

OREGON WILD

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STANDING TALL FOR OLD GROWTH

Also: Public lands in a pandemic



OREGON WILD

Working to protect and restore Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters as an enduring legacy for future generations.

Main Office

5825 N Greeley Avenue Portland, OR 97217

Phone: 503.283.6343

www.oregonwild.org

The e-mail address for each Oregon Wild staff member: initials@oregonwild.org (for example: ef@oregonwild.org)

Membership & Event Manager	Gaby Diaz x 205
Development Director	Jonathan Jelen x 224
Wildlife Policy Coordinator	Danielle Moser x 226
Conservation Director	Steve Pedery x 212
Communications Manager	Arran Robertson x 223
Executive Director	Sean Stevens x 211
Finance Manager	Ellen Yarnell x 219

Oregon Wild Board of Directors

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Lisa Billings, Vice President	Vail Fletcher
Clara Soh, Treasurer	Jared Kennedy
Naila Bhatri, Secretary	Darcie Meihoff
Vik Anantha	Seth Prickett
Faith Briggs	Stacey Rice

Western Field Office

P.O. Box 11648 Eugene, OR 97440

Phone 541.344.0675 Fax: 541.343.0996

Conservation & Restoration Coord.	Doug Heiken
Western Oregon Field Coord.	Chandra LeGue

Northeastern Field Office

P.O. Box 48, Enterprise, OR 97828

Phone: 541.886.0212

NE Oregon Field Coordinator Rob Klavins

Central Oregon Field Office

2445 NE Division St, Bend, OR 97701

Phone: 541.382.2616 Fax: 541.385.3370

Ochoco Mountains Coordinator	Jamie Dawson
Wilderness Program Manager	Erik Fernandez

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Standing tall for old growth	{4-7}
Public lands in a pandemic	{10-11}
Exposed- the logging industry's dirty secrets	{14}



BRIZZ MEDDINGS The diverse old forests of eastern Oregon are on the chopping block if Trump gets his way.



From the Director's Desk The reckoning

Sean Stevens, Executive Director

this tragedy. You've heard it before from Timber Unity, AFRC, Seneca, OFIC, and the rest of the log-it-all gang - if we just clearcut the last big trees we would somehow be safe from fire.

That line of thinking is as frustrating as it is inaccurate. Science and decades of experience tell us that we can't stop all forest fires and that much of our efforts to "manage" forests to prevent fire (chief among them industrial clearcutting) make matters worse.

Personally, I go from frustrated to angry when I pause to think about how these same logging industry Trump clones can spout false solutions while actively opposing the remedy for the root problem - global climate change. September's large fires, driven by historic winds and abnormally dry vegetation, are climate fires. Yes, wildfire is as natural in Oregon as the rain. But these conflagrations spread with a speed and ferocity that can only

truly be explained by our warming climate and the extreme weather it continues to bring.

And how do Timber Unity and their ilk plan to deal with the planetary climate crisis? Oh, that's right...they walked out! Encouraged by the logging industry and other anti-government forces, Republicans abandoned their posts in the Legislature this year and killed climate legislation. Appallingly, that same walk out also dashed hopes that Oregon could upgrade policies and invest in communities to help them better prepare for wildfires to come.

