

Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team that identified ten options for managing all or part of 17 national forests that provide habitat for the spotted owl. The options ranged from preserving all remaining old-growth forests to reaffirming existing management plans, and included alternative designations of reserve areas and levels of logging outside those protected enclaves. The team also assessed the impact of alternatives on biodiversity, finding that the viability of some 1,300 species was a direct function of the size of old-growth reserves. The option the Clinton administration ultimately selected was one of the least environmentally protective. It designated about half of the old-growth forest acreage outside of wilderness areas as timber-producing lands. In exchange for opening lands to produce about 1.2 billion board feet of lumber a year, the plan increased the threat to some 400 species whose habitats became more isolated and fragmented.

The July 1993 Northwest Timber Plan allowed logging of about 12 billion board feet of timber over 10 years, or about 1.2 billion annually on Federal lands in the Northwest that produced more than 5 billion a year in the 1980s; established reserves for the threatened northern spotted owl in which logging would be limited to dead and dying trees and thinning of some live ones, but only where that poses no threat to the owl; set up 10 special management areas where experimental harvesting techniques would be used; established no-logging buffer zones around sensitive streams and protects entire watersheds to try to avoid endangered salmon and other wildlife; proposed that Congress appropriate \$1.2 billion over five years, including \$270 million in the fiscal year 1994, to assist the region's economy through economic development grants, small business zones, job training money and funds to have loggers restore rivers damaged by excessive logging; and asked Congress to encourage more domestic milling by eliminating a tax subsidy for timber companies that export raw logs.²

Much of the debate among the Clinton administration, environmentalists, and timber stakeholders focused on the impact on timber jobs. The option selected was projected to result in a loss of 6,000 jobs. Preserving all old-growth forests was projected to cost 13,000 jobs. Industry representatives had projected a loss of 60,000 jobs. The plan also included federal assistance to help communities diversify their economies.³ In October, the administration reached agreement with 12 different environmental groups. Logging will be permitted in some Northwestern forests while promising that they, the Clinton Administration, will work against any legislation in Congress that seeks exemption from environmental laws or promotes a long-term logging plan. In Clinton's proposed 10-year plan, logging would be reduced to 1.2 billion board feet per year. This is about a quarter of the timber that is usually extracted.⁴

The evolution of the Clinton administration's plan to balance the concerns of environmentalists and the timber industry in protecting the spotted owl, old growth forests, jobs, and profits, is a particularly interesting case study of the interaction of Congress, the president, executive branch agencies, Federal courts, national environmental and industry interests, and local organizations. Environmental groups were rather successful in challenging the power of the timber industry and in developing a two-tiered strategy of judicial challenges and political lobbying to protect old-growth forests. The courts, in