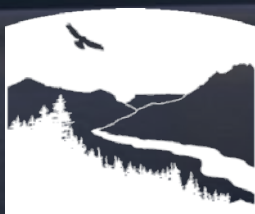




Oregon's 10 Most Endangered Places 2013

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
www.oregonwild.org

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Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
Klamipopsis Audubon Society
Friends of Kalmiopsis
Friends of the Columbia Gorge
The Larch Company
Northwest Rafting Company
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Rogue Riverkeeper
Sierra Club
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Umpqua Watersheds
WaterWatch
Western Environmental Law Center

***Fold out the cover for a spectacular Western Oregon Backyard
Forest (Devil's Staircase Proposed Wilderness) poster**

COVER: TIM GIRAUDIER
ABOVE: NEIL SCHULMAN

Oregon: A State of Outdoors & A Tale of Two Economies

Let's get down to business. Oregon's future, our future, depends on the long-term investments we make in our state. We stand now with two paths before us, each with radically different economic and environmental consequences. To choose which path we walk we must ask ourselves: *What do we value as Oregonians and what is of the greatest value to Oregon?*

Path #1: The Ghost Economy

Oregon is a state of outdoors. A tight-knit relationship has always existed between the forests and the people. Yet despite a century or so of population explosion, technological advancement, and heightened environmental understanding, the archaic and highly unsustainable model of unrestricted logging somehow remains at the forefront of current economic and legislative discussions.

This brings us to our #1 Endangered Place of 2013. In February 2012, Reps. DeFazio, Schrader, and Walden released the "O&C Trust Act," a bill putting millions of acres of our backyard forests on the chopping block for private industry. These electeds have answered the question up top with: *quick fixes and short term profits*. A band-aid in lieu of stitches, the bill functions as a superficial mend to long-neglected county funding problems and embodies what is essentially a "ghost economy":

Ghost economy: *n.* an economy based on shortsighted strategies relevant only to historical standards; one which leaves nothing for coming generations other than reminders of the irreparable mistakes of the past.

Path #2: The Recreation Economy

Oregon *is* outdoors. The public lands that paint our

landscape are the lifeblood of local communities, as well as our most powerful magnet for tourism. From lush coastal forests and towering Doug firs, to grasslands, canyons, and vanilla-scented ponderosa stands, few states rival Oregon's ecoregional diversity and status as an outdoor adventure mecca.

Over 68% of Oregon residents participate in recreational activities out-of-doors each year, not including those who hunt, fish, and view wildlife. Add that to the out-of-state visitors that travel to Oregon specifically for its wild places, and you have outdoor recreation generating nearly \$13 billion in consumer spending, \$955 million in state and local tax revenue, and 140,000 jobs each year.

