million acres were signed over. The title to that land is encumbered with fishing and hunting rights, as judges have clearly indicated. The effort now is to try to keep the fish around."

In fact, the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the tribes' treaty-reserved fishing rights seven times.

"The cost of saving salmon may seem high," Weiss said. "But the costs have to be weighed against not saving the fish."

Paul Koberstein is editor of Cascadia Times. Kevin Bell is a graduate fellow at the JFK School of Government at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass.
A Relic of History

Six Myths About Aluminum in the Pacific Northwest

By Kevin Bell

Aluminum smelters make up the bulk of a special class of retail industrial customers in the region called Direct Service Industrial (DSI) customers, who purchase power directly from BPA.

This arrangement is an accident of history, part of a story that goes back to the Second World War. Aluminum smelters have long contended that this arrangement is justified simply because they are an integral part of the Pacific Northwest economy and power system. But the fact is that aluminum smelters take more and give back less in terms of an energy shortage, direct BPA service to these customers.

Grid, establishing the precedent for direct BPA service to these customers. The plants were integrated into the Federal transmission system, as other demands expanded. The DSI’s were becoming less and less important to the reliability of the BPA system, as other demands for electricity increased.

The massive Hydro-Thermal Power Program proposed by regional utilities in the late 1960’s (26 large nuclear and coal power plants in the Pacific Northwest) by 1990 threatened to increase significantly the cost of power to the aluminum smelters, and the imminent end of a regional energy surplus meant that the special relationship between direct industrial customers and BPA was nearing an end. If aluminum smelters wanted to stay in the Northwest, they would be treated just like any other industrial customer. At the same time, new smelter production was increasing in other parts of the world, creating an increasingly volatile world commodity market for aluminum.

Determined to preserve their special access to the Federal hydro system, the aluminum industry teamed up with utilities in 1976 to propose the Northwest Power Act, which basically would have locked in Federal subsidies and guaranteed special rights for aluminum smelters. The initial proposal was rejected outright, launching a pitched four year battle to restructure the Pacific Northwest power system. In the end, the smelters were forced to accept a compromise. In return for new long-term power sales contracts which gave BPA an obligation to serve without a corresponding obligation for the aluminum corporations to pay, the smelters agreed to play a premium price for continued direct access to the Federal system.

The aluminum DSI’s broke their word almost immediately. Almost as soon as the new contracts were signed, the smelters were back, threatening to leave the region en masse unless they received special rates based on the world market value of aluminum. Faced with huge cashflow problems resulting from a regional economic recession and the implosion of the Hydro-Thermal power program, BPA agreed. The result was the “variable industrial” rate, which indexes the price of power to the commodity price of aluminum. This established aluminum smelters as the only retail customers in the United States who are charged for power based on ability to pay. The new rates still allowed smelters to enter and exit the system at will, giving them considerable leverage over BPA policy.

In recent years, the regional aluminum industry has successfully propagated the story that DSIs are entitled to the same access to the Federal hydropower.

This arrangement made sense in the 1940’s and 1950’s. The Pacific Northwest was only beginning its rapid transition from a backwater, resource-based economy to its present role as a significant technology and international trade center. The huge surpluses of cheap hydropower from the growing Federal hydropower system persisted well into the 1960’s, aluminum demand was soaring worldwide, and the growing aluminum industry provided steady revenues for repaying the cost of the hydropower system. Electricity demand for aluminum production tripled in the region during the 1950’s and 1960’s. The situation changed permanently beginning in the late 1960’s. The Northwest was running out of cheap hydropower sites, and new demand for electricity was growing fast as the region industrialized and expanded. The DSI’s were becoming less and less important to the stability of the BPA system, as other demands for electricity increased.

Myth number 2: Aluminum smelters are reliable customers.

The cheapest way to operate an electric system is to operate it at 100% of capacity at all times. If loads fluctuate significantly over the course of a day or a year, expensive transmission, distribution and generation facilities must be built that will sit idle some of the time. The ratio between the average amount of energy generated and the amount of consumer uses and the maximum amount they use is referred to as the load factor. DSI customers claim that they are entitled to pay lower prices because they have an unusually high load factor – meaning they use a relatively even flow of electricity. It simply isn’t true. DSI historical load factors are no better than the load factors for industrial customers in the region who don’t get special treatment.

