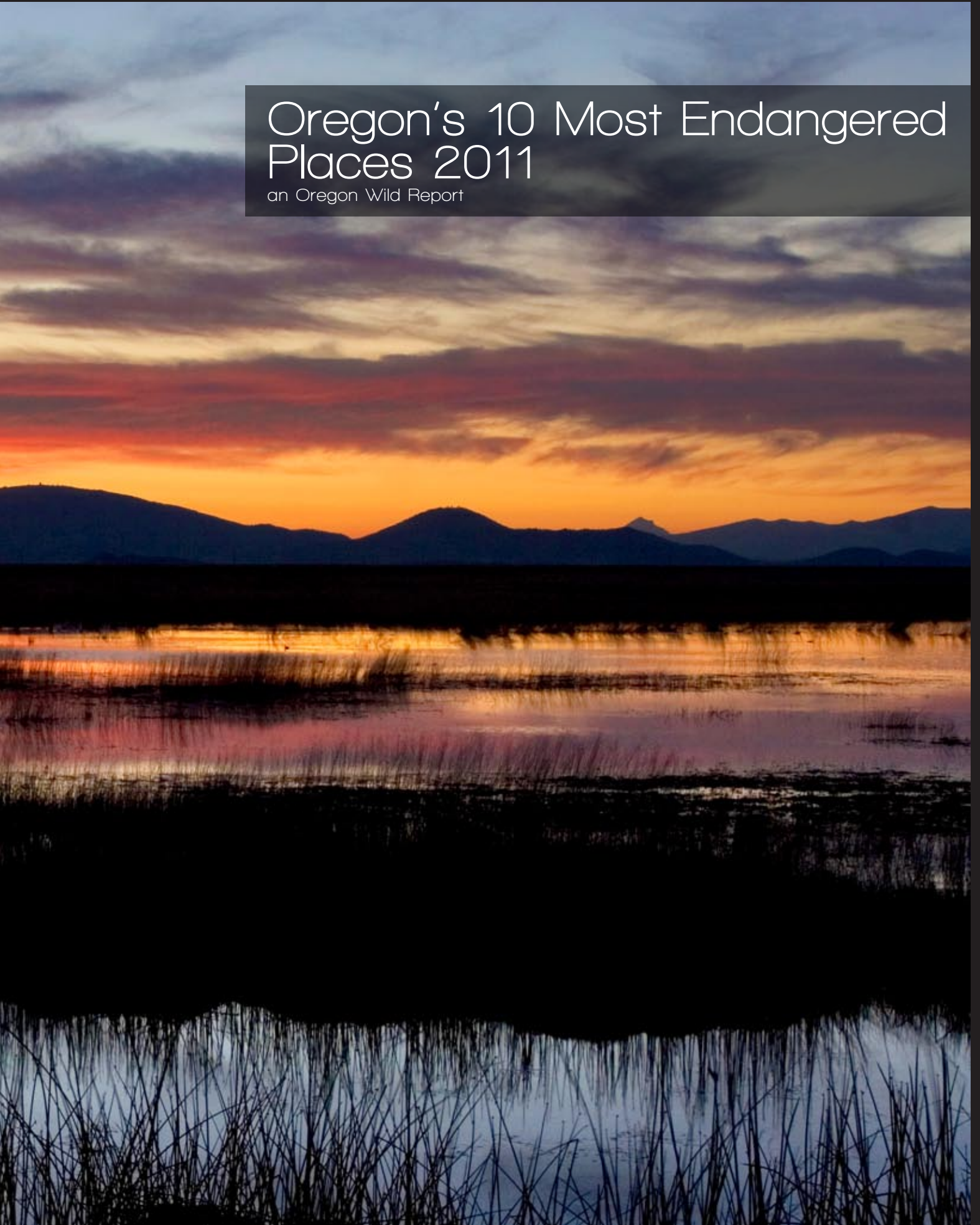


# Oregon's 10 Most Endangered Places 2011

an Oregon Wild Report







**OREGON WILD**

## 10 Most Endangered Places

Our mission:

Since 1974, Oregon Wild has worked to protect and restore Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters as an enduring legacy for future generations.

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To find out more about our  
conservation work please visit  
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**\*Fold out the cover for a spectacular Klamath Wetlands poster**

COVER: BRETT COLE

ABOVE: ROGER DORBAND





# Congress attacks!

## Anti-environment extremists target Oregon's wildlands

When we last compiled the 10 Most Endangered Places report, national elections were poised to shake-up the power dynamic in Washington, D.C. – and alter the future for much of America's cherished public lands.

The Tea Party movement that has steered the national dialogue towards talk of deficits and debt ceilings has also reframed the debate on the environment. Conservationists are now forced to answer to the false choice between economy and environment – as if the two could ever be separated.

As the 112th Congress slogged through budget battles in the spring of 2011, environmental advocates grew all-too-familiar with an old nemesis – the budget rider. "Riders" are a time honored tradition by some politicians – a way to pass unpopular or controversial legislation without having to face a straight up or down vote or much public scrutiny.

The principle works like this – take an unpopular legislative proposal and attach it to a budget bill or other must-pass legislation. Other members of Congress must then choose between voting no on the whole package (and being blamed for shutting down the government), or going along with the bad "rider."

In April 2011, conservationists managed to beat back a slew of anti-environment riders, but failed to hold the line on two critical policy fronts – endangered species protections for wolves and administrative protections for wilderness-quality BLM lands. As you'll see in this report, some members of Congress aren't done.

The Wilderness and Roadless Release Act of 2011, proposed by Rep. Mike McCarthy (R-CA) and Sen. John Barasso (R-WY), threatens no less than six of the special areas featured on these pages. Another rider aimed at exempting logging roads from the Clean Water Act puts at risk the Nestucca River (#2 on this year's list) and countless other waterways in Oregon.

