

2025 Resolutions

Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs

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2025-1 Dam Removal on Lower Klamath River to be Commended

Submitted by: John Rettig, Mazamas Conservation Committee

Organization: Mazamas

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Background of Issue: (source: NY Times, by Soumya Karlamangla)

With Dams Removed, Salmon Will Have the Run of a Western River

The nation's largest dam removal project is nearly complete after a lengthy campaign by Native tribes to restore the river at the California-Oregon border. When hydropower dams were built on the Klamath, the river's ecosystem was upended and salmon were cut off from 420 miles of cooler tributaries and streams where they had once laid their eggs.

Four giant dams on the Klamath are being razed as part of the largest dam removal project in U.S. history, a victory for the tribes who have led a decades-long campaign to restore the river. As the final pieces are demolished, a 240-mile stretch of the Klamath will flow freely for the first time in more than a century — and salmon will get their best shot at long-term survival in the river.

Salmon play an outsize role in nourishing and holding together ecosystems, scientists say, and their plight has fueled a growing trend of dam removals nationwide. Of the 150 removals on the West Coast in the past decade — double that of the previous decade, according to data from American Rivers, an environmentalist group — most have benefited salmon. Chinook salmon, or king salmon, in the Klamath are predicted to increase by as much as 80 percent within the next three decades.

The dams were erected between 1918 and 1962 by the California Oregon Power Company to supply electricity to the growing rural region. By that point, the Klamath had already suffered from overfishing, logging, agricultural development and mining operations that spit sediment and chemicals into the river. The dams choked its flows, ruined water quality and fostered toxic algae blooms that often made the river unsafe for summer recreation.

Upstream of the Klamath dams, salmon completely disappeared because they were unable to return from the ocean. Below the dams, the salmon population dropped to less than 5 percent of what it had been, with some species fully extinct.

Catalyzed by a huge salmon die-off in 2002, the Klamath area tribes kicked off an aggressive campaign to remove the dams, collaborating with scientists, environmental organizations and commercial fishermen, who together wrote letters, staged rallies and traveled as far away as Scotland to protest outside the headquarters of ScottishPower, which owned the dams at the time. After more than 20 years of advocacy from the tribes, federal regulators in 2022 approved an agreement to demolish four dams on the Klamath. The dams were providing less than 2 percent of the energy portfolio of their current owner, PacifiCorp — a subsidiary of Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Energy — and the company would have had to pay more to upgrade them to modern-day standards than to take them down. The \$500 million cost of the demolition project has been split between California taxpayers and surcharges paid by PacifiCorp customers in Oregon.

Two dams will remain farther upstream on the Klamath to collect and divert water to farmers in Oregon. Between the 1920s and 1940s, the federal government granted homesteads to veterans in the Klamath Basin, and the farmers' battle for water with the tribes became one of the fiercest water wars in the West. The two remaining dams have fish ladders so that salmon can make it to the other side.

No one knows how quickly salmon will rebound in the Klamath. After a dam removal on the Elwha River in Washington State's Olympic National Park, every migratory fish species in the river swam upstream of the former dam site within three years. But even a decade later, some salmon populations remain critically low.

Resolved: The FWOC commends the removal of the four Lower Klamath River dams, and calls for timely removal of all such dams that have little economic benefit but high environmental cost.

2025-2 OBF and ODF Should Implement Their Climate Change and Carbon Plan

Submitted by: John Rettig, Mazamas Conservation Committee

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Background of Issue:

The Oregon Board of Forestry (BOF) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) approved a Climate Change and Carbon Plan (CCCP) that was over two years ago. The details are yet being worked out.

The CCCP aims to transform the Oregon Department of Forestry into a national leader in Climate-Smart Forestry. This approach prioritizes climate mitigation and should encompass the following actions:

- Optimizing forest carbon sequestration
- Extending harvest rotations
- Enhancing forest resilience
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Protecting old-growth and mature forests, as well as biodiversity

To achieve these goals, ODF should establish and maintain a carbon inventory for state forests, proposed Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs), and Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). These areas should be managed as carbon reserves.

Additionally, ODF should set clear targets for increasing carbon sequestration and storage, along with a detailed roadmap to meet these targets.

We also recommend that BOF and ODF collaborate with the Department of State Lands to develop carbon offset projects within state forests.