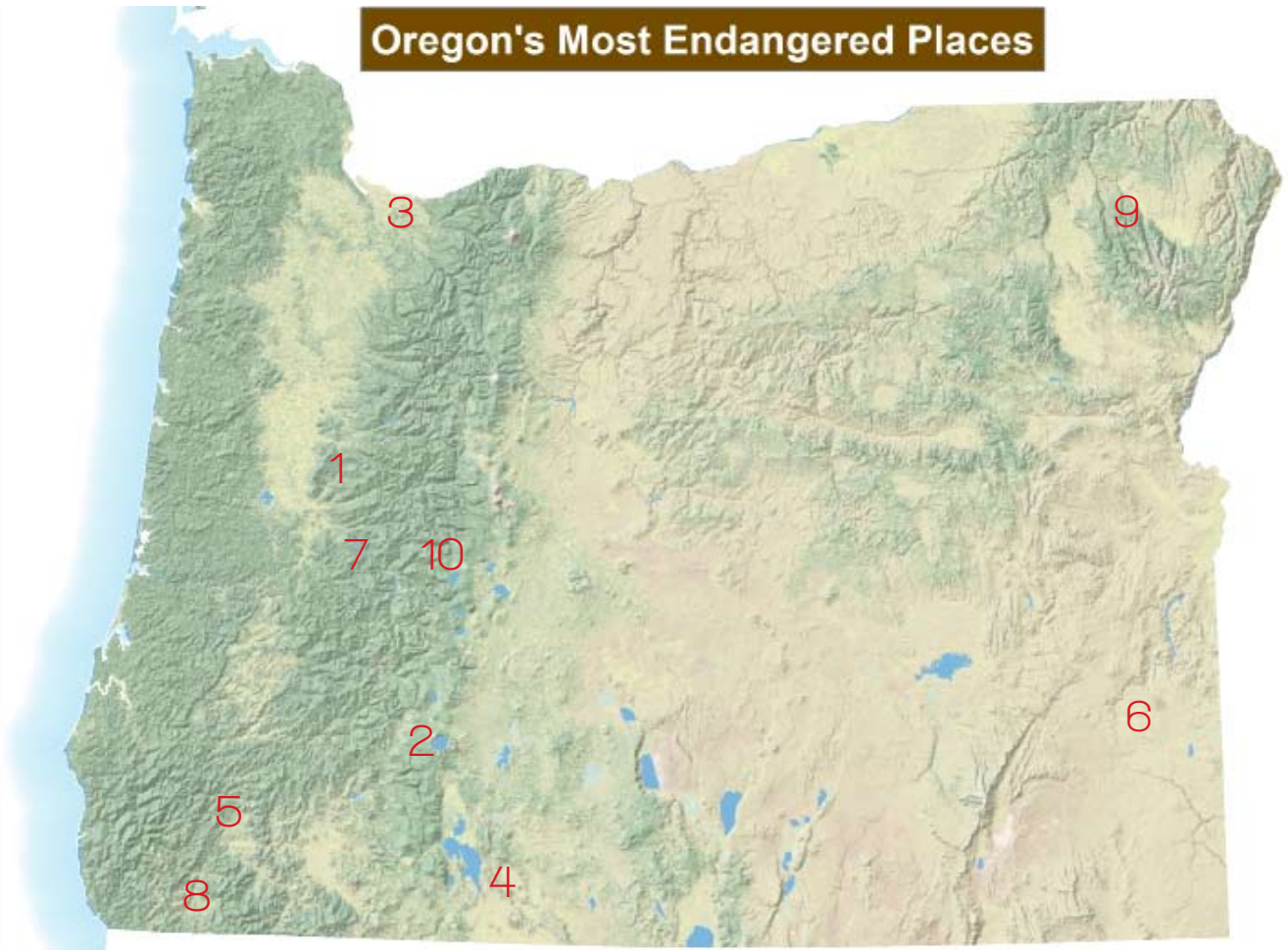
Our public lands are the heart of our recreation economy. No one travels to Oregon to hike through a clearcut. Allowing our legislators to take these lands out of public hands would be to deny Oregon a future. The water we drink, the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the places we play are all at stake.

Oregon Wild and our allies are working tirelessly to protect the wild places in this report, but we need your help. Strong citizen action is the best way to enact change – YOU proved that this year with a victory for Waldo Lake (see page 14). Find out how you can **take action to protect our public forestlands on page 15**. Help us send a loud, unified message to all our elected officials that Oregonians value their public lands. We choose path #2.

We choose a future for Oregon.

–Marielle Cowdin

Oregon's Most Endangered Places



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#1 Western Oregon Backyard Forests

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Threat: Logging and privatization proposals in Congress and State Legislature

The Place: Public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – 2.6 million acres in Western Oregon – are the forests that surround our communities. Many thousands of Oregonians live next to, recreate in, and get their drinking water from BLM forests. These are the forests that Oregonians see from our windows or visit on day-trips. They are our backyard forests.

BLM forests, streams, rivers, and recreation areas safeguard our clean water, provide habitat for native salmon and wildlife, and include some of the last remaining old-growth forests in Oregon. These special lands stretch from southwestern Oregon's unique botanical areas to ancient forests tucked away in the Alsea, Umpqua, and Santiam watersheds. They are some of Oregon's most visited recreation areas, and some of the best kept secrets right in our backyards.

The Threat: Right now our backyard forests are at risk. For years, counties with O&C lands received funding based on the amount of timber harvested from these federal public lands. This incentivized logging of our old-growth forests to pay for basic county services like schools, law enforcement, and libraries, which in turn led to endangered fish and wildlife and polluted water. The unsustainable logging on these lands had to come to an end. Over the past decade, federal funding has been provided for these counties, but today, they are facing a looming financial crisis due to the end of these federal payments.

Some groups and politicians have tried to use this budget crisis to promote a return to old-growth and clear-cut logging on BLM lands as a means of generating revenue.