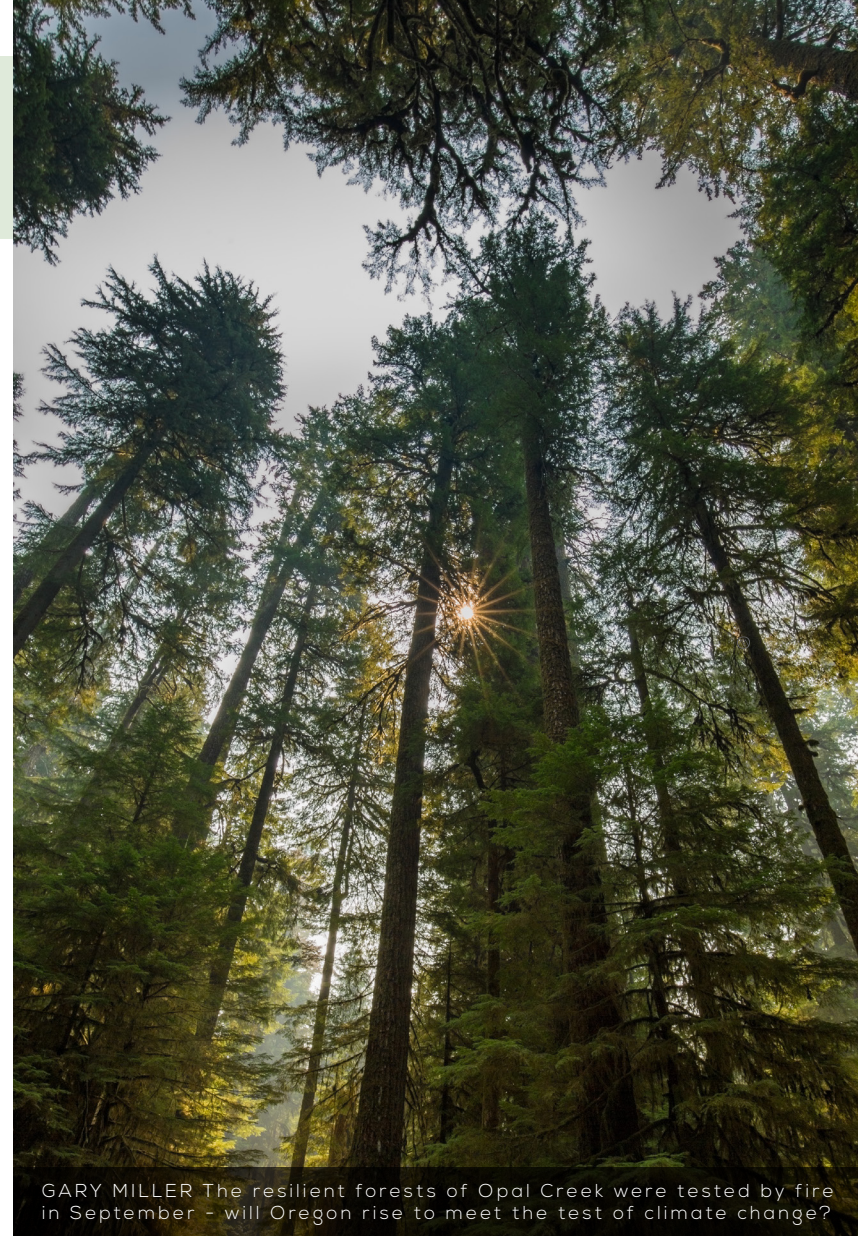
This is a moment of reckoning. Will politicians (of all parties) finally tell the logging industry to take a hike? Will we focus on protecting communities instead of logging the backcountry? Will we let science dictate policy instead of propaganda?

Just when we all thought 2020 couldn't get more challenging, Labor Day brought extreme heat and wind that spurred fires that tore through our towns, our forests, and right up to the edge of our cities. As I write, authorities have confirmed over 2,000 homes lost and expressed fear that the total loss of life could be staggering.

Our hearts go out to our fellow Oregonians who have lost so much.

While I feel a huge measure of sadness for impacted communities, immense gratitude for first responders, and fear over what the future may bring - I also feel one other emotion. I'm angry.

Before the scope of these fires was even clear, the logging lobby was already firing off op-eds and posting to social media to exploit



GARY MILLER The resilient forests of Opal Creek were tested by fire in September - will Oregon rise to meet the test of climate change?

STANDING

ALL

eastern
Oregon
forests at
risk

Rob Klavins, Northeast Oregon
Field Coordinator



Working for Oregon Wild has its perks. I never have to compromise my values for a paycheck. I work with colleagues who inspire me and I work *for* people who care deeply about our public lands and wildlife. I also get to spend time in the woods with knowledgeable and passionate people in one of America's most spectacular landscapes.

Sadly though, those trips aren't for finding peace, learning for its own sake, or appreciating the place I've chosen to call home out here in the Willows.

Far too often, my role is to counter those who see our forests as resources to exploit rather than living and life-giving systems that deserve our respect, humility, and protection. Frequently, I'm a lonely voice arguing for the application of basic science and 21st century conservation values. On the worst days, I feel like I'm at once meeting and saying goodbye to special places.

It's especially frustrating when our nominal opponents are the very public agencies tasked with missions aligned so closely with ours. I recently went on a field trip that made clear we are facing a very stark moment regarding the fate of our forests.

Forever 21?

The Trump administration is eliminating environmental protections as fast as they can identify them (see sidebar on page 7). My quiet corner of Oregon isn't escaping. As a result of political pressure of a staggering degree, the administration has tasked the Forest Service to rush a process to eliminate protections for the biggest and oldest trees in eastern Oregon.

Specifically, administration officials have set their sights on an obscure, but critically important protection called "the screens."

After decades of unsustainable logging, things were coming to a head in the mid-1990s. With the implementation of the Northwest Forest Plan, the so-called timber wars came to a truce in western Oregon.

In eastern Oregon, the Forest Service put into place the screens as a placeholder until they could implement something as comprehensive and protective as the Northwest Forest Plan. Despite scientific recommendations for logging and grazing reform, reduced road density, and more, the USFS never honored the promise of

comprehensive reform, so the screens remain.

Perhaps the most important provision of the screens was a prohibition on cutting the biggest trees. Any tree over 21 inches in diameter was protected. Over the years, the agency began proposing more and more exceptions until a court weighed in and said they couldn't continue doing so.

At times we and other conservationists agreed there were unique situations where limited exceptions may be justified. Extractive-minded folks including some in the Forest Service misrepresented these unique situations and began suggesting the screens were arbitrary, outdated, and unscientific.