Resolved: The FWOC requests a timely and meaningful implementation of the Climate Change and Carbon Plan.

2025-3 PGE Harborton Reliability Project Impacting Portland's Forest Park

Submitted by: John Rettig, Mazamas Conservation Committee

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Background of Issue:

PGE has submitted a revised land-use application in the north end of Portland's Forest Park, which proposes to clear cut 4.7 acres of 150+ year old Douglas fir and bigleaf maple trees and proposes to remove five white oak trees estimated to be 170-500 years old. In total, the proposal includes the removal of 376 living trees, and 21 dead trees. It will permanently fill at least two wetlands and disrupt two streams that support multiple species of aquatic wildlife.

According to PGE, Phase 5 of this project may impact another 15 acres of Forest Park to the northwest and west potentially disrupting the Miller Creek watershed which contains salmon habitat. Should Phase 3 be approved, it will pave the way to Phase 5 as the "least expensive" alternative.

This area of land lies within the City's Environmental Conservation and Environmental Protection overlay zones, and also within the City's Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan (FPNRMP). Legally, PGE must comply with this plan unless they can prove that there is no alternative to meet their obligation to provide reliable power. We are not convinced that PGE has investigated alternatives, nor have they been forthcoming with convincing information that they have tried to do so. Such information was requested as far back as 2022, and although a report on this was delivered to PGE by a private consultant at that time, it was not made available until a few weeks ago. Now PGE has released the report after withholding this information from the public for two years, and is requesting urgency on this matter to be decided.

As documented in the City of Portland's 2012 Forest Park Wildlife Report, the northern area of Forest Park is home to over 200 species of interest - either listed, candidate, sensitive, or of concern at the State and Federal level. It is rich in wildlife structural diversity including larger trees, standing snags, and native understory. One of the streams that would be denuded is habitat for the northern red-legged frog, an at-risk species as noted in the Special Status and At-Risk Species List prepared by the City of Portland in 2022.

Ecological impact on the protected area of Forest Park would not be restricted to the area targeted for clear-cut. The edges of this pristine coniferous forest would be susceptible to plant invasions (ivy, blackberry, garlic mustard and others) that degrade forest health and limit diversity of species supported by the Park, tree blow-down from storms, land-slides, temperature increases which can weaken the forest making trees susceptible to insect and disease invasions. The slopes in this area of the Park are extremely steep, as documented in the Toth report, making this landscape prone to landslides when vegetation is removed.

Mitigation is not a solution for the environmental impact caused by power lines. Once a corridor is widened or opened, it is continually maintained in a manner that does not resemble the original natural state of the land. Proposing that this can somehow be compensated by improving other areas is ludicrous.

There are two more phases that PGE wants to follow up with. If this proposal is approved, against the overlay zones and long-ago approved FPNRMP, it will become a slippery slope - there would be an expectation that the following two phases could also be approved, incrementally increasing total impact to the north end of the park.

This proposal was initially approved by a City of Portland Land Use Hearings Officer, and overturned on appeal to the Portland City Council. The current status is that PGE has appealed the overturning to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA).

Resolved: The FWOC commends the Portland City Council's overturning of this bad decision by the City Hearings Officer, and calls upon PGE to abandon this ill-advised appeal to LUBA.

2025-4 NWFP EIS Needs Strengthening

Submitted by: John Rettig, FWOC Resolutions Committee

Organization: FWOC

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Background of Issue:

For 30 years, the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) has guided management of 17 national forests stretching from western Washington and Oregon, south to northwestern California. The plan curbed the destructive over-logging of our forests and protected habitat for salmon, northern spotted owls, marbled murrelets, and many other species. It also safeguarded watersheds and provided climate benefits, while still allowing commercial logging.

These practices helped to redress decades of unbridled industrial logging.

On March 1, 2024, Donald Trump signed an executive order entitled “Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production,” calling on federal land managers to “fully exploit our domestic timber supply,” and instructing agencies to bypass existing federal laws and regulations that protect stately forests, rural communities, clean water, imperiled species, recreation, and the climate. This directive wrongly seeks to elevate timber production above all other forest uses and values. This would lead to disastrous outcomes for public forests and our groups adamantly oppose its implementation in the Northwest Forest Plan area.