A proposal in Congress advanced by Oregon Reps. DeFazio, Schrader, and Walden would remove 1.5 million acres of public forest lands from the scientific Northwest Forest Plan and exempt them from strong federal standards under the Endangered Species and Clean Water Acts. They would instead be managed as private industrial timberlands under the comparatively weak Oregon Forest Practices Act.

In order to meet the monetary demands of cash-strapped counties, logging on these "timber trust" lands

would at least double from the current 15-year average, putting clean water, salmon, and Oregon's tourism and recreation economy at further risk.

In the meantime, logging proposals in special places like the Green Springs Mountain area in a potential addition to the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument move forward, and require the attention of conservation groups to hold these threats at bay.

The Solution: Conservation groups recognize the importance of finding a long-term solution to county funding, while at the same time protecting old-growth forests and expanding restoration thinning in younger forests. Expanded forest and watershed restoration can provide jobs for thousands of workers, get logs to local mills, and enhance the public values important to so many Oregonians in our backyard forests.

Instead of attempting to solve the county payments crisis by liquidating public lands through risky logging schemes, a long-term solution to county funding needs to include contributions from federal, state, and county governments. This "shared responsibility" plan for keeping county governments in business is essential to maintaining clean drinking water, salmon and wildlife habitat, and quality of life for Oregonians. To learn more about this endangered place, visit www.backyardforests.org.

Fast Fact

According to recent data from the BLM, recreation on Western Oregon BLM lands is providing more jobs and economic output than the timber industry. In 2010 a total of 6,811 jobs were associated with recreation on BLM lands, accounting for a total of \$662,400,000 in output.

#2 Crater Lake Proposed Wilderness

Threat: Logging, including the Bybee Timber Sale, and helicopter tours

The Place: Crater Lake and its surrounding wildlands have inspired people for generations, providing the postcard image that encapsulates Oregon's natural beauty, heritage, and commitment to conservation. Each year, Crater Lake attracts half a million visitors who come to gaze into its pure water, to marvel at its unique geology, and to explore its rugged backcountry.

The natural beauty of Crater Lake extends far beyond Wizard Island and the caldera. It includes spectacular roadless lands and headwaters to several of Oregon's most renowned rivers including the Rogue, the Klamath, the Deschutes and the Umpqua. The region includes world class scenery, ancient forests, and exceptional recreational opportunities both inside and outside of the official park boundaries.

The Threat: The Crater Lake region is currently threatened by both air and land. A helicopter tour operator is seeking a permit to run tours over the park, potentially filling the tranquil skies with the din of machinery. These noisy flights would destroy the quiet of the park, disturb native wildlife, and diminish the experience of the vast majority of park visitors. Helicopter flights could also threaten the pristine waters of Crater Lake. Though helicopter accidents are thankfully rare, they do still occur. In 1995, a small private helicopter crashed into the lake, killing both passengers and releasing 70 gallons of jet fuel into its waters.

But noisy helicopter flights are not the only proposed threat to the wildlands surrounding Crater Lake.

Several misguided Forest Service logging projects aim to log old-growth forests in potential wilderness areas near or adjacent to the park. The most recent project, called "Bybee," proposes to log ancient forests right up to the western edge of the park. This reckless proposal includes logging 1,200 acres of proposed Wilderness, which serves as an important wildlife corridor. In addition, other logging projects including the D-Bug project and the Dread and Terror project threaten the proposed Crater Lake Wilderness as well.

The Solution: Wilderness designation is the gold standard when it comes to protecting America's public lands. Conservationists and the National Park Service have long

argued that Crater Lake and its surrounding wildlands deserve Wilderness status. This designation is essential to combat the misguided logging projects and the threat of noisy helicopter flights over the National Park. Oregon Wild has partnered with Umpqua Watersheds, the Crater Lake Institute, Environment Oregon, and other organizations to advance protections for the Crater Lake Wilderness.

Our proposal would protect 540,000 acres both inside and outside the park boundaries, creating a 90-mile protected corridor of habitat with very few disturbances along the southern Cascades. This key north-south corridor will be critical for wildlife as they adjust to habitat changes associated with climate change. The area is home to pine martin, Roosevelt elk, bald eagles, and pika. The proposal would not affect the lodge or any of the existing roads within the park.

Fast Fact:

Crater Lake has the purest water of any lake in the world.

WAYNE PARKER The value of Crater Lake lies not just in the famous caldera, but also in the spectacular surrounding wildlands - essential for recreation, for wildlife, and for safeguarding the headwaters of Oregon's great rivers, including the Rogue, Deschutes, Umpqua, and Klamath.