Though the intensity of the threats is great, conservationists have always proven that they are up to the task of protecting Oregon's natural heritage. Past successes temper our concern at the magnitude of the threats before us.

The last great blow to the environment inflicted by Congressional shortsightedness came in 1995, with the infamous "Salvage Rider." Though this backhanded legislation led to the destruction of thousands of acres of ancient forest, the backlash against the policy was the precursor to the far greater protections that Oregon's old-growth forests now enjoy.

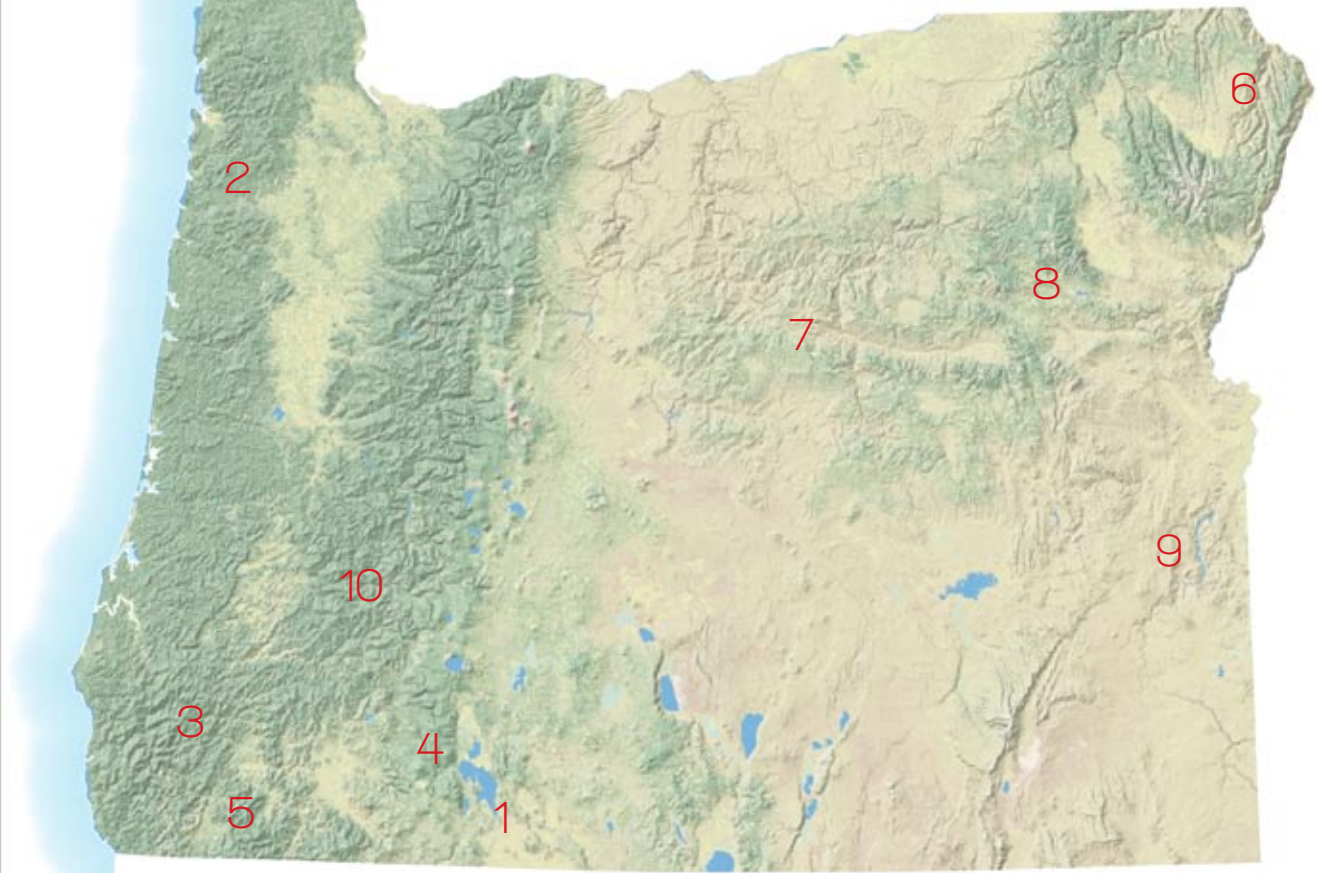
The current threats described in this report beg the question: Will Oregonians heed the call to protect our air, water, and land just as generations before have done.

We hope and believe we will.

*-Sean Stevens*



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BRETT COLE

# #1 Klamath Wetlands

**Threat:** Agribusiness, degraded habitat, pesticide use

**The Place:** One hundred and fifty years ago, the Klamath Basin hosted 350,000 acres of wetlands, shallow lakes and marshes. Settlers fished a roaring, salmon rich river winding through hundreds of miles of countryside, and were amazed by the spectacular migrations of geese, eagles, and other birds. Half a century ago, during the peak of fall migration, over 7 million waterfowl and 1,000 overwintering bald eagles could be found in the Klamath Basin at one time.

Home to hundreds of invaluable wildlife species and remarkable territory, the basin wetlands drew the attention of conservationists from across the nation, including President Theodore Roosevelt. In 1908 President Roosevelt designated 81,000 acres of marsh and open water in Lower Klamath Lake as the first National Wildlife Refuge for waterfowl. Twenty years later, Tule Lake joined the refuge system when Franklin Roosevelt authorized the protection of 37,000 acres as Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

**The Threat:** The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's massive Klamath Irrigation Project, initiated in 1905, paved the way for extensive agricultural development that destroyed thousands of acres of wetland, and drained much of what was Lower Klamath and Tule Lakes. Over time, 80% of the historic wetlands in the Klamath Basin have been drained. Similarly, peak numbers of migratory birds have dropped by over 80% during the last 60 years.