We face worsening climate change, biodiversity loss, and uncharacteristically severe wildfires, and we need an ecologically sound and socially just plan that not only ensures intact, thriving ecosystems, but also meaningfully respects Tribal sovereignty, to guide us into the future.

We ask the agency to support or improve analysis of the following components in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and any resulting decision:

1. Support input from everyone: Any decision made by the Forest Service should advance all of the input provided by all concerned groups, not just those with an economic interest in the outcome.
2. Elevate Environmental Justice: The Forest Service should address environmental justice by analyzing impacts on air, water, and communities and ensuring fair, sustainable working conditions.

3. **Ensure Recreation Access:** The Forest Service Draft EIS does not consider the effects its proposed increased logging will have on outdoor recreation opportunities in the region. Outdoor recreation is one of the primary economic drivers in the region, and timber harvest usually requires large area closures during and following implementation that disrupts these recreation activities and access. There are myriad economic benefits from leaving landscapes intact, including recreation, fishing, and water quality. The Forest Service must analyze these economic benefits in the Final EIS.
4. **Ensure Adequate Staffing and Funding:** The efficacy of the Forest Service's proposed logging to reduce wildfire hazards in the region will depend on the work being done in the appropriate forest type, what the logging prescriptions are, and ensuring post-logging treatment of slash piles and repeated burning and follow up treatment/removal of undergrowth vegetation responses. The Forest Service must ensure that these practices are appropriately staffed and funded, otherwise logging will only increase fire risk.

We also request the agency exclude any components in the final plan that would lead to the following outcomes:

1. **Weakened Protections for Mature and Old-Growth Forests:** We support the parts of the proposed amendments that provide long-overdue protections for mature and old-growth forests. Communities value these areas because they are resilient to wildfire, provide essential habitats for a host of imperiled species, store carbon, serve as climate refugia, and protect water quality. However, the draft amendments redefine these forests in a way that leaves far too many of them open to logging and road building. The Forest Service has no social license for commercially exploiting mature and old-growth forests.
2. **Altered Purpose of Late-Successional Reserves (LSR):** In the Draft EIS, the Forest Service proposes expanding the purpose of LSR management to include the "restoration" of habitat for species that depend on young forests. Restoring young forests is a euphemism for regeneration harvest, and including this as a LSR objective directly contradicts the purpose and role of these reserves, which were designed to achieve late-successional and old-growth characteristics. The shift would inappropriately allow new and unprecedented regeneration harvest in these reserves. While our organizations support management to restore traditional and historic oak woodlands and other meadow habitats, provisions to facilitate this management exist elsewhere in the plan. If the Forest Service genuinely wanted to restore young forest habitat, it would not permit salvage logging following natural disturbances. This change to the fundamental purpose of these reserves undermines the reserves network's purpose and efficacy and will increase fire risk across the planning area.

3. **Weakened Protections for Imperiled Fish and Wildlife:** The Draft EIS encompasses changes that radically alter the fundamental assumptions and management of forest habitats depended upon by a host of wildlife species, including the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, marten, red tree vole and numerous imperiled aquatic species, including salmon. The effects of the proposed changes on these species and their habitats must be properly analyzed and considered by the decision maker.
4. **Fire Resilience Efforts That Remove Mature Trees:** Fire risk reduction efforts should focus on community preparedness and home hardening. Any logging practices that may be used to increase fire resilience must focus on retaining the larger-diameter trees in the stand, work to increase overall tree diameters in the stand in the short-term, and avoid negative impacts to wildlife and carbon storage. These treatments must also be accompanied by prescribed burning, as studies have shown thinning alone to be ineffective at altering wildfire behavior. These treatments also have no ecological justification in moist forests.
5. **Alterations to the Survey and Manage Program:** The Draft EIS discusses recommendations to eliminate the Survey and Manage program that documents and protects unique and uncommon species and their unique habitats. We agree with the Forest Service's conclusion that any changes to this program are outside the scope of the proposed amendment and cannot be addressed through this process. This program is vital and should continue.
6. **Expansions to the Road Network:** The Draft EIS fundamentally fails to consider impacts from road construction, which could harm key watersheds, drinking water, and habitat for salmon and other species, and increase the costs of proposed logging. The Forest Service should be focused on reducing the overall road network in the Northwest Forest Plan area. The Draft EIS as written mandates aggressive timber targets that will require extensive road construction or reconstruction. An analysis of the requisite road effects is necessary to inform a responsible decision on this amendment.