#3 Columbia River Gorge

Threat: Coal trains and barges headed to proposed coal export terminals on the coast

The Place: Where in Oregon can you find our state's tallest waterfall, breathtaking fields of wildflowers, and world renowned hiking, fishing, windsurfing, and wine-tasting? You guessed it: the Columbia River Gorge. The Gorge is also Oregon's only National Scenic Area, designated as such thanks to the efforts of Friends of the Columbia Gorge and the U.S. Congress in the mid-1980s.

Over millions of years North America's second largest river, the Columbia River, slowly eroded the Cascade Range to form a canyon we now know as the Columbia Gorge. American Indians have been fishing in the Gorge for at least 10,000 years, and in 1805 Lewis and Clark chose the river as their route to the Pacific.

The Columbia Gorge is the only sea-level passageway through the Northwest, which made it the choice site for the first major paved highway and railroad in the region.

The Threat: As the U.S. has transitioned away from dirty coal power to clean energy, coal companies have scrambled to find markets for their 19th Century fuel. With prospective demand for coal in Asia and with the nation's largest coal deposit in Montana and Wyoming, the Pacific Northwest is targeted for the largest coal export proposals in North America.

Peabody Energy, Arch Coal, and Ambre Energy have proposed three coal export terminals in Washington and Oregon that would total 100 million metric tons of coal per year, or 180 million tons of carbon pollution. The amount is sobering when compared with the 3 million tons of coal that PGE's Boardman coal plant - Oregon's only coal plant - burns each year.

With these proposals, 24, 1.3 mile-long coal trains would cut through the Columbia River Gorge and communities across the region each day. Open-air coal cars would emit toxic coal dust containing mercury, arsenic, and lead, into our air and the Columbia River. Currently, the four coal trains en route per day to Washington's coal plant in Centralia and to British Columbia already produce buckets-full of coal dust in the Gorge.

Proposed coal barges on the river also pose a threat. In addition to pollution and interference with Tribal fishing and recreational activities, dangerous barge fires (coal is known to spontaneously combust) would put the river and communities at risk, and responsibility would likely fall on the shoulders of small municipalities in the Gorge.

The Solution: The Power Past Coal coalition, an alliance of environmental, public health, and citizen groups, has formed to fight coal export proposals in the Northwest. Led locally by Columbia Riverkeeper, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Sierra Club, Climate Solutions, and many others, the coalition successfully derailed three of the original six coal export proposals, but we need your help to stop the rest.

Join us at upcoming hearings and rallies to send a signal to Governor John Kitzhaber and other leaders that coal exports are not congruent with the Gorge or any region in the Northwest. The Governor called for a thorough federal review of the impacts of coal exports on Northwest communities, but we need officials to take a firm stand against turning the Columbia River and the Northwest into a chute for dirty coal.

By saying "no" to coal, we are saying "yes" to transporting Northwest agricultural products and passengers, and "yes" to creating jobs through eco-tourism and by investing in clean energy. The benefit for all of us will be clean air, clean water, a stable climate, and an ever-beautiful Columbia River Gorge.

Fast Fact:

The Columbia River Gorge has over 90 waterfalls on the Oregon side alone.



DANIEL DANCER A coal train runs through the Columbia River Gorge

years, these commercial agricultural operations receive water while the few remaining wetlands go dry.

With climate change and the lack of a credible plan by the Obama administration to balance water demands, conditions in the Lost River and Tule Lake are getting worse. In 2010, the US Bureau of Reclamation and US Fish and Wildlife Service signed an agreement that would have allowed the lake to go dry - despite the presence of two species of endangered fish. Rather than reduce water diversions and protect habitat as the Endangered Species Act requires, the Obama administration planned to trap the fish, load them into trucks, and relocate them elsewhere.

In 2013, with the region facing one of the worst droughts on record, the Lost River and Tule Lake are again in danger of going dry.

The Solution: Water in the Lost River and Klamath Basins is severely over-promised. There is simply not enough of this precious resource to satisfy current levels of agribusiness while also sustaining healthy populations of salmon, wildlife, and endangered lake fish. The single biggest step that could be taken to solve this problem is to establish a voluntary program to buy water rights from landowners and permanently retire them, leaving more of this precious resource for fish, wildlife, and other farmers.