The problem of limited wetland habitat is exacerbated by the practice of leasing 22,000 acres of publicly-owned land on Tule Lake and Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuges for commercial agriculture. While the creation of the refuges was intended to preserve vital fragments of

the once-vast Klamath wetland system for geese, herons, and eagles, much of that land is instead managed for potatoes, alfalfa, and onions.

Today, Lower Klamath and Tule Lake face the perils of Congress. Restoration in the Klamath is slow to take shape, and a proposed settlement deal awaiting Congressional approval could bind dozens of organizations to an endorsement of leaseland agriculture on refuge lands. In addition, bills

like the "Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2011," which have already passed the House and await action in the Senate, could result in free reign for pesticide users. This Act would prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from safeguarding our waterways in the Klamath and throughout the nation from toxic pesticide pollution by exempting pesticide applications and discharge from Clean Water Act permitting.

**The Solution:** Bringing resource demands back into balance with what the region can naturally provide is the ongoing goal and challenge in the Klamath Basin. With demands far in excess of supply, water resources must be better preserved and allocated in the Klamath Basin.

Federal lawmakers should only pursue legislation in the Klamath that supports a comprehensive restoration package; one that includes restoration and protection of the region's remaining wetlands and refuges as well as a substantial willing-seller buyout program, reducing the demand for water from irrigation. Furthermore, Congress, with the support of stakeholders, should uphold the Clean Water Act and put a stop to legislation that facilitates industry pollution from pesticides and other toxic sources.

## Fast Fact

A nationwide U.S. Geological Survey study discovered that more than half of agricultural and urban streams sampled had at least one pesticide in a concentration that exceeds guidelines for the protection of aquatic life.

## #2 Nestucca River (Tillamook State Forest)

**Threat:** Poorly maintained logging roads, extensive cutting and weak state forest rules

**The Place:** Beloved by generations of steelhead fishermen, the Nestucca River flows for 50 miles through temperate rainforest in the Oregon Coast Range. Its headwaters form in Yamhill County (where it provides drinking water for the 32,000 residents of McMinnville), and it cuts through a scenic canyon of 40 million year old basalt and limestone before meeting the ocean near the town of Pacific City. Despite having been heavily logged, the Nestucca River watershed still supports wild Chinook salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout, and coho salmon (listed as “threatened” under the federal Endangered Species Act).

Lands within the Nestucca watershed are a mix of federal (Bureau of Land Management and Siuslaw National Forest), state (Tillamook State Forest), and private. Logging has taken a severe toll on this watershed, and in recent years the BLM and Forest Service have invested tens of thousands of dollars to restore the river and reduce the damage done by poorly designed and maintained logging roads.

**The Threat:** Because the Nestucca has been so heavily logged in the past, wild fish populations in the river have declined significantly.

During heavy fall and winter rains, area roads can bleed

thousands of tons of sediment into the Nestucca and its tributaries, smothering salmon eggs and destroying spawning habitat. Worse, in severe cases these roads fail, and can create catastrophic mudslides. Decommissioning logging roads that are no longer needed, and upgrading culverts and other structures to reduce erosion, are among the most effective steps that can be taken in the Nestucca to aid salmon and improve the health of the river. This is particularly true on state and private lands, where weak and outdated logging rules fail to adequately address logging roads.

However, a measure recently proposed in Congress to exempt logging roads from the Clean Water Act could remove much of the incentive for state and private landowners to reduce pollution caused by their logging roads. The legislation, (S.1369, “Silviculture Regulatory Consistency Act”),

was introduced at the behest of the logging industry, and co-sponsored by Oregon’s U.S. Senator Ron Wyden. It would overturn a recent court ruling that found that pollution originating from active logging roads be treated similarly to other industrial activities, such as construction projects. Wyden’s legislation poses a serious risk not just to the Nestucca, but to countless other rivers and streams in Oregon that have been damaged by poor logging and road building practices.

**The Solution:** In the short term, Congress should reject any attempt to exempt the logging industry from the Clean Water Act. The harm to clean water and salmon from pollution running off of logging roads is no different than mud and sediment originating from poorly maintained construction sites or road building projects.

In the long term, Oregon’s weak State Forest Practices Act, and other measures encouraging reckless levels of logging on state lands, must be reformed. Every year, countless roads in the Oregon Coast Range fail, resulting in severe erosion and mudslides. Together with rampant clear-cutting (perfectly legal under Oregon law), these failing roads are a leading cause of salmon declines, and put clean drinking water and other resources at risk. Oregon laws should be updated to ban clear-cutting, update road building and maintenance standards, and to ensure key salmon and steelhead habitat are off-limits to logging.

### Fast Fact:

Though much of the Nestucca has been heavily logged, the rugged slopes of Mount Hebo remain a wild stronghold, with over 11,000 acres of Wilderness-quality land.



**PACIFIC WATERSHED ASSOCIATES** When logging roads give they dump thousands of tons of dirt into Oregon rivers.



## #3 Wild Rogue

**Threat:** Proposed logging on western Oregon BLM lands and political inaction

**The Place:** The Wild Rogue area is one of Oregon's most pristine, scenic, and rugged landscapes. This natural treasure is one of Oregon's premier recreational destinations, attracting tens of thousands of visitors every year and contributing millions of dollars to the local economy. The Rogue River is second only to the Columbia River in Oregon salmon production, with nearly 100,000 fish returning from the ocean each year. The Rogue River supports 450 jobs and serves as an economic engine for a region that is transitioning into a more sustainable economy.

But the Wild Rogue extends far beyond the river banks. Tens of thousands of acres of wild Bureau of Land Management (BLM) forest lands surround the river, providing a home for diverse plants and wildlife like elk, black bear, river otters, and threatened northern spotted owls.