A walk in the woods

So that brings us back to that field trip. I headed out to one of my favorite parts of the Willowa Whitman National Forest. For the better part of a decade, the Imnaha Wolf Pack made their home in this diverse landscape of towering peaks, deep valleys, grasslands, ponderosa pine forests, and wet forests with old Doug fir. The Nimiipuu (Nez Perce Tribe) have lived here since time immemorial. It was once

home to grizzly and condor. It still has wolverine, goshawk, and marten. Oregon's most famous wolf - OR7- was born here.

To their credit, local Forest Service staff knew they were considering a potentially controversial proposal. They invited Oregon Wild – along with our partners at Greater Hells Canyon Council – to take a look.

On our first stop, we saw those unique circumstances where one could make a coherent argument for cutting a few large trees. We came across a dense stand. Among them were those precious yellow belly ponderosa pines. Most were over 200 years old. Some were probably well established when Shakespeare was writing.

Immediately under the pines were equally impressive trees including the much maligned (but ecologically important) grand fir. Some of the big grand fir were as young as 45 years old. This was a productive forest that had historically been thinned by regular fire.

However, fire suppression allowed these young large trees to take hold and directly compete with legacy ponderosa pine trees.

In such a case - where young large trees are only there because of recent meddling and are putting ancient trees at risk - it sometimes makes sense to consider dropping a few. Details matter, and other considerations were discussed, but we had hope we might be able to find agreement.

But, give an inch...

We drove our rigs on out of the canyon on a rugged road to a ridge above. We walked into a healthy stand of trees much smaller than the giants below. But some of those smaller trees were nearly 150 years old! The stand was not nearly as productive, but it was healthy. There was a mix of larch, pine, and fir. It looked like a great home for all sorts of wildlife and evidence of pileated woodpeckers abounded.

Here the agency told us about the stuff they thought would be easy. It's what they wanted to do around much of the massive 90,000-acre project area. With no real ecological justification, they were considering cutting many of those big, old trees to turn a "multi-story" forest into a "single-story" forest. Miles from private property or even the nearest paved road, the Forest Service couldn't really

justify this logging based on fire risk. This was a healthy functioning forest. Other than meeting timber targets and economic extraction, there was no justification we could see for logging this habitat.

It's a microcosm of the Trump administration's push to eliminate the screens. We gave an inch, and the administration wants to take 21 miles.

Exploiting a crisis

There may be unique situations where dropping big trees makes sense. But we've never supported targeting the biggest or oldest trees across the landscape.

We agree that the screens were meant to be temporary. But they were meant to be temporary until the Forest Service put together more comprehensive protections. They never honored that promise, so, for 25 years, the screens have remained.

In that time, the screens have not just protected the biggest and oldest trees in eastern Oregon, but also wildlife habitat, clean cold water, and healthy soils. We're also increasingly recognizing the importance of large trees as carbon sinks working hard to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change.



DARYL FLEENOR Eastern Oregon's older and larger trees support diverse wildlife like these fledgling great gray owls.

As you can imagine, industry never liked any prohibition on logging. They've been campaigning to get rid of the screens since they were put in place. Their "need" to log big trees on our public lands is only exacerbated as they liquidate their own mismanaged private lands.

They finally found their chance. With Trump appointee, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, regularly putting pressure on agency staff to get the cut out and outgoing congressman Greg Walden directly lobbying the president himself, the Forest Service announced they would be "amending" the screens.

We were skeptical, but - along with others in the conservation community, scientists, tribes, and more - we participated in good faith.

The initial signs were troubling. Independent scientists who raised critical issues were dismissed. A leaked memo showed the agency was violating its own direction to slow down during the pandemic. Forest Service talking points call this a “narrow” decision despite it applying to well over 9 million acres of diverse forests (nearly 15,000 square miles!). The list goes on.

As our skepticism grew, so did our coalition. In July, 27 organizations including small local groups, public health organizations, and national non-profits joined us in telling Trump’s agency to slow down - or better yet, stop.

The proposal

Just a month later, the agency put out their official proposal to amend the screens. It was worse than we had feared.

The plan removes all protections for entire cohorts of big and old trees. Where any protections remain, they have been changed

from clear, enforceable standards to extremely weak guidelines that are wide open for abuse. They are not only eliminating protection for large trees, but also eliminating requirements to retain enough green trees and snags for the scores of wildlife species that depend on them (see page 12).

Where the agency has laudable goals that may require chainsaws, they can be achieved by thinning smaller trees and focusing on areas near homes and infrastructure.

Rather than focus on places where agreement could be found, what I saw at that second stop on



KATHY WOOD Old growth trees logged from a national forest in NE Oregon.

the field trip would likely become the norm all across eastern Oregon. The ecological damage would be tremendous. Dozens of wildlife species here are limited by the lack of large trees on the landscape.

like mine and more money flows to out of state shareholders. The agency has promised “adaptive management,” but the provisions are so weak and ambiguous that tremendous permanent damage will be done before it’s even recognized much less addressed.