Wildlife refuge lands should actually be managed for wildlife. Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge has been reduced to two wastewater sumps and 15,500 acres of private agribusiness, with almost no quality habitat left for native fish, amphibians, and birds. Phasing out the shameful practice of leasing land on a national wildlife refuge for private agribusiness would not only restore wetland habitat, but also improve water quality and reduce the demand for water.

Fast Fact:

The shores of Tule Lake were once home to stands of enormous old-growth ponderosa pine, and it was believed to support the largest nesting population of ospreys in the entire United States.

BRETT COLE Habitat for countless native bird and wildlife species continues to be drained for unsustainable agribusiness in the high desert.



#4

Lost River Basin & Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Threat: Agribusiness development draining the river and the National Wildlife Refuge dry

The Place: The Lost River arises in the arid hills of Modoc County in Northern California, flowing northwest into Klamath County in Oregon before curving back across the border and feeding what was once Tule Lake. The Lost River sustained this massive 100,000 acre freshwater lake for millennia, which in turn provided for a tremendous diversity of fish and wildlife, and the Native American communities that depended upon them.

Over the last 100 years, the US Bureau of Reclamation and private agribusiness development have radically transformed the Lost River and Tule Lake. Though it feeds one of America's most important National Wildlife Refuges, the river is now almost entirely drained by agribusiness development in the high desert. The water that is still allowed to reach the remnants of Tule Lake is severely polluted by animal wastes, pesticides, and fertilizer, making it one of the most polluted lakes in the Pacific Northwest.

The Threat: The Lost River is dying. The massive Klamath Irrigation Project drains most of its natural water flow to sustain agribusiness in the high desert. Polluted run-off from this development flows back into the river, creating severe water quality problems. Dams and irrigation diversions block fish habitat and dry up tributaries. Populations of many native fish and wildlife populations have collapsed.

What remains of the Lost River flows into Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge was once among the most productive wildlife areas in America, but today virtually its entire land base is leased to private agricultural interests. Land that was set aside to protect wetlands and wildlife is instead managed for agribusiness. In drought



#5 Rogue River

Threat: Suction dredge mining

The Place: The headwaters of the Rogue River flow from springs in the volcanic Cascade Range, just west of Crater Lake. Major tributaries such as the Applegate and Illinois Rivers originate in the geologically complex Klamath-Siskiyou Mountains.

The headwaters and tributaries of the Rogue River are in some of the most rugged and remote territory that Oregon has to offer. The Rogue then flows through the lowlands of the Rogue Valley, where the communities of Medford, Gold Hill, Rogue River, and Grants Pass all depend on the Rogue as a source of municipal drinking water.

As one of the state's premier recreational attractions, the Rogue draws tens of thousands of visitors annually and contributes millions of dollars to the local economy. The Rogue provides important habitat for salmon and steelhead, second only to the Columbia as Oregon's top salmon producer and is home to one of the state's most important sport and commercial fisheries.

The Threat: While the Rogue benefitted from three recent dam removals, the Rogue River and its tributary streams are unfortunately facing a growing threat from suction dredge gold mining. Suction dredges use a gasoline powered vacuum to suck up the stream bottom and spit it back out, damaging salmon spawning habitat, upsetting landowners and recreational businesses, and mobilizing toxic heavy metals like mercury in the process.

The Rogue is home to threatened Coho salmon that the public spends millions on to ensure their survival. Gravels that have been disturbed by dredges have been shown to greatly increase the loss of salmon eggs, and we simply don't have the eggs to spare.

Due to the rising price of gold, this type of mining has increased throughout the watershed, as well as on the main stem where up to 20 dredges can be seen from a single spot. Riverside landowners report dredgers using their lawns as restrooms, tying up to their irrigation intakes, clogging intakes with sediment and running noisy engines in front of their houses. In addition to landowners, local rafting and fishing companies report unhappy customer experiences with the dredges.

During the gold rush, mercury was used to mine rivers in southwest Oregon, including the Rogue. This mercury, as well as naturally occurring cinnabar, settled in the riverbeds at a depth not generally disturbed by winter storms. However, suction dredges disturb the riverbeds at a much deeper level and mobilize the otherwise safely buried toxic metal. Mercury isn't something anyone wants in their drinking water or accumulating in the fish they eat.

The Solution: Other states have taken important steps to reform suction dredging activities. California currently prohibits the practice entirely, and Idaho recently issued a permit that allows dredging only in areas where threatened and endangered aquatic species are not found. It is time for Oregon to do the same.