**The Threat:** Despite the importance of the forests and rivers of the Wild Rogue, and the more than 2 million acres of other BLM lands in western Oregon, threats remain. The BLM's Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR) posed a huge threat to the old-growth forests of the Rogue, and throughout western Oregon, by dramatically increasing logging. With that threat now in the rear view mirror, these lands are at risk from a variety of proposals designed to address budgetary problems at the county level that would jeopardize many public values that the Rogue provides. Proposals range from selling off nearly one million acres of public BLM lands to long term logging leases of these same areas.

Western Oregon BLM lands, including places like the Wild Rogue (the largest forested BLM roadless area in the country), provide numerous public benefits. These low elevation forests provide clean drinking water, world class recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat. Perhaps most importantly, they are extremely efficient at storing carbon pollution, the primary driver of global warming.

Selling off public forest lands or leasing them on long term timber contracts to private companies is extremely unpopular. Both of these options would put a million acres of public forests on the chopping block, with devastating consequences. Water quality in rivers like the Wild Rogue, the Willamette, and the Umpqua would be significantly degraded, wildlife habitat would be further destroyed, recreation would be impacted, and countless scenic vistas Oregonians enjoy would be marred by clear-cuts.

With Congress slow to act on protecting the Wild Rogue, this natural treasure is left vulnerable to logging, road building, mining, and the current privatization schemes.

**The Solution:** Conservationists have worked out a compromise with the timber industry on a proposal to designate 58,000 acres of Wilderness and 93 miles of Wild & Scenic Rivers. That common ground solution, supported by dozens of local businesses that rely on the river, now sits on the desks of Rep. Peter DeFazio and Sen. Ron Wyden and Sen. Jeff Merkley. It is a truly rare occasion when conservationists and the timber industry are able to agree on Wilderness protections, now it's up to Congress to finalize this agreement with legislation.

A long term solution for ecologically-appropriate management of Oregon's BLM lands is needed to ensure the future of our healthy forests, salmon streams, climate, and rural economies. Oregon Wild is working toward this type of solution, but in the meantime we need to fight to keep these public lands and their important resources in public hands by urging our representatives to oppose privatization for short term economic gain.

### Fast Fact:

The Wild Rogue is one of only a few rivers in the west that the giant Green Sturgeon call home. They can be up to 7 ft long and weigh 350 lbs.



developing these protections. In fact, Oregon submitted more comments per capita in support of the plan than did any other state. Yet some in Congress seek to ignore the voice of the people in an effort to end protections for much of our natural heritage.

Over the last two decades, Pelican Butte has faced an on again/off again threat in the form of a ski area proposal. While currently shelved, this ski area development could come back to life, especially if the roadless area protections are lost.

**The Solution:** Oregon Wild is working on an exciting plan to establish Wilderness protections for Pelican Butte and other key wildlife corridors that extend into the Crater Lake area. The Crater Lake Wilderness proposal would designate a wildlife corridor extending 90 miles along the southern Cascades. We have joined forces with coalition partners Umpqua Watersheds, Environment Oregon, and the Crater Lake Institute in our effort to designate the Crater Lake Wilderness.

Roadless area protections have proven to be very helpful over the years in holding the line and limiting destructive activities in our natural treasures, but these protections aren't permanent and remain susceptible to shifting political winds. Wilderness protection is the gold standard for public lands – once designated, no Wilderness has ever been unprotected.

### Fast Fact:

This isn't the first time Oregon Wild has had to fight to protect the wildlife habitat around Pelican Butte. About 10 years ago we stopped a destructive ski area from being developed on Pelican Butte.

**BRETT COLE** Pelican Butte's slopes host Bald Eagles and countless other native bird and wildlife species.



## #4 Pelican Butte Roadless Area

### Threat: The Wilderness and Roadless Release Act of 2011

**The Place:** Pelican Butte, named after the nearby Pelican Bay, is one of the largest and most important unprotected areas in the southern Cascades. Thirty-four endangered, threatened, sensitive, or indicator species can be found here.

The old-growth forests in this part of the Cascades are home to bald eagles, pileated woodpeckers, and northern spotted owls. The area serves as an important wildlife corridor between the six Klamath National Wildlife Refuges and the protected Sky Lakes Wilderness and Crater Lake National Park, including a diverse elevation range from 4,200 to 8,000 feet. This corridor will be all the more important in the future as scientists are increasingly highlighting the importance of protected corridors for wildlife to use as they adapt to a warming climate.

**The Threat:** The Pelican Butte Roadless Area has some protection under the 2001 Roadless Rule. Unfortunately, extremists in Congress are pushing forward legislation that would erase all protections for roadless areas and most Wilderness Study Areas (BLM lands deemed to have wilderness qualities). In Oregon alone this would result in over 3 million acres of the state's most important natural treasures, like Pelican Butte, losing protections. Nationally it would result in 43 million acres opened up to increased logging, drilling, mining, and other destructive activities.

Roadless area protections were the result of a multi-year effort by Oregon Wild and countless other environmental groups across the country that resulted in the most popular government rule in history. Over 600 public hearings and meetings were held across the country in



# #5 Sucker Creek



GEORGE SEXTON (KSWILD)

With skyrocketing gold speculation, permitted and unlicensed mining along Sucker Creek is on the upswing. In 2011 the BLM and Forest Service are processing multiple requests to mine creek-side public forest stands and within Sucker Creek itself; including a new mining request from the same miner who illegally trashed the Creek in 2009.

**The Solution:** Many of the public streams, creeks, and rivers in the Klamath Siskiyou Mountains are under tremendous mining pressure. A small cadre of radical miners is contending that they are above the law and needn't abide by the Clean Water Act or the Endangered Species Act.

**Threat: Mining. Lots of it!**

**The Place:** Sucker Creek serves as one of the Rogue River Basin's premiere salmon and steelhead spawning streams. It was designated as a "Key Watershed" for salmon recovery under the Northwest Forest Plan, has been classified as "essential fish habitat" for threatened Coho Salmon, and was identified as a core area for salmon protection by the state of Oregon.