In fact, DSI load factors have fluctuated wildly since 1981 when the BPA decided to let the aluminum smelters to enter and leave the system at will.

Myth number 3: Aluminum loads stabilize the hydro system.

Aluminum smelters like to claim that they provide system stability because their loads are well matched to hydro system flows, implying a close ratio...
Myth number 4: Aluminum stabilizes BPA revenues.
Contrary to what the aluminum smelters claim, BPA's obligation to serve, combined with the fact that smelters have no obligation to pay, destabilizes the Federal power system.

Myth number 5: Aluminum pays a high price for electricity.
The DSI's insist that the Northwest Power Planning Act limits the rate they must pay for power to the rates paid by other industrial customers in the region. In fact, a legislative history of the Act shows that aluminum smelters were expected to pay a premium for access to Federal power, and that they explicitly agreed to pay that premium.

In reality, the smelters actually pay far less than other industrial customers.

For example, if aluminum smelters were treated like industrial customers of Puget Power (where the Intalco Aluminum plant is located), they would have paid an additional $3.2 billion over the 15 years between 1980 and 1994, as shown in Figure 5. As a result, some aluminum smelters claim, BPA's revenue structure for aluminum smelters is unfair.

The DSI's argue that they have paid more than double over by 2001, exceeding $450 million per year.

Myth number 6: Aluminum stabilizes the regional economy.
When pressed, the DSI's simply resort to threats — if electricity prices are too high, they say, they will simply and suddenly leave. This is the same argument that was used to force BPA to adopt the very heavy rates for aluminum smelters in the mid-1980s.

What regional smelters are really saying is that if we don't subsidize them, they won't make it in a competitive market.

The United States produced roughly 5 million tons of aluminum in 1994. The 1.3 million tons of aluminum ingot exported by the US that year was roughly equivalent to the amount of primary aluminum production in the Pacific Northwest. Overall, US aluminum production is a steadily declining percentage of worldwide production, dropping from 30 percent in 1980 to 19 percent in 1993.

The fact is that other parts of the world are closer to badly needed and aluminum commodity markets than the Pacific Northwest. Truly cheap electricity, which is the only significant advantage the Pacific Northwest ever had for primary aluminum production, is lost.

The only question that ultimately matters is whether aluminum smelters contribute more to the regional economy than they take if we subsidize them. The core issue is whether the benefits of aluminum smelters provide to the regional economy justify the cost of the subsidies.

Kevin Bell
California Land Exchanges

To the editor:

The article in the May Issue on Land Exchanges was very good but I was disappointed that information on exchanges underway in California was not included. Of most concern to Northwest California forest activists are exchanges being proposed by Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) — the largest private landowner in the U.S. and California’s largest timber company.

The Klamath Forest Alliance is attempting to track down exchanges proposed for the checkerboard lands to the east and west of Interstate 5 in the Upper Sacramento Canyon. This area contains the best remaining “connectivity links” linking forest habitat in the Klamath Mountains to the Northern Sierra Nevada forests. We have been advised that SPI is also proposing exchanges of private and national forest lands in the Northern Sierra Nevada. The work of the Western Land Exchange Project is critical public oversight. Hopefully, this surrounding project will develop the capability to coordinate work on timber industry sponsored land exchanges throughout the West. Keep up the good work!

Felice Pace
Klamath Forest Alliance
Etna, CA

Roads Are a Liability

To the editor:

(Regarding) your article on land exchanges in Cascadia Times:

While we did not sign on to Janine Blaschick’s letter, the Sierra Club sent a letter (May 6th) to Senator Murray urging her to support Plum Creek’s legislation, to defend the NEPA process, and to appropriate funds to purchase much of the land.

We have discussed the need for roads. Appraisers consider them as a plus that increases the access and therefore the value of the timber. We argue they are an environmental liability. Some say that means they should also be a liability in the appraised value. Aside from the fact that would make roadless forests less expensive to access, there is a question of whether unoccupied (but legally constructed) roads would actually be decommissioned.