Oregon should ensure that suction dredging occur only in those areas where salmon populations will not be harmed, where mercury will not be uncovered, and where it will avoid conflict with landowners, fishing, and rafting businesses.

As a first step, the Oregon legislature should pass Senate Bill 838 to enact a temporary moratorium on suction dredging in salmon habitat and have the agencies propose a new, simpler and more protective regulatory framework for permitting suction dredging statewide. Additionally, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality should strengthen the statewide permit for suction dredging to be more protective of fish and water quality.

Fast Fact:

The Rogue is second only to the Columbia as Oregon's top salmon producer.



ROGUE RIVERKEEPER Suction dredges on the Rogue River.

#6 Owyhee Canyonlands

Threat: Loss of the sagebrush ecosystem to catastrophic fires and off-highway vehicle (OHV) desecration

The Place: Sheer-walled canyons, rolling sagebrush hills, red rock hoodoo formations, and miles of Wild & Scenic River characterize the Owyhee Canyonlands. It remains the largest undeveloped landscape in the continental United States without permanent protection.

The Owyhee consists of more than 1.9 million acres of remote and unfragmented sagebrush steppe, which is home to the nation's largest herds of California bighorn sheep and pronghorn antelope. The ecological value of this vast landscape also includes large stretches of core sage grouse habitat, as well as critical wintering grounds for herds of Rocky Mountain Elk and mule deer. Canyon walls along the Owyhee Wild & Scenic River offer nesting sites for golden eagles, ferruginous hawks, and other birds of prey, while varying depths of volcanic ash and talus slopes allow 28 endemic plant species to thrive in the area.

Backpackers and hikers come to marvel at this wildlife sanctuary, finding solitude and excellent scenery. Places like the Honeycombs and Leslie Gulch feature spires of volcanic ash, which rise hundreds of feet above the desert floor.

The Threat: The summer of 2012 brought an unprecedented fire season to Southeast Oregon, with three separate blazes burning in excess of one million acres of quality sagebrush habitat. These fires greatly impacted core sagebrush steppe ecosystems that provide key habitat for big game species like bighorn, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope. The fires marked a turning point for the population of Greater sage-grouse, the most threatened of all sagebrush-obligate species, in the Western portion of its historic range. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife calculated that over 84% of the total fire acreage burned through core or low density sage grouse habitat. The bird's range has already shrunk steadily due to energy development, transmission, and the spread of invasive annual grasses.

Sagebrush takes a very long time to reestablish – anywhere from 35 to 100 years – and in the interim, invasive grasses like cheatgrass and medusahead can colonize the burnt desert landscape. These grasses are of little value to species like pronghorn antelope, pygmy rabbit, Brewer's sparrow, and Greater sage-grouse that need intact sagebrush stands for all aspects of their life cycle. Releasing domestic livestock before mature native plants have a chance to gain a foothold only compounds the negative ecological impacts on the landscape. Additionally, the illegal cross-country travel of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) can cause irreparable harm by creating a vector for the destructive spread of invasive weeds.

The Solution: The Vale district BLM needs to hear from you: a member of the public and the rightful owner of the lands. Tell the agency that they need to consider the ecological health of the desert landscape as their highest priority for fire rehabilitation. The ground needs a sufficient amount of rest to renew itself. Tell the Vale district BLM that you value intact sagebrush stands for use by myriad species of wildlife, and that every effort should be made to protect remaining habitat from further degradation. Find out more at www.onda.org.

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.

SARAH LYNCH Backpackers and hikers find unmatched solitude in the Owyhee in addition to a unique and delicate desert ecosystem.

BRIZZ MEDDINGS

Threat: Variable retention regen harvest (aka 'clearcutting') under the BLM's White Castle Timber Sale and forthcoming Myrtle Creek 2013 Project

The Place: The Myrtle Creek watershed contains one of the BLM's largest contiguous blocks of land in western Oregon, a rarity in an ownership pattern largely made up of a checkerboard of public and private land. Located a short distance from the town of Myrtle Creek, whose motto is "Where Nature is Your Neighbor," this headwater area serves important ecological and tourism-based economic functions for the community.

A tremendous moist forest habitat, Myrtle Creek is critical for water storage and water quality, providing miles of habitat for the threatened Coho salmon and other fish. The White Castle timber sale and adjacent areas of mature and old-growth forest also provide home to threatened spotted owls and rare wetland plant communities known as "fens."