Fragile social agreements that took decades to reach have already begun to unravel. Collaborative groups are being pushed to be involved. Where we once had clear sideboards within which to find that agreement, the proposal would send us back to the free-for-all that reigned for decades.

The gains? More profit for industry. As mills have mechanized, fewer dollars stay in rural communities

True to form, as the Trump administration has tried to cut out meaningful scientific and public input across the board, the Forest Service declined to do the robust analysis needed for an Environmental Impact Statement. The agency skipped normal parts of public engagement and, amid worsening crises that are distracting people and organizations alike, the Forest Service allowed the minimum public comment period required by law. Their cherry-picked and rushed “scientific assessment” didn’t even bother with a carbon analysis-information that would demonstrate even more of the negative ecological impacts of this scheme.

It’s bad. Taken with everything else this administration is doing, it’s downright overwhelming. But it’s not hopeless.

Fighting back!

The administration hoped that this would be just another obscure attack on the environment that they could rush through before the election.

But they were wrong. Dozens of organizations have joined our growing coalition fighting for the screens. Over 100 independent

scientists signed a letter opposing the process. Tribes are making their voices heard.

Hundreds of you reached out to Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley. They listened and asked the agency to extend the comment period to 90-days. Trump's Chief of the Forest Service took the half measure of adding 30 days. It doesn't change the substance of the proposal or procedural shortcomings, but it helps the public engage more meaningfully and shows we're gaining some traction.

Over one thousand Oregon Wild members used that extra time to submit their comments!

Vote!

There's probably nothing more important that you can do than vote in November, but we'll keep working with our partners, our senators, and our supporters to get the Forest Service back on track.

I hope to keep working in the woods for you for decades to come. With your help, some of those field trips will be a lot more fun, productive, and full of big old trees that are worth protecting! ☺

Trump's assault on the environment

Doug Heiken, Conservation and Restoration Coordinator

Donald Trump is the worst environmental president of all time. When we needed leadership more than ever, Trump moved aggressively in the wrong direction. Here is a brief summary.

Trump installed industry lobbyists to lead virtually every natural resource agency. Right-wing think tanks now have undue influence over natural resource policy.

Trump is hollowing out the regulatory agencies, forcing out well-intentioned employees with decades of experience developing and enforcing environmental policy. Morale in the agencies is as low as it could be.

Trump is packing the courts with too many unqualified judges to count. Federal judges enjoy lifetime appointments, which will create lingering problems for conservation.

Climate change is of course the mother of all conservation issues. Trump proudly withdrew from the Paris Climate Accord and trumpets that "wind turbines cause cancer!" Trump stopped President Obama's fuel efficiency standards and his Clean Power Plan and replaced them with fake "Clean Coal" and "Energy Dominance." Climate action delayed is climate action denied.

At the Environmental Protection Agency, criminal enforcement of pollution

violations hit a 30-year low. He's undoing scores of rules that protect our air and water. Trump is forcing EPA to limit the agency's use of science in rulemaking which locks in weak standards and makes it harder to develop new protection rules.

Trump's public lands and wildlife policies include gutting the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and several parts of the Endangered Species Act, shrinking national monuments, allowing more hunting and trapping in national parks and wildlife refuges, reduced protection for sage grouse habitat so that more public land can be exploited for oil and gas.

Trump's appointees at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved the Jordan Cove LNG Export, and Pacific Gas Connector pipeline, which could become Oregon's largest point-source emitter of greenhouse gases. The project still faces many hurdles.

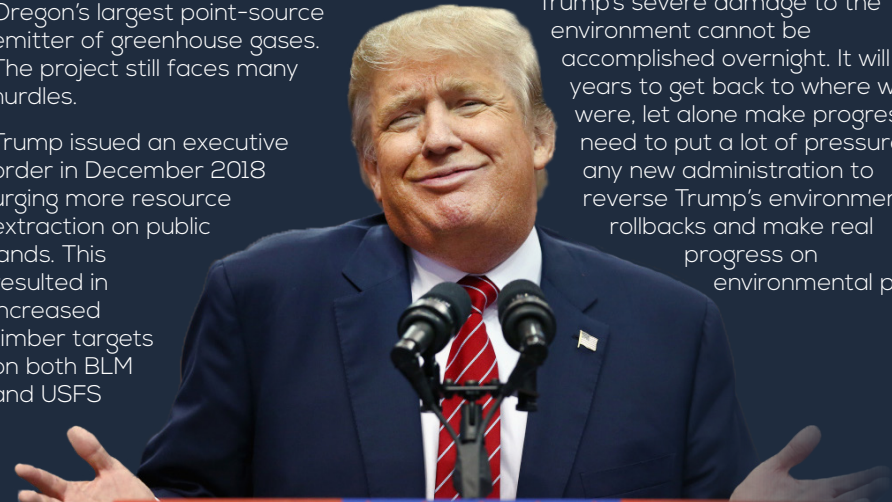
Trump issued an executive order in December 2018 urging more resource extraction on public lands. This resulted in increased timber targets on both BLM and USFS

lands. Timber apologists within BLM and USFS are now emboldened to go after older forests and do more clearcutting instead of thinning.