The Klamath Forest Exchange would actually be decommissioned. If the final land exchanges agreements issue, these roads and railroads in many areas. The resistance from other members of the public that want those roads for vehicle use and access is strong and very vocal. Despite our best efforts, (and ignoring lack of funds) there is no guarantee that any of the 169 miles of road in the Huckleberry Exchanges will actually be decommissioned.

We have worked hard to get the Forest Service to obliterate (or convert to trails) roads in many areas. The resistance from other members of the public that want those roads for vehicle use and access is strong and very vocal. Despite our best efforts, (and ignoring lack of funds) there is no guarantee that any of the 169 miles of road in the Huckleberry Exchanges will actually be decommissioned.

All environmentalists have supported purchasing these unroaded or forested lands. Again, we would welcome support in our work to stop these roads or require full compensation and mitigation if granted (as the Forest Service believes the law requires).

The Yaak - Alpine and Piney Lakes including the Green River watershed that you highlighted in your story. Again, we would welcome support in our work to stop these roads or require full compensation and mitigation.

Thanks for your interest in these important issues. I would encourage you to do a full story on the road easements.

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Susianna DeFazio
Walton OR

Clarifying Air Testing Story

To the editor:

The Oregon Clearinghouse for Pollution reduction, a non-profit membership organization formed in January 1997, was responsible for the conception, application, management and execution of the EPA grant to do air testing in the Northwest District of Portland. Bob Amundson’s activities as project director were as staff scientist for Oregon CPR. Mark Brown was also compensated for his work with the project. Other professionals, including Ph.D’s and M.D’s contributed significantly to all phases of the project.

For information about Oregon CPR, visit our website at www.orCPR.org, or call (503) 238-6420 to have a brochure sent to you.

Lisa Brennan
President, Oregon CPR
Portland OR

Color the Yaak Unprotected

To the editor:

I just got back from an extensive wander in the Northern Rockies of Montana. Walking alone in grizzly country rates at the top of my list of life-affirming activities. Grizzly habitat is the epitome of wilderness and wildlife is what feeds my hunger.

So I was thrilled to find your March issue in the heap of accumulation on my desk. But tell me please, how could you leave out the Yaak! How, in an extensive cover story devoted to the last remaining roadless area, did you forget about the Yaak Valley of Montana? Home to grizzly, wolverine and Rick Bass, the author you refer to in your article, who wrote two books — Winter and The Book of the Yaak — describing the unique wilderness values of the place. A place threatened by road construction and clearcutting.

Please re-open that wonderful centerfold map you provided and go to the far northwest corner of Montana. Color the Yaak "unprotected roadless area.

Susianna DeFazio
Walton OR

Ground Truthing CONTINUED FROM PAGE A

out the possibility that he might halt the project if the evidence persuades him the incinerator should not be built.

Malhotra says it’s too late to reconfigure the Oregon plant to accommodate neutralization or some other alternative method of destroying the chemicals. “The whole plant — the piping, the ventilation — is all designed for the incinerator,” he said. “If Congress tells us that (one of the new alternative technologies) is a proven technology, of course we have to comply. We have to get a permit, and start over again.”

Kathie Dublin can be contacted at kadbubin@aol.com

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Why Habitat Matters

A Tribute to Nat Bingham

By Glen Spain

In May the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations and the entire fishing industry lost one of its great champions and leaders, Nat Bingham. A salmon troller for over 30 years, Nat was always there to remind us that in the midst of struggling to make a living that we also had to keep in mind the more fundamental necessities of the fishing life. One of those most often negleged — and by far the most important for the future of our industry — is the protection of fish habitat.

Most members of the general public still behave as though fish spontaneously appear somewhere in the ocean. If pressed, they might give a nod to the concept of protecting their habitat, but very few have any clear idea what that means or where fish come from. In part this is our industry's failure — it is our obligation to educate the public about these things as well as to educate ourselves. Nat's view was that it is also our obligation to always press hard for the protection of those areas from which fish come and upon which the future of our industry depends.