Resolved: The FWOC calls for a strong forest plan that ensures robust Tribal inclusion, advances ecologically-sound forest management for biodiversity, wildfire resilience, and climate stability, and supports the needs of current and future generations. There are positive steps outlined in the proposed amendments related to robust Tribal inclusion and beneficial fire use. There are also shortcomings in the proposed amendments that would place remaining mature and old-growth public forests at risk and hinder recovery of imperiled fish and wildlife species and their habitat. If the Forest Service fails to remedy these shortcomings in the Final EIS, we are prepared to challenge them.

2025-5 Protect Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument from Exploitation

Submitted by: John Rettig, Mazamas Conservation Committee

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Background of Issue:

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument has been brought up in Congress' 2026 Budget Bill. We need ensure that it remains protected from exploitation. The House version of the bill includes a harmful provision that would undermine existing protections for this crown jewel of our nation's public lands system.

The House 2026 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill would require the Department of the Interior to manage Grand Staircase-Escalante "in compliance with the Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plans . . . dated February 2020." In practical terms, if passed, this language would require the BLM to follow a 2020 Trump administration resource management plan that does not afford monument protections for approximately 900,000 acres of Grand Staircase-Escalante.

The Senate's version of the Budget Bill does not include this provision, and it must stay that way. Our advocacy action urges senators to hold the line and reject any attempt to add this provision into their version of the bill; at the same time, it calls on representatives to remove the provision from the House bill.

Resolved: The FWOC resolves that the Senate version of the 2026 Budget Bill, with appropriate protections for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, must prevail.

2025-6 Preserve The 2001 Roadless Rule

Submitted by: Barry Buchanan, Mazamas Conservation Committee

Organization: Mazamas

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Background of Issue:

US Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins of the Trump administration has announced plans to rescind the Roadless Rule, a highly successful protection put in place in 2001, covering approximately 58 million acres nationwide by limiting destructive logging and development in roadless areas. The Department of Agriculture adopted this final rule "to protect and conserve inventoried roadless areas on National Forest System lands". The Roadless Rule currently shelters fish and wildlife, protects drinking water, and helps maintain recreation.

In Oregon, this includes places like the Metolius River, Lost Lake, the Oregon Dunes, Mount Hebo, Hardesty Mountain, Tumelo Mountain, and the Upper Hood River Valley.

The Forest Service struggles to maintain its existing logging roads and did so even before the USDA's recent staffing cuts. The Roadless Rule was put in place in part to address the size of the issue "...the size of the existing forest road system and attendant budget constraints prevent the agency from managing its road system to the safety and environmental standards to which it was built". The rule was also intended to fend off increasingly "costly and time-consuming litigation".

Eliminating this rule makes many of these areas a prime target for commercial logging. The Trump administration has set a goal for a 25% increase in logging on our public lands. If protected areas are opened to new roads and commercial logging, they will become fragmented and damaged. Roads create barriers in wild places which have known negative impacts on wildlife. Backers of rescinding the rule claim that it will help with wildfire management. This would pile onto decades of fire suppression, but research shows that wildfires are four times more likely in areas with roads (<https://earthjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/updated-summary-roads-and-fire-.pdf>)

According to Earthjustice, the Roadless Rule was created after more than 600 public hearings were held. The public provided more than 1.6 million comments in favor of adopting it — more comments than any other rule in US history.

References:

Federal Register :: Special Areas; Roadless Area Conservation

Earthjustice Responds as Trump Administration Takes Aim at Longstanding Rule Protecting National Forestlands - Earthjustice

<https://oregonwild.org/resource/what-are-roadless-wildlands/>

<https://www.sierraclub.org/Sierra/roadless-rule-trump-wants-rescind-what-does-that-mean>

Resolved:

The FWOC opposes the elimination of the 2001 Roadless Rule.

2025-7 Enforceable Environmental Standards in the Blue Mountains Forest Plan

Submitted by: Jared Kennedy

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Contact: Jamie Dawson, Conservation Director

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Background of Issue:

Greater Hells Canyon Council respectfully requests consideration of a 2025 resolution to ensure enforceable standards to protect old growth trees, landscape connectivity, and wildlife are included in the Blue Mountains Forest Plan.

