
regional highlights

Pacific Northwest

"In 50 to 100 years, Paradise Lodge at Mount Rainier will be totally surrounded by forest. The recovery plan for grizzly bears, worked out so diligently in the 1990s, becomes moot, as habitat for the bears is no longer available. Ponderosa pine and Oregon white oak are now the major regenerating species in the lowlands of the northeastern Olympics. These and other changes are *not* predictions of the impending climate changes due to carbon dioxide increases in the atmosphere, but they are possible scenarios based on potential climate changes in the Pacific Northwest."

Thus did NPS Biologist James K. Agee head his Feb. 12 cover letter to superintendents of Mount Rainier, Olympic, North Cascades, and Crater Lake, sent with the article by Jerry W. Leverenz and Deborah J. Lev: "Effects of carbon dioxide-induced climate changes on the natural ranges of six major commercial tree species in the western United States" from Shands and Hoffman's *The Greenhouse Effect, Climate Change, and U.S. Forests*, published by The Conservation Foundation (1987).

The article's value lies in the magnitude of potential physical/biological change and its impacts for park areas such as Paradise meadows, the Hoh Rainforest, and Mount Rainier's winter snowline (up from 2600 to 4900 feet?). Agee suggests that as accurate impact projections become possible, "our confidence levels may rise enough to warrant a workshop or conference on this topic for western or northwestern parks."