The equation is really simple — the better and more extensive the habitat, the more abundant the species. This means protecting and restoring not only salmon habitat (reaching far inland) but all the nursery beds for groundfish, shrimp, crabs, lobsters, halibut, and even other areas which supports or is important to any of the species which support our industry. This also implies protecting the fragile marine ecosystems upon which we all depend. It was Nat’s view that wherever fish are, or wherever they go, it is our obligation to protect them.

Wherever you look in North America today you see species on the verge of extinction. For freshwater inland fish, according to the American Fisheries Society (APS), roughly one-third of all America’s fish species are now at risk of extinction due to loss of habitat and water pollution. On the West Coast, all seven major salmon species are now extinct on the West Coast in 38 percent of their historic range, and in serious decline in at least 56 percent more. Each loss of habitat costs our industry money. One 1991 report (based on NMFS figures) estimated the total economic losses to our industry already caused by habitat destruction to exceed $27 billion/year at a cost of more than 450,000 jobs nationwide.

Through Nat’s leadership as PCFFA’s President for ten years, the fishing industry started speaking out against these losses and has continued to be a vocal advocate ever since — not out of some vague philosophical idea of environmentalism but out of sheer economic necessity.

Through PCFFA, Nat helped strengthen and expand the long-standing tradition of fishermen fighting to save habitat. This tradition continues and grows. For example, we recently sued the Corps of Engineers in support of Columbia River crab fishermen to stop the dumping of dredging spoils on a $50 million crab nursery at the mouth of the Columbia. We also recently joined NMFS in a suit to force removal of the Savage Rapids Dam, one of the worst fish killing dams on the coast.

Under the leadership of Nat and our Board, PCFFA and its member organizations have now become an effective voice in protecting the natural resources which are the foundation of our industry. Together with many allies (both within and outside the industry), fishermen have won major political and court victories for clean water, healthy watersheds and unpolluted estuaries, as well as spearheaded the drive to give more habitat control to fisheries managers. This is a course the fishing industry must stay into the future, including fighting in the following arenas:

WATER FOR FISH — PCFFA and other fishing groups led the decade-long fight to pass the California Central Valley Project Improvement Act in 1991, which guarantees 800,000 acre-feet of water for fish and wildlife restoration from the Central Valley Project. To date the irrigators have done everything possible to block implementation, and in February, 1998, PCFFA, the United Anglers of California and several other organizations sued the Department of Interior and Bureau of Reclamation to enforce those provisions. There are also problems with over-appropriation of water from fish-bearing streams throughout the West Coast. In most basins there are more water withdrawals legally allowed than there is water available.

UNBLOCKING RIVERS — Dams are the bane of the salmon fishing industry. Dams now block more than 55 percent of the entire Columbia Basin, and 90 percent of the historic Chinook spawning habitat in the Central Valley, PCFFA and many other fishermen's groups (both commercial and recreational) are actively working to remove such fish killing monstrosities as the two Elwha dams and the four lower Snake River dams in Washington, the Savage Rapids and Elk Creek dams in southern Oregon, and several smaller dams in the California Central Valley.

OIL SPILLS AND COASTAL POLLUTION — The tragic spill of the Exxon Valdez brought home the damage that even a single leaking tanker can do to fragile marine resources. Fishermen fought for and got compensation in that case, but this was only a fraction of their actual losses. Yet since that time, however, the cumulative amount of oil spilled in vital marine or estuarine areas has already equaled several Exxon Valdez’s. Now the very laws which require cleanup and compensation for damage from such spills are under attack in Congress by well-heeled Big Oil interests, including the Superfund law, the Oil Pollution Act, and the Ocean Dumping Act.

PROTECTING WETLANDS NURSERY GROUNDS — About 55 percent of all the nation's wetlands in the lower 48 states has now been lost. Coastal wetlands are relatively scarce, making up only about 5 percent of the total national wetlands acreage, but have suffered the greatest losses. Wetlands are the nursery or feeding grounds for salmon, pollack, crabs, halibut, shrimp, scallops, starfish, bluefish, lobsters and a wide variety of other species. In fact the productivity of most commercially fished marine species is directly dependent upon those same coastal wetlands — and the greater the loss of wetlands, the greater the loss of fishery jobs.