**The Threat:** In August of 2007 the unthinkable happened when a holding pond for a private gold mining operation on the banks of Sucker Creek rapidly filled with subsurface water and blasted turbid water into Sucker Creek, creating a sediment plume that fouled water quality in this salmon stronghold for days.

Then in 2009 a miner who was "tired" of waiting for approval and permits to dig a similar holding pond on Forest Service lands cleared a streamside old-growth stand, excavated down to bedrock, and built another holding pond which again blew a turbid mess of mud into Sucker Creek. He was arrested for illegal mining, and declared bankruptcy leaving the taxpayers with a \$29,000 cleanup bill.

Much more Forest Service and BLM law enforcement is needed, as is a reform of the 1872 Mining Act which gives away minerals that belong to all Americans while leaving taxpayers on the hook for cleaning up the mess. Most people believe that public lands miners should have to comply with reasonable rules and that taxpayers should get a fair return for minerals removed from public lands.

## Fast Fact:

The Forest Service and BLM have spent thousands of dollars trying to restore fish habitat in Sucker Creek through efforts such as "in-stream log placements" which are promptly removed by suction dredge miners. The efforts of Oregonians to restore wild salmon runs.

GEORGE SEXTON (KSWILD) Roads carved through creek beds and turbid water collected in holding ponds were just part of the illegal mining operations at Sucker Creek in 2009.







## #6 Imnaha Canyonlands (Oregon Wolf Country)

**Threat:** Congressional riders, overgrazing, off-highway vehicles, misguided management

**The Place:** Wallowa County is tucked away in the northeast corner of Oregon. Larger than the state of Delaware, the county is home to only 7,008 people. From the lakes basin of the Eagle Cap to the rolling hills of the Zumwalt Prairie and Hells Canyon (the deepest in North America) Wallowa County contains some of the most stunning landscapes on earth.

The county is also home to a number of native species attempting to recover in Oregon. Amongst them: wolves, wolverines, moose, and a number of endangered birds and fish. As science continues to shed light on the irreplaceable role played by wolves and other native species in maintaining healthy landscapes, the importance of Wallowa County's wildlands and wildlife becomes ever clearer.

**The Threat:** Income from the livestock industry has declined 40% in the last 40 years in Wallowa County, and tourism employs more than twice as many people as that declining industry. Still, cattle is king, and the industry has a stranglehold on local politics

and management. A century of overgrazing on public and private lands has left a legacy of negative impacts on endangered salmon, steelhead, and redband trout populations.

Though welcomed by most Oregonians and many in Wallowa County, the return of wolves has catalyzed a radical minority to push a campaign of misinformation and fear against the species and common sense protections for wildlife and wildlands.

The Wallowa Whitman National Forest already has 9,000 miles of roads, yet recently proposed a travel plan to increase and expand destructive motorized uses. In addition to degrading streams, landscapes, and rare opportunities for solitude, such exploitation threatens not just the recovery of threatened species, but also more common species like elk.

The Eagle Cap is Oregon's largest protected Wilderness area, but it is largely composed of high country that does not provide year round habitat for some of the state's most critically endangered species. Nearby roadless areas deserve similar protections, but face long odds given the current political climate and management. Worse still, proposed congressional riders could strip already minimal protections for many of these areas.

**The Solution:** Domestic livestock grazing should be eliminated in sensitive habitats – especially on public lands. Other negative impacts should be minimized by employing better management techniques and requiring operators to pay fair market value taking into account mitigation and restoration costs currently born by the public.

Forest managers, travel management planners, and local decision makers should ensure protection of remaining wildlands and critical wildlife habitat in part by scaling back already heavy motorized use.

Public agencies that serve and manage lands for the broader public interest must stop bending to local political pressure calling for the elimination of species, wilderness protections, and basic environmental safeguards that protect landscapes, the local economy, and public health.



ODFW Wolverine and wolves are just two of the rare species that call the Imnaha home.

### Fast Fact:

There are now at least 3 wolverines confirmed to be living in the Eagle Cap. Photos released this spring were the first ever taken in Oregon!





TYLER ROEMER

### Threat: Off-Highway Vehicles, Grazing, and the Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act of 2011

**The Place:** Surrounding the Painted Hills Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument and the John Day Wild & Scenic River, this area enjoys tens of thousands of visitors every year that marvel at the abundant wildlife, geologic uniqueness, and enjoy the solitude and backcountry recreation opportunities.

Over a decade ago, a legislated land exchange consolidated BLM lands on Sutton Mountain to improve access and management. As a result, the Sutton Mountain and Pat's Cabin Wilderness Study Areas were recommended to Congress to be designated as Wilderness.

The proposed wilderness would encompass a diversity of habitat types including riparian areas, grasslands, and shrub steppe. Herds of pronghorn antelope, mule deer and Rocky Mountain elk browse the bunchgrass hillsides of Sutton Mountain, and these new wilderness areas are habitat for a number of federally and state-recognized sensitive species, including steelhead trout and chinook salmon.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recently released California bighorn sheep to the nearby Sheep Rock Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. Chucker, California quail, ferruginous hawks, bald and golden eagles nest in the area.

**The Threat:** With anti-environment forces gaining control in Washington, D.C., areas like Sutton Mountain that hold only administrative protections are under fire. Sen. John Barasso and Rep. Mike McCarthy have introduced the Wilderness and Roadless Area

Release Act of 2011. In one broad sweep, this dangerous legislation would erase existing protections on over 40 million acres of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands (including over 3 million in Oregon alone), as well as circumvent citizen participation and congressional authority in determining how these lands are to be managed.

The legislation, dubbed the "Great Outdoors Giveaway," would "release" lands into the hands of corporations determined to mine, log, and destroy our natural heritage.