Trump is eliminating 185,000 acres of critical habitat for the northern spotted owl on BLM lands. This will have disproportionate impacts in southwest Oregon in public forests that are already under heavy logging pressure.

The resistance is already busy. Many of these Trump actions are being challenged in court. Sadly, even when we win, courts typically remand improper decisions back to the agency so they can fix the legal error or find another way to get to the same (bad) result.

Under a new administration, undoing Trump's severe damage to the environment cannot be accomplished overnight. It will take years to get back to where we were, let alone make progress. We need to put a lot of pressure on any new administration to reverse Trump's environmental rollbacks and make real progress on environmental policy.



TOM PENNINGTON Getty Images

Big win for forest waters – more hard work ahead

Chandra LeGue, Western Oregon Field Coordinator

While 2020 will go in the record books for a lot of different reasons, it may also be remembered as the year that serious gains were finally made to address Oregon's "weakest in the West" logging laws.

Current rules under the Oregon Forest Practices Act (OFPA) that govern the 12 million acres of private and state-owned forest land in Oregon allow timber corporations to clearcut vast areas, logging right across steep mountain slopes and year-round headwater streams. Neighboring states like Washington and California have developed far stronger logging laws to safeguard water supplies, protect fish and wildlife, and reduce the risks of landslides. Oregon has a lot of catching up to do.

Which is why Oregon Wild waded into the effort to enact needed reforms several years ago (see timeline). Working with communities most impacted by harmful logging practices and aerial chemical spray, we were set



to head to the ballot this fall to address some of the most damaging practices. As we've previously reported in these pages, the looming fight at the ballot brought the logging industry to the table, ultimately leading to an agreement between thirteen conservation organizations and thirteen timber companies. The agreement required legislation to pass the Oregon Legislature, but time ran out on the February session when Republicans walked out on the job over pending climate legislation. However, the Governor's office was committed

to keeping the agreement alive, and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, worked with lawmakers to ensure the deal moved forward in June's special session. On June 26, the legislation passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. Building off of decades of grassroots advocacy, public education, and dogged work by legislative champions to better protect forestlands, at risk wildlife, and adjacent communities, these improvements - most of which have been a part of legislative and ballot campaigns for the past ten years - include:

- Increased notification for Oregon residents, including real-time alerts, during pesticide spraying on forestlands. This is a vast improvement from the current notification logging companies give for spray sometime in the next year.
- Dramatic increase in buffers for homes, schools, and streams from aerial pesticide spraying (including protections for small streams that currently have no buffer and make up 70% of Oregon's waterways). The new buffers are a step in the right direction

for protecting forest waters from chemical drift and runoff.

The legislation also kick-started a process for working on a forest practices reform package that will form the basis for a federally approved plan to protect salmon and other aquatic species in Oregon. Known as a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), the new framework could bring Oregon's logging laws in closer alignment with states like Washington and California when it comes to limiting steep slope logging, increasing forest buffers around streams, and other measures to restore rivers and streams. In fact, it was an HCP agreement that saw Washington's logging rules vault ahead of Oregon's 20 years ago, resulting in major gains for fish and water quality. The HCP process will take a few years, but these reforms have the potential to be significantly more comprehensive than any efforts to date.

Forest Practices Act timeline

Next steps

While this legislation represents a significant step forward for Oregon's forests and the wildlife and people that rely on them, we know it is just a first step. Demand for change has never been greater, and we're working with a robust coalition of community and conservation groups to keep the momentum going to seek meaningful reform to our logging laws. The Forest Waters Coalition continues to organize with rural communities and work with legislators for needed change that addresses rampant clearcutting, climate impacts, and unfair taxation that leaves rural communities holding the bag when corporate interests leave town.

In the meantime, Oregon Wild will be at the table as the HCP process plays out, and we'll need your help to advocate for the strongest rules possible to safeguard our forests, watersheds, wildlife, and climate. The work, already decades in the making, is just beginning. ©

Measure 64, an effort to restrict clearcutting and ban aerial pesticide spray, fails at the ballot by an 80% to 20% margin.

Oregon Wild first identified OFPA reform as a strategic priority in our planning and began working with community groups, fish conservation, public health, and environmental organizations around the state.

Tested the waters with three ballot measures that would have stopped aerial pesticide sprays in watersheds that are a source of drinking water, and near homes and schools. Time ran out to qualify for the ballot.

Worked with partners to bring several reforms forward in the legislature, but none made it out of committee.

Reached agreement and passed legislation to ensure new aerial spray buffers and notification, and set up HCP process to better protect salmon streams.