RESTORING HEALTHY WATERSHEDS — Not only salmon, but a wide variety of estuarine-dependent species must have healthy inland watershed for their survival. Too many of our coastal watersheds have been overplowed, overdeveloped, and this is costing our industry many tens of thousands of jobs.

Nat always emphasized that one of the best things fishermen can do to assure a future for themselves and their industry is to organize in defense of fish habitat. Wherever that habitat is, we must be there as well, always speaking out against any activities that jeopardize the future of our resource. It is no longer enough for fishermen just to fish. It is no longer enough to struggle with the annual allocation battle. If we are to have a future as an industry, we have to make sure that there will be fish to harvest by protecting their habitat.

Sometimes this makes us controversial, Nat’s view, however, was that if working for a decent future for our industry ruffles feathers, then so be it. Resistance always comes from those who would do nothing — or worse, from those who for short-sighted profits would destroy the very basis of who we are and how we live.

Glen Spain is the Northwest regional director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations. PCFFA is the West Coast’s largest organization of commercial fishermen. He writes from PCFFA’s Northwest Regional Office in Eugene, Ore.
A Tug of War Threatens the Seas

By Elizabeth Grossman

"The helpless salmon's life is gripped between two forces - the murderous greed of the fishermen and the white man's advancing civilization - and what hope is there for salmon in the end?... Nothing can stop the growth and development of the country, which are fatal to salmon.... Provide some refuge for the salmon, and provide it quickly, before complications arise which may make it very difficult. Now is the time. Delays are dangerous." This statement, made not last week by an exhausted member of the Western governors' task force, but in 1892, by Livingston Stone, a member of the U.S. Fish Commission. It is cited by Carl Safina in his impressive new book, Song For The Blue Ocean, and could, unfortunately, serve as a refrain for what Dr. Safina found as he traveled the world's coastal regions assessing the current state of fish and fisheries.

From the Atlantic waters off of Maine, Cape Cod and Dr. Safina's native Long Island, to the Pacific Northwest and far Pacific islands of Palau, Hong Kong, and the Philippines, a disturbing tug of war has been going on for quite some time between the interests of fishing, water users, and the health of fisheries. Safina illustrates this vividly by spending time with fish, fishermen, scientists, and others whose lives and livelihoods are devoted to, or depend on the health of the seas. He does so from a vantage point of one who has spent his life absorbed by the wonders of ocean life, and so, succeeds in conveying the immense importance of the overused and abused wildlife of those waters.

Safina shares with us his joy in observing sea creatures, but also his frustration and anger at what is happening to the oceans. "Magnificent creatures that I was just getting to know in the ocean," Safina writes of his studies in marine ecology, "like giant tuna, sea turtles, marlin, and sharks were dwindling each year. The oceans were being depopulated; the creatures were not just being used—they were being used up."

Safina begins his travels on the Atlantic coast, with fisherman in pursuit of one of the world's biggest fish, the bluefin tuna. Bluefin can weigh hundreds of pounds, and travel so far so efficiently that scientists are trying to model their behavior. As more migrants go further offshore in pursuit of fewer fish, issues of overfishing and by-catch intensify, as does the contentiousness and mistrust between scientists, government officials, and fishing industry. "Fishermen," writes Safina, "are the last major hunter-gathers in modern culture, pursuing wildlife on an industrial scale with all the tools of the space age brought to bear."

Spotting planes, radar, boats capable of longer and longer journeys further and further from shore, fishing methods designed for large quick catches have aided in the decline of fish populations as younger fish are caught, and tons of by-catch depleted food stocks for other fish species. In the far Pacific islands where desirable food fish lurk in coral reefs and underwater rockeries, cyanide and other poisons are used to flush the fish, leaving devastation in its wake.