**The Solution:** The Oregon Natural Desert Association has been working with adjacent landowners, grazing permittees, hunters, anglers, and local communities to understand how the Sutton Mountain wilderness proposal can improve with their input. Strong guidance from landowner and stakeholder knowledge has driven this process to a series of County Court meetings and the formation of an advisory group to vet the final proposal with the county government. Additionally, a local "Friends" group has formed to spearhead restoration efforts.

This proposal represents around 5% of the 1.1 million acres in Wheeler County, and nearly all its BLM lands eligible for wilderness designation. Protecting these lands will ensure that no further degradation due to off-road vehicles, mining or development will occur that will impact adjacent landowners, natural resources and local communities. The stunning vistas from the Painted Hills National Monument that bring tens of thousands of visitors to this area will be preserved. The public and local community can be ensured that the wildlife, solitude, and natural beauty that exist in the John Day today will be here for future generations.

### Fast Fact:

The surrounding Painted Hills Units of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument is rich in fossils and a valuable resource for geologists looking to explain the natural history of the region..



## #8 North Fork Burnt River Watershed

stream temperatures to rise, which in turn impairs sensitive redband trout and other aquatic organisms that depend on clean, cold water. The Forest Service's own resource specialists acknowledge that cattle are trampling stream banks and contributing to increased sedimentation of these already heavily degraded streams. Livestock grazing within riparian areas along streams has resulted in accelerated erosion and loss of floodplain storage capacity. This is particularly problematic given the high road densities in the North Fork Burnt River watershed (747 miles of roads – both open and closed) which have, and continue to, contribute a significant amount of sediment to the area's streams.

**Threat:** Livestock grazing, and the cumulative impacts of historical and current mining, logging, and associated road-building

**The Place:** The North Fork Burnt River Watershed is about 106,500 acres and is tributary to the Burnt River, which is tributary to the Snake River. The North Fork Burnt River grazing allotments stretch over 45,000 acres of National Forest Service lands, encompassing the headwaters of the river, and two other major drainages. These riparian areas, dominated by alder, willow, and sedges, should provide healthy habitat for sensitive species like redband trout, gray flycatchers, and Columbia spotted frogs (also a candidate species for federal listing). The allotments are characterized by drier sagebrush-steppes, managed Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir stands ranging from 4,000-6,200 feet elevation. Habitat for rare and declining plants, such as Clustered lady's slippers and Many-flowered phlox also occur throughout these allotments.

**The Threat:** Livestock grazing – particularly when added to the severe degradation that has already resulted from historic mining, logging, and associated road building – is destroying the riparian functions of the North Fork Burnt River watershed. These activities have been adversely affecting this area for over a century yet the U.S. Forest Service has never thoroughly analyzed the role of livestock grazing and its impacts on the watershed's special resources.

Several of the streams that feed the North Fork Burnt River are listed on Oregon's water-quality impaired list (for exceeding sedimentation and temperature standards). Livestock are over-browsing riparian area vegetation that shade streams, causing

Cattle are also one of the primary reasons that invasive plants and noxious weeds are prevalent throughout these allotments, and the diversity and vigor of native plant communities are declining.

**The Solution:** The Forest Service should be required to prepare a thorough environmental analysis pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Previous attempts to use a categorical exclusion (a sweeping exemption from NEPA) to allow for unfettered grazing should be declared improper and the impacts of continues livestock grazing in the area should be examined to ensure that existing natural resources are not being damaged.

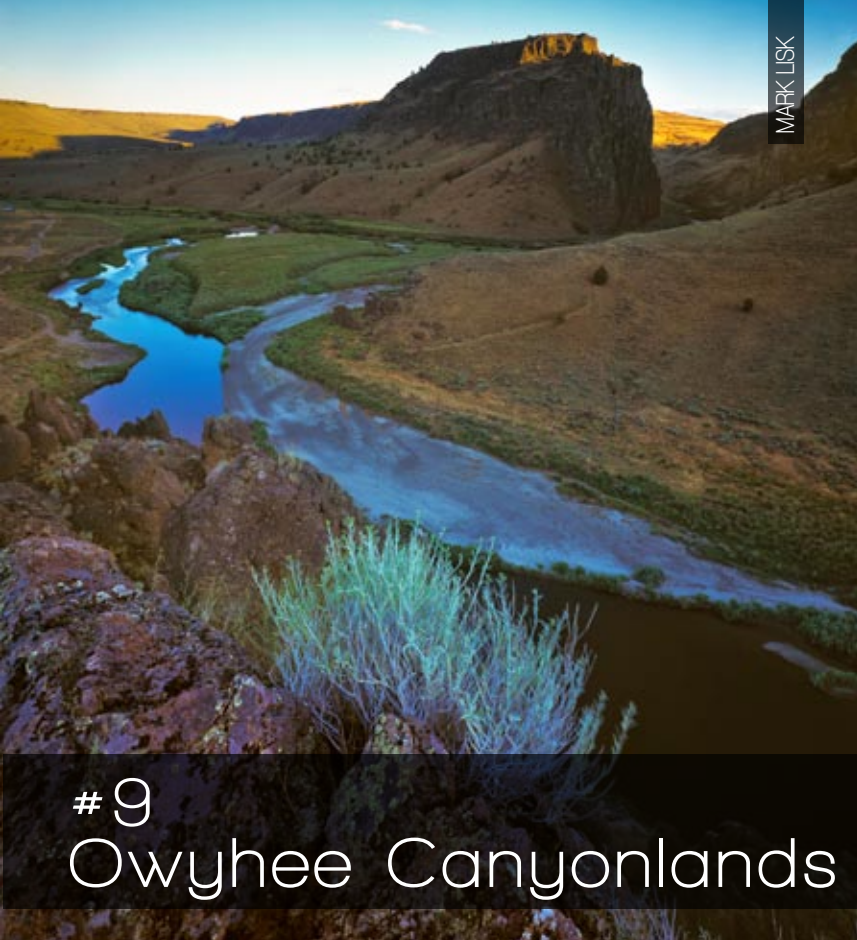
### Fast Fact:

Rather than conduct a thorough environmental review, in 2008, the Forest Service re-authorized livestock grazing for another 10 years without assessing the potential resource impacts.