The Threat: After logging under the Northwest Forest Plan shifted from old-growth clearcutting to thinning young stands, the Myrtle Creek Watershed

was in a state of restoration and recovery. The Bush Administration advocated a 400% increase in logging of BLM lands under the Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR), which was narrowly averted when the newly-elected Obama Administration rescinded the WOPR. Now, Obama's Secretary of Interior is advancing new ideas that threaten mature forests on BLM lands. "Variable retention harvest" is a new name for clearcutting that leaves small isolated islands of older forest in a sea of clearcuts. It's better than industry clearcuts, which leave little to nothing behind, but it's not restoration and it's not what our public forests need today.

Often promoted as a benefit for species that live in complex young forests, variable retention clearcutting is merely an excuse for logging. Young forests are not rare and neither are the species that live in them. There are vast areas of young forest on private timber lands, yet old forest is still under-represented and needs to remain the focus of federal land management. Any need for young forest habitat on public land can be met by recognizing natural disturbance processes such as fire, wind, and insects.

The Solution: The BLM should withdraw the White Castle timber sale and redirect the Myrtle Creek 2013 Project toward common sense forestry. Thinning in dense young stands will restore forests simplified by past clearcutting, create jobs, and produce some wood products as a by-product.

Fast Fact:

The scientists who are promoting variable clearcutting recommend doing it in areas that were previously clearcut, but the White Castle sale is located in a 108 year old native forest that has never been clearcut.



BARBARA ULLIAN

#8 Rough and Ready Creek & Baldface Creek

Threat: Nickel mining and off-highway vehicles (OHVs)

The Place: Rough and Ready Creek and Baldface Creek flow through the 105,000-acre South Kalmiopsis Roadless Area - a strange, other-worldly wild landscape of great open vistas, gnarled pine and cedar, buckskin boulders and cobbles, deep red ancient soils and off the charts plant rarity (aka serpentine terrain). Both creeks are Forest Service "eligible" Wild & Scenic Rivers. Most of their watersheds were recommended by the agency as a 34,000 addition to the Kalmiopsis Wilderness.

Rough and Ready Creek is host to the highest concentration of rare plants in Oregon. The waters, salmon, steelhead, and cutthroat trout produced at Baldface Creek are essential to the world-class fishery of the Wild & Scenic Smith River. The Smith and the Wild & Scenic Chetco Rivers are critically important to the economies of coastal communities. While the entire Smith River watershed in California is protected, much of the watershed of Oregon's North Fork Smith River is not.

The Threat: The very feature that makes this area so unique, botanically rich, and its rivers so beautiful has also attracted its greatest threats: nickel strip mines, ore haul roads and nickel processing facilities. A new proposal to mine and construct a nickel processing facility at Rough and Ready Creek was submitted to the Forest Service in 2011. It's another chapter in a decades-long struggle. This time, a nickel processing facility (smelter, drying area, and kiln, ore, and smelter waste storage) is proposed on the Rough and Ready Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

In 2012, Red Flat Nickel Corporation, a foreign owned mining company, submitted a proposal to conduct

exploratory drilling at 59 sites across about 2,000 acres in the watersheds of Baldface Creek and the National Wild & Scenic North Fork Smith River - Phase II in the company's plans for the area. They also have plans for the special area along the Oregon Coast known as Red Flat, where further exploratory drilling is proposed. According to the EPA, metal mining releases more toxics into the environment by far than any other industry in the United States

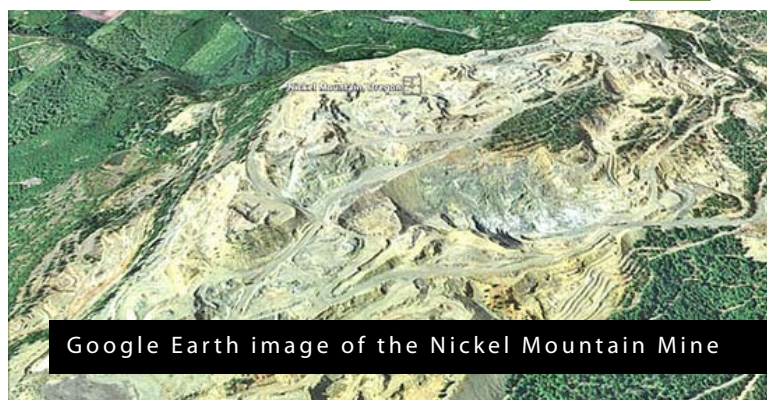
Extreme off-road vehicle users also present high risks to the area through rare plant habitat destruction, soil erosion, and the introduction of invasive plants like yellow tuft alyssum and pathogens like Port

Orford cedar root disease.