- **1971** Oregon Forest Practices Act (OFPA) first adopted
- **1998**
- **2004** Measure 34, the "Tillamook 50/50" campaign that sought to protect half of Oregon's north coast state forests as reserves and allow logging on the other half, also fails at the ballot by a 70% to 30% margin.
- **2012** Worked with a coalition of Oregon legislators, rural residents and public environmental health interests, to pursue legislation to increase public transparency and accountability for aerial chemical spraying, creating a spray notification system, and new rules to buffer homes, schools, and drinking water. This bill was opposed by the timber industry and stymied in the legislature.
- **2015**
- **2016**
- **2017**
- **2018-2019** Continued building support for logging and spray reform. Developed ballot measures to require no-spray and no-cut buffers along streams.
- **2020**

Public lands in the pandemic

Jamie Dawson, Ochoco Mountains Coordinator



Before I started at Oregon Wild, I spent several years working as a National Park Service Interpretive Ranger. Wearing the quintessential “flat hat” and the signature leather belt embossed with sequoia cones, I often gave educational programs in campgrounds and led hikes for visitors. But hikes and campfire programs weren’t the most important part of my job - most of the time, my most important job was saving the park from the visitors, and

saving the visitors from themselves.

Would you believe me if I told you that I once had to stop a full grown woman (with baby in tow) from approaching a seemingly docile bighorn sheep ram for a photo opportunity? You should - it happened.

For that reason and many others, my heart ached when I saw headlines like “*Crowds, illegal gear threaten Oregon’s*

pristine Crater Lake” in newspapers this summer. Don’t get me wrong - I love public lands, and believe that all people deserve access to them - I just know that sometimes...humans need a little supervision.

This strange summer has encouraged Oregonians to take advantage of our public lands like never before. And thank goodness we have them - who needs a swimming pool when you have the Oregon Coast?

Who needs the waterfall at the museum turtle exhibit when you have Multnomah Falls? (No offense, museums, you’re great!) To me, COVID has made it abundantly clear that we humans just need to be outside. It’s the natural order of things.

But what do we make of the crowded trailheads? The full parking lots? The uncomfortable feeling of passing many masked-up individuals on the trail for the fourth weekend in a

row? This is all evidence of something we’ve known for a long time - as far as public lands recreation goes, Oregon has a supply and demand problem. Despite our green reputation, we have just one National Park. Our State Forests are managed almost exclusively for industrial clearcutting, which isn’t exactly enticing for Sunday hikers looking for a view. Logging interests and even some county commissioners are trying to overturn protection for forests

in Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, and continue to work to weaken laws that safeguard old-growth, wildlife and recreation on Bureau of Land Management lands.

Perhaps most egregious, Oregon lags far behind all neighboring states when it comes to how much of our state has been permanently protected as Wilderness. Wilderness is the gold standard for public lands conservation, preserving traditional quiet recreation like hiking, camping, hunting, trail running, and fishing, while safeguarding wild areas from destructive logging, mining, and

off-road vehicles. Just 4% of Oregon's land base is set aside as Wilderness, compared to 9% in Idaho, 10% in Washington, and 15% in California. Those overflowing trailhead parking lots are an indictment of Oregon, and of our failure to protect more of our wild public lands heritage.

So what's a gal to do? When this crisis is over, we should all commit to do better. Yes, education is needed to ensure Oregonians access and use our public lands responsibly and do not overcrowd and love them to death. But action is also needed to safeguard more Wilderness,

Wild & Scenic Rivers, and natural areas. For far too long these values have played second fiddle in Oregon to logging, livestock grazing, and mining, and it is high time for that to change.

If you're feeling like this is an overwhelming time to be alive, I'm with you. But please know that as our planet struggles with a pandemic, our region struggles with wildfires, and our country reconciles with the next civil rights revolution, we're still here standing up for Oregon's public lands, waters, wildlife, and the people who love them - thanks to you. ©



JAMIE DAWSON



NICK HEILBRUNN

Why do our wildlands matter to you?

Jonathan Jelen, Development Director

Absence makes the heart grow fonder. And it's safe to say that between shelter-in-place, national forest closures, and now an unprecedented wildfire season, many of us haven't been able to get as much time out in Oregon's incredible wildlands this year as we'd hoped.

So we know that many of you have been missing your favorite wild places this year and we want to know: Why are Oregon's wildlands and waters so important to you?

As we advocate for protecting and defending special places, Oregon Wild touts their many benefits - clean drinking water, critical wildlife habitat, the immense carbon storage capacity of our forests in the fight against climate change, and outstanding recreation opportunities, to name a few.

But we also recognize that the core reasons why these places mean so much to us are often much more personal. Maybe it's that exhilaration when you reach a viewpoint that takes your breath away. Or that humbling feeling as you stand beneath an ancient old-growth tree. Or the quiet, introspective moment that only seems to be accessible "out there."

However Oregon's amazing places affect you, we invite you to share your thoughts. Your words could end up capturing the essence of why wild places matter and they could help us protect them!