JENNIFER SCHWARTZ Comparing ungrazed (right) and cow-bombed (left) areas is often like looking at two completely different landscapes







MARK LISK

# #9 Owyhee Canyonlands

sagebrush-peppered plateaus serve as a bit-sweet reminder of what the American West once was.

**The Threat:** Calico Resources of Canada has begun the process of exploratory drilling for gold in the Owyhee Country near the Owyhee Reservoir at Grassy Mountain. This rolling portion of the sagebrush steppe ecosystem is used by pronghorn antelope, mule deer, and birds of prey like ferruginous hawks, golden eagles, and red-tail hawks. The mining company intends to use a decline system that drills deep shafts down into the mountain to remove ore that would then be processed on site. To process the tailings, the company would use cyanide and other heavy metals, remove over 150 acres of delicate desert topsoil, and expand a road system that already chokes off species migration.

**The Solution:** The Oregon Owyhee Canyonlands Campaign (including ONDA and Oregon Wild) is working to protect this special place – one of the most expansive and dramatic landscapes in the West. To preserve this desert gem in the near term, Malheur County commissioners and the Vale District BLM should not support cyanide gold mining at Grassy Mountain.

## Threat: Proposed gold mining at Grassy Mountain

**The Place:** The Owyhee Canyonlands is among the most remote and unfragmented sagebrush steppe ecosystems left in the continental U.S. Over 1.9 million acres of wilderness-quality land provides critical habitat and migration corridors for many species, including the nation's largest herd of California bighorn sheep and pronghorn antelope.

The Owyhee encompasses large stretches of core sage grouse habitat and critical wintering grounds for herds of Rocky Mountain Elk and mule deer. The landscape also provides excellent hunting opportunities for game birds like chukar, pheasant, and California quail. Canyon walls along the Owyhee Wild & Scenic River offer nesting sites for golden eagles, ferruginous hawks, and other birds of prey. Varying depths of volcanic ash and talus slopes allow 28 endemic plant species to thrive in the area. Backpackers and hikers can find solitude and excellent scenery in places like the Honeycombs Leslie Gulch, where spires of volcanic ash rise hundreds of feet above the desert floor.

The Owyhee Canyonlands lay in the farthest corner of Southeast Oregon. This landscape is connected by the Owyhee River which begins in Nevada, winding through Idaho and into Oregon through one of the most sparsely populated areas in the contiguous United States. The Owyhee's vast network of deep basalt river canyons and

Currently, ONDA is working to establish an Owyhee desert trail – a system that would stretch for over 700 miles. The trail designation would be part of an effort to spur interest in this remote area of Oregon. Ultimately, the unique landscape of the Owyhee should be permanently protected so that current and future generations can marvel at its geologic beauty and rare wildlife.

## Fast Fact:

The Owyhee (pronounced "oh-WHY-hee") name comes from the word "Hawaii", after an 1819 incident where Canadian fur-trapper Donald Mackenzie sent Hawaiian trappers down the river who never returned.

TYLER ROEMER Adjacent to the Owyhee, the remarkable Steens Mountain still faces grave threats from industrial wind energy development. Twice on the list of Oregon's 10 Most Endangered Places, you can find out more about Steens at [onda.org](http://onda.org).







# # 10 Bulldog Rock

## Threat: Off-highway vehicles

**The Place:** Located within the Umpqua National Forest, the Bulldog Rock Roadless Area encompasses 6,000 acres (with thousands more wildland acres not officially recognized by the U.S. Forest Service). Located adjacent to Douglas County’s Boulder Creek Wilderness, this low-elevation watershed is currently classified as an Unroaded Recreation Management Area.

Big Bend Creek, whose headwaters lie within the Bulldog Rock Roadless Area, and Bulldog Creek contribute high water volume and cold water temperatures vital for the summer steelhead resting holes in Steamboat Creek. Myriad forest ecosystems provide unique habitat for peregrine falcons, deer, elk, black bears, cougars, bobcats, coyotes, weasels, martins, grouse, eagles, bats, northern spotted owls, fishers, and other fauna.

Steelhead spawn in the lower two miles of Big Bend Creek, while in the upper portion of Big Bend and Bulldog Creeks rainbow and brown trout are found. Small lakes, ponds, meadows, wetlands and rock outcroppings abound, offering diverse recreation opportunities for the backpacker, hiker, photographer and cross-country hunter.

Bullpup and Fuller Lakes are popular sites that can be accessed by using the area’s historical trail system. The silence and serenity of the forest canopies and meadows are enhanced only by rock pinnacles offering outstanding views of Broken Top, Three Fingered Jack, Diamond Peak, Mt. Thielsen, the Three Sisters and occasionally Mt. Jefferson.

**The Threat:** The Umpqua National Forest is currently preparing a revised Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) and Travel Management Plan for the entire

984,600-acre forest. The proposed action in a Draft Environmental Assessment released in 2010 by the Forest Service included designating many historically non-motorized trails for use by OHVs, including the Bulldog Rock Trail and trails traversing Rodley Butte (Mt. Bailey Roadless Area) and the Williams Creek and Dread and Terror Ridge roadless areas.

OHV use – and its associated noise and pollution – is incompatible with the wild character of roadless areas and wildlands. OHV use displaces sensitive wildlife and the knobby vehicle tires – designed to displace soil – send sediment into streams that adversely affects local fisheries. In addition, OHV use often is incompatible with human pursuits like hiking, fishing, and hunting for which “natural quiet” is an important component of the recreational experience.

**The Solution:** The incoming supervisor of the Umpqua National Forest recently convened a collaborative working group composed of diverse stakeholders from the public to make recommendations on motorized trail designations throughout the Umpqua National Forest.