The Blue Mountains Forest Plan is the US Forest Service's management plan for the Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla, and Malheur National Forests. The plan impacts over 5 million acres of public lands, outlining how they will be managed for the next several decades. The plan, by law, should be updated every 15 years, but the current plan was adopted over 30 years ago. Due to the challenges the US Forest Service faces in trying to placate various user groups, the new plan, once adopted, will likely be in place for another 30 years. The US Forest Service aims to have the new plan adopted in 2026, and they are currently in the scoping phase to determine what does and does not get included in the upcoming plan.

GHCC and our allies are working tirelessly to ensure that the US Forest Service maintains enforceable standards in the Blue Mountains Forest Plan. This is especially challenging in today's deregulatory environment being spearheaded by the Trump administration. Vocal and powerful timber and cattle industry groups in the area have traditionally wielded outsized influence over the management of federal forests in the Blue Mountains region. With the Trump administration directly seeking to align federal management and extractive industries, the process to revise the Blue Mountains Forest Plan is skewed to discount the voices and input of environmentalists, low impact recreation users, and climate change solution considerations.

The Blue Mountain Forests Plan must protect the few remaining large and mature trees in these National Forests. The current Blue Mountain Forest Plan prohibits the logging of all trees over 21 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) without a site-specific amendment. We successfully fought a lawsuit against the US Forest Service that maintained these protections. It ruled that the attempt to change the enforceable standard to a guideline was done illegally in violation of the National Forest Management Act and the Endangered Species Act. The US

Forest Service has indicated that they will seek to change this enforceable standard to a guideline through the Forest Planning process. *With only 3% of large and mature trees remaining in the Blue Mountains, the 21-inch DBH standard must be maintained in the new forest plan.*

The Blue Mountains Forest Plan must address climate change. The current Blue Mountain Forest Plan does not address climate change. The 2012 US Forest Service Planning Rule, that governs how any new or amended forest plan across the nation is created, indicated forest plans must address climate change. *The current plan draft omits any mention of climate change.* We insist that climate change be addressed in compliance with the 2012 Planning Rule, and more importantly, the importance these national forests play in a changing climate.

The Blue Mountain Forest Plan must have enforceable standards to protect wildlife connectivity. These three National Forests operate as a critical wildlife corridor connecting the Rockies to the Cascades. Updating all three of these plans simultaneously is a great opportunity to consider connectivity between National Forests, in addition to the connectivity of lands within them. The existing plan only narrowly addresses connectivity, but it's time to expand that. These new forest plans must create logical connections between roadless areas, riparian areas, and other special landscapes, and create species specific corridors (big game is an easy example, but it's time to do this for other species too). *This is the opportunity for the creation of a landscape level management plan.*

The Blue Mountains Forest Plan must maintain an inventory of Wilderness-quality lands and potential Wild and Scenic Rivers. The US Forest Service is required to take an inventory of lands and waters across the forests to determine if they are suitable to be considered for Wilderness or Wild and Scenic River protections. While they can't officially designate them as such, the forest plans should include management direction for those areas that would prevent their quality from being degraded (in case Congress ever decides to protect them). The agency must ensure that the few unroaded areas that remain receive protection from future human disturbances such as logging and road building. *After an extensive analysis was conducted by the Forest Service with many thousand acres identified as being of Wilderness quality. None have been included in the draft plan.*

Proposed Resolution:

FWOC supports maintaining enforceable standards for wildlife, large and mature trees, and connectivity in the Blue Mountains Forest Plan.

FWOC supports the effort to insist that the Blue Mountains Forest Plan address climate change per the requirement set forth in the 2012 US Forest Service Planning Rule.

FWOC supports the effort to identify Wilderness quality lands and Wild and Scenic River segments and detail management considerations for these lands in the Blue Mountains Forest Plan.

Suggested Follow-up Actions:

Sign up for and take action as outlined by Action Alerts from Greater Hells Canyon Council related to the Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision. Seek participation in a coalition of organizations working alongside GHCC on this issue. To get engaged, please reach out to Jamie Dawson, Conservation Director at GHCC (contact information above), for information on when to provide comments, attend public meetings, and send communications to elected officials.