Share why our wild places matter to you at:

www.oregonwild.org/iamwilderness

Loving the whole forest

Doug Heiken, Conservation and Restoration Coordinator



Oregonians love their forests, and love requires accepting the whole system, not just the lush, moss-draped ancient forest, but also the ravages of fire and the complex young forests that follow. Disturbance is where old growth forests are born.

To appreciate the whole forest cycle, let's focus on dead trees, often called snags. Every tree has a lifecycle that starts as a seedling and progresses through many stages of growth and development. If the tree is lucky, it lives to become large and old, then it dies during a windstorm, from a fire, or due to competition with its neighbors.

Death of a green tree is not really the end of the tree's life. Dead trees may remain standing for many decades as a snag, eventually falling to become down wood and finally incorporating into the soil or recycled to the atmosphere. All of this is an important part of a healthy forest!

The life of a dead tree is as vibrant and interesting as it was when the tree was green and

growing. Once we recognize that every tree has a rich life as both a live and dead tree, it becomes clear that wildlife evolved in forests with a bounty of dead trees that provide many benefits, including:

- food such as beetle larvae and fungi
- nesting and denning sites in hollow snags and logs
- shelter such as cavities excavated by woodpeckers
- hiding cover from predators
- drumming sites to attract mates and intimidate rivals
- and the list goes on!

Carbon storage in our forests is particularly important during the climate crisis. Dead trees play an important role keeping carbon out of the atmosphere while the surrounding forest recovers and rebuilds carbon stores. During fire it is mostly the small fuels such as understory shrubs, needles, and small branches that combust and the large tree trunks that remain

afterwards. Guess where the majority of the carbon is stored? It's true that a dead tree is no longer growing and is starting to decay, which slowly transfers carbon to the atmosphere. But it can take a very long time for a dead tree to fully decay. In fact, part of the reason that mature and old-growth forests store so much carbon is the carbon in soils and well-decayed wood that is carried over from previous generations.

So, love your forest, including the snags and fallen logs. And remember, every tree removed by logging is a tree that is denied the opportunity to fulfill its complete lifecycle. ☺



ED LYONS Critters of all kinds love dead trees!

Hoof, paw, feather, and wing - the wildlife roundup

Danielle Moser, Wildlife Policy Coordinator



The work to protect and restore Oregon's wildlife is hardly ever a straight line. While we've seen some positive momentum in the last few months to "rewild" our state (reintroducing native wildlife back to the landscape), for other species, it's been an uphill battle to maintain critical protections. Despite this rollercoaster, we can assure you there's one thing that never changes: Oregon Wild's commitment to seeing fish and wildlife thrive in our state.

There otter be good news

Sea otters, which were once abundant along the Oregon coast,

were pushed to the brink of extinction (and for Oregon, local extirpation) as a result of the international fur trade (okay, this part isn't the good news). However, efforts are underway to explore the possibility of bringing them back, which in turn, will help our nearshore environment. In service of that effort, the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee recently allocated funds for a sea otter recovery study. This study will be essential in understanding the potential economic and environmental impacts of such a reintroduction effort. With the support of members like you, Oregon Wild helped raise an

additional \$1,500 for the study. Thank you!

"Rogue" bears get reprieve

One of Oregon's most famous Wild & Scenic Rivers, the Rogue, has always been a popular rafting spot, in part, because of black bear viewing opportunities. Unfortunately, this has also meant it is a place for conflict. Not surprisingly, ODFW was considering a proposal to allow black bear trophy hunting as a way to mitigate the "problem" without even requiring non-lethal measures first. Luckily, because of a loud outcry from the public, ODFW decided to scrap this

plan and instead work with the federal managing agencies to institute better practices. We'll happily take this win!

Commission not eager on beavers

Several conservation organizations asked the Fish and Wildlife Commission to ban recreational and commercial beaver trapping on all federal public lands. Beavers, our ecosystem engineers, are very

important for helping restore wetlands, recharge groundwater, and more. It's about time Oregon (ahem, the beaver state) gives this keystone species the protections it needs. Wanting to avoid taking an actual vote on this proposal, the Commission decided instead to create a beaver working group. Now, some of the same organizations that urged the Commission to act are filing a petition to demand a vote on this proposal. More to come as this develops. ☺



Exposed: How Wall Street logging corporations abandoned Oregon

Arran Robertson, Communications Manager

The cost of Oregon's laissez-faire approach to industrial logging regulation has been well documented: polluted drinking water, drought, fire hazard, struggling salmon runs, and marginal wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, the more widespread and pernicious narrative of Oregon's forests ignores the consequences of intensive industrial clearcutting in favor of the myth that national forests are off-limits to logging.

Two investigations published in a partnership between Oregon Public Broadcasting, The Oregonian, and ProPublica, expose an untold story: Oregon's clearcutting companies have gamed the state's tax code, and converted a public agency to do their bidding, at the expense of Oregon taxpayers and rural communities.