Consistent with the plan for almost all National Forests in the Pacific Northwest, the designation of motorized trails within Roadless Areas should not be placed on the negotiating table. Rather, the Environmental Assessment soon to be issued by the Umpqua National Forest should recognize the outstanding values of Roadless Areas like Bulldog Rock while seeking to designate OHV trails in landscapes where its impacts can be minimized. Ultimately, the best way to protect unique landscapes and wildlife habitat like the Bulldog Rock Roadless Area is to designate such landscapes as Wilderness and native fisheries such as Big Bend and Bulldog creeks as Wild & Scenic Rivers.

## Fast Fact:

Data from the U.S. Forest Service indicates that less than 4 percent of people who visit the Umpqua National Forest participate in motorized trail activities and OHV use. In contrast, over 60 percent of forest visitors participate in hiking and other relatively quiet non-consumptive uses.

FRANCIS EATHERINGTON OHV trails often lead to deeply rutted paths through the forest that are hard on wildlife and bad for water quality.





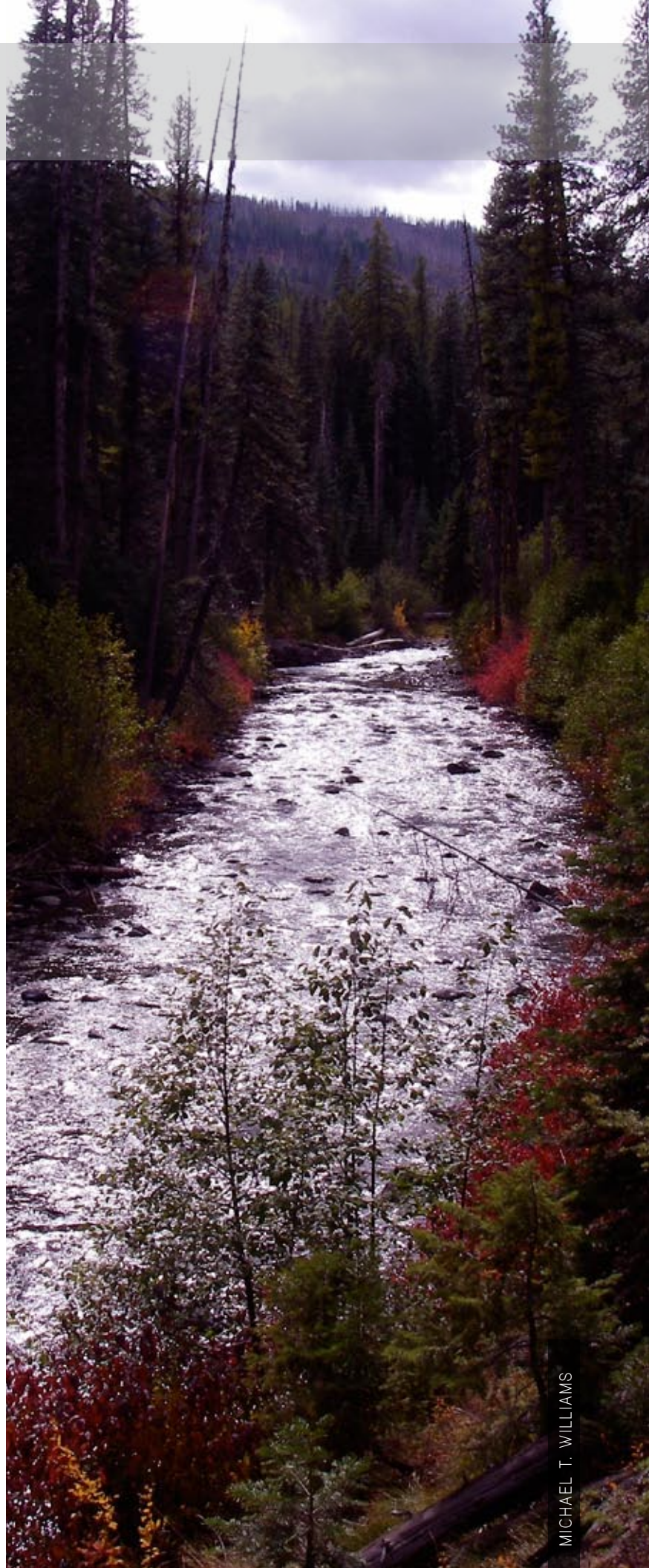
# Oregon Wild 2011 Accomplishments

Despite a year filled with Congressional roller coaster rides and unprecedented threats to our nation's wildlands, wildlife, and waters - Oregon Wild can take credit for numerous accomplishments during the year. From small victories for our fledgling wolf population to a big win for small wildlife (and the forests they call home), we're holding the line to keep Oregon a special place. Here are a few highlights:

- Generated over 1,000 grassroots comments on the proposed National Forest Planning Rule in the national effort to ensure strong protections for public forests across the country.
- Finalized settlement on Survey and Manage program (after winning a key court case) that protects hundreds of lesser known, yet critically important, species living in Oregon's old-growth forests.
- Defeated anti-wildlife measures in the Oregon Legislature that would have significantly weakened the state's wolf management plan by taking decisions out of the hands of wildlife biologists and making it easier for private citizens to kill wolves.
- Received our second national Two Chiefs Award for our pioneering work restoring coastal forests as part of the Siuslaw Stewardship Group.
- Funded nearly \$1 million worth of projects aimed at restoring habitat for suckers and other native wildlife in the Klamath River Watershed as part of our Sucker Enhancement Fund and Fremont-Winema Mitigation Fund.
- Led nearly 40 hikes with almost 300 participants all across Oregon.

To get involved in the effort to protect and restore Oregon's endangered landscapes, become an Oregon Wild member today. To join, go to:

[www.oregonwild.org/membership](http://www.oregonwild.org/membership)







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