Safina makes no pretense of neutrality when it comes to the politics of maritime conservation. He has little patience with the machinations and manipulations of those who would delay decisions in favor of conservation, to placate the interests of industrial fishing. He deplores what has become our way of waiting until a species is endangered to begin to save it. "Waiting until that point, rather than cherishing and protecting the best, helps ensure both that the best runs will eventually join the worst and that some of the worst will be lost."

In this context, Safina travels the Oregon coast from Yaquina Head to Astoria and north to the Olympic Peninsula. He follows the Columbia upstream to the Dalles and Umatilla, and the fate of the salmon to California's Central Valley. Doing so, he presents the history of the current crisis state of Pacific Northwest salmon as part of an historic global misunderstanding of how humans can best support healthy fish populations — fish upon which so many people have depended for their own health and welfare. For the most part the bewilderment in knowledge, and failure to act bear the brunt of Safina's bitterness, rather than individuals who've contributed to the crisis.

In the Northwest, as on the Atlantic Coast and in the Pacific Islands, Safina's story of the fish is colored by the characters of those with whom he visits. He relays with them the water, in the water, under water, and in the air. Schools of fish, pods of whales, dolphins, snorkeling with chinook and steelhead, diving through coral reefs, cruising over what Safina calls the rolling prairies of blue, "we are given a sense of the vast and vital richness of ocean life — something often ignored in most of our terrestrial centered lives.

His travels in the far Pacific, where fish delicacies are fussed over, coveted and costed out as Frenchmen do wine, underscores how central fish are to Pacific rim cultures — again something often overlooked by many Americans. By nearly circumnavigating the globe in this book's travels, Safina shows us how without national or continental boundaries concern for oceans' health must be. While it is now true that many fish now cross oceans most frequently as flash frozen food products, and many commercial outlets have come to rely on the predictability of farmed fish, Safina makes it painfully clear that we cannot afford to ignore the global interdependence of healthy fish runs.

Just as the land ethic grew into the conservation and environmental consciousness of the late twentieth century, "Safina writes in his conclusion, "the sea ethic will logically expand our view of wildlife and its values throughout the oceans. "The economy," he writes, has been described as "a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment," Song For The Blue Ocean goes a long way toward impressing upon us the urgency of protecting oceans' health. As Dr. Safina puts it, "We need the seas more than we need us."

Elizabeth Grossman writes from Portland.
Dear CT Reader:

As Cascadia Times begins its fourth year of publication with this issue it’s time for a toast—and a pledge of continuing support. First, the toast:

A little over 4 years ago, Paul Koberstein and Robin Klein called on me at my office to talk about their vision for a newspaper for Cascadia, stretching from Northern California to Alaska, that would offer in-depth coverage of environmental and related social issues. Their inspiration, along with missing from the region’s newspapers, radio and television outlets, was that inspiration, along with many thousands of hours from Paul, Robin, Kathy Durbin, Bryan Potter, Jo Osgerby, many volunteer reporters and editors have sustained Cascadia Times through 3 years of publication. For those who know the universe that is the current population of $699 million.

A much smaller public land involved in forest management is fragmented by heavily logged private ownership, while most of the land protected is the proposed national forests. In the early 1990s, Congress and the Forest Service, then underfunded, found the loss of productive merchantable timber to development that was slow getting off the ground. Much of the money appropriated remained unspent. The budget for the 1994 Congress, rescinded its $21 million appropriation for fiscal 1993, before the Forest Service was able to spend it. Montana rescued the issue, and channelled most of the money to land conservation projects.

Now the pledge: For CTRF to fulfill its goals we need your financial support. In keeping our work with the spirit of Cascadia Times and its distinguished record of investigative journalism we work to ensure that our full-time investigative team can continue to produce.

To donate in any amount you can clip the coupon on this page or mail your check to CTRF, P.O. Box 42162, Portland, OR 97242. Thanks for your support.

Peter Lovigne, President
Cascadia Times Research Fund

YES, I want to support investigative journalism for the environment. Enclosed is my contribution to the Cascadia Times Research Fund:

- $1000+ Cascadia Circle
- $501-1000 Muckrakers Club
- $101-500 McWilliams Society
- $51-100 Sustainers
- $25 Individual
- $15 Living Lightly

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