"Big money bought the forests. Small logging communities are paying the price" details the

consequences of the phase-out of Oregon's logging severance tax. According to the report, this change has resulted in the loss of billions of dollars in revenue for rural communities, money that could have been used to fund schools, libraries, and fire departments. While Wall Street logging operations like Weyerhaeuser and Hancock have reaped record profits from aggressive clearcutting, they've also been consolidating, automating, and shipping raw logs overseas. Small towns have seen fewer jobs and far less tax revenue from the distant corporations that own the forests that surround them. In Polk County, for example, changes to the tax code have cost at least \$100 million in revenue.

The second investigation took on the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI), a quasi-government agency funded by tax dollars tasked with educating the public on Oregon's logging laws but forbidden from attempting to influence policy. Oregon Wild



JASON GONZALES Breaking the law, the Oregon Forest Resources Institute participates in a logging industry lobby day.

Big money bought the forests, small logging communities are paying the price.

JUNE 11, 2020



documented OFRI at a logging industry lobby day in Salem, and acquired hundreds of pages of public records documents illustrating agency staff helping coordinate the day's efforts, records Oregon Wild shared with reporters. "What happened when a public institute became a de facto lobbying arm of the timber industry" took readers beyond those emails and revealed that OFRI had been leading the charge to influence climate

change policy, discrediting scientists and their research, and acting aggressively to quell any criticism of the state's logging laws.

Search for these stories online and share them. With the malfeasance of the clearcutting industry exposed, it is now up to the Oregon legislature to take up reforms to eliminate corruption at OFRI and fix the tax code. ©

Conservation roundup

Steve Pedery, Conservation Director

Fighting for water in the Klamath

The survival of wildlife, salmon, other native fish, and the Native American Tribes of the Klamath Basin are inextricably linked to water, and 2020 has been another difficult year. In August, the worst avian botulism outbreak in 40 years struck the National Wildlife Refuges in the basin. Low water (due in part to agricultural diversions) forced birds into unnaturally dense concentrations that allowed the disease to spread

rapidly. Oregon Wild and our allies continue to fight in the courts for a secure water future for these precious public lands. Meanwhile, dam removal on the Klamath River suffered a setback when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission rejected a key element of an agreement to remove these fish-killing structures.

Heading to court to protect wildlife

The Ochoco National Forest provides some of the best habitat

for mule deer, elk, and native fish in Central Oregon. Unfortunately, those values are threatened by the Black Mountain logging project, a destructive proposal by the Forest Service to log forests to the east of Big Summit Prairie. While the project has laudable goals, including thinning to protect old-growth ponderosa pine, it also includes 22 miles of new logging roads and destructive activity along 80 miles of rivers and streams. Oregon Wild, together with conservation allies, have taken the Forest Service to court

to push the agency to eliminate the most destructive provisions of this project.

Collaboration, not clearcuts

Oregon Wild has participated in collaborative groups around forests and public lands management all across Oregon. The idea behind these groups is to bring conservationists, timber interests, scientists, and others together to discuss problems, and to advise the Forest Service on how to solve them. Unfortunately, under the Trump administration, hostility towards science and conservation voices has deepened in some of these groups. In June, Oregon Wild and Greater Hells Canyon Council made the difficult decision to withdraw from the toxic Northern Blues Forest Collaborative. We welcome dialogue and honest disagreement about forest management, but we just can't lend credibility to groups that simply rubber stamp environmentally destructive logging. ☹



BRETT COLE Waterfowl have struggled this year with low water conditions on the Klamath Refuges.



JAMIE DAWSON A marked tree signals the edge of the Black Mountain timber sale on the Ochoco National Forest.



OREGON WILD

5825 N. Greeley Ave.
Portland, OR 97217

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Call of the Wild

A virtual benefit for Oregon Wild

10.9.20

7:00-8:30 pm

You're invited to join us for our biggest (and best) celebration of the year - **Call of the Wild!** The support we raise during this annual camp-inspired event plays a critical role in helping us be the strongest possible voice for protecting the wild places that bring us all together. **Now more than ever, Oregonians need to come together for the future of our wildlands, wildlife, and waters.**

While we can't gather in person this year, we're reimagining this classic event to be an evening of fun,

laughter, and inspiration. So put on your camp gear (flannel encouraged!) and gather together virtually with Oregon Wild supporters across the state to celebrate our special wild places, free-flowing waters, critical carbon-storing forests, and iconic wildlife that bring us together.

This year, we're offering some special ticket prices with benefits ranging from beer koozies to camp meals. We've got an incredible line up of outdoor-inspired raffle prizes, some wild auction items, campfire

delights, and exciting updates on a historic opportunity to protect more miles of our Wild & Scenic waters. Plus we'll hear from conservation champion, Senator Ron Wyden!

We're kicking off the festivities with a silent auction starting September 25th, but be sure to grab your ticket and join us for the big event on **Friday October 9th at 7:00PM.**

Be part of the celebration by purchasing your advance ticket at **oregonwild.org/callofthewild**

We hope you'll join us!