The Solution: Rough and Ready Creek and Baldface Creek are among the ten Most Endangered Rivers in America, according to American Rivers. President Obama needs to direct the federal land managing agencies and the Secretary of Interior to withdraw the creeks and surrounding South Kalmiopsis from operation of the 1872 Mining Law. Senator Wyden, Senator Merkley, and Representative DeFazio have repeatedly asked the President's Administration to do this in order to give them time to develop and pass legislation to permanently protect the area. Withdrawal would prevent the location of new claims and require that the existing claims be valid and comply fully with existing laws before any further mining activities occur. The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest needs to close all user created mineral exploration tracks in the area to motorized travel. Our Senators and Representatives need to pass legislation permanently protecting the wild lands and rivers of the South Kalmiopsis.

Fast Fact:

For more information about the proposed mining and Rough and Ready Creek, Baldface Creek, the North Fork Smith River, and the wild South Kalmiopsis Roadless Area go to: roughandreadycreek.org.



Google Earth image of the Nickel Mountain Mine

#9 Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Threat: The Snow Basin logging project and similar poorly designed, large-scale logging in fragile high elevation forests and roadless areas

The Place: The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest contains some of the most breathtaking landscapes in Oregon, including Hells Canyon National Recreation Area – home to pristine roadless areas, roaring whitewater rivers, and the deepest river canyon in America. It also includes the granite peaks of the rugged, alps-like Wallowa Mountains, drawing visitors around the world to enjoy spectacular hiking, camping, and fishing amid alpine lakes and stunning wildflowers. An amazing diversity of wild-life, from bull trout and spring Chinook salmon to endangered gray wolves and wolverine, call this place home.

Most of the Wallowa-Whitman is not the typical dry ponderosa pine forest found in much of Eastern Oregon. Because of its mountainous terrain, this area receives much more snow and rain. This has fostered a unique landscape where natural forest fires are rare, and species like grand fir, Engelmann spruce, and western larch can live to become old-growth giants.

The Threat: Despite the differences between the Wallowa-Whitman and other Eastern Oregon forests, the Forest Service continues to bow to the demands of logging interests for aggressive cutting on these fragile, high elevation areas. Scientific evidence clearly shows that such logging harms forest health and degrades habitat for elk and other species.

The Snow Basin logging project is one example of this reckless approach to management. Instead of focusing on thinning dry forest stands and reducing the risk of fire to local communities, the Forest Service is pushing a plan that logs in high elevation, moist forests where fire risks are low and intensive logging is not scientifically appropriate. Even worse, it includes logging of old-growth trees. Over the past decade, thousands of acres of adjacent private industrial forest lands have been sold off and clear-cut. Now, corporate timber interests are demanding aggressive logging levels on the public lands of the Wallowa-Whitman to make up the difference.

But logging is not the only threat. The Wallowa-Whitman is the third most heavily roaded national forest in the nation. The eroding logging roads and off-road vehicle trails spew thousands of tons of sediment into the regions streams and fragment core habitat. In 2012, the Forest Service released a Travel Management Plan that would have closed off-road vehicle travel but kept most roads open. A very vocal group of OHV users angered by the plan in turn pressured politicians and the Forest Service to withdraw its travel planning decision. The Forest Service has furthermore been unable to enforce its own rules and keep off-road enthusiasts off the small portion of the forest that is closed to vehicles.

The Solution: The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest needs to move away from the failed logging models of the past, and resist pressure from advocates of reckless logging levels. The agency should focus on scientifically sound projects in dry forest stands – areas where science actually shows that restoration-based projects that protect old-growth could have environmental benefits. The Forest Service should also develop a credible collaboration with conservationists, local landowners, Tribes, and others to guide future management decisions for this forest.

Finally, the Forest Service must enact a plan to address the rampant problem of off-road vehicle use in the forest, and to reduce its failing road network. Previous initiatives were abandoned due to pressure from off-road vehicle enthusiasts. The Forest Service must have the courage to do what is right for the land, and for the fish and wildlife that depend upon it.

Fast Fact:

The Wallowa-Whitman is the only place in Oregon where wolverines have been documented in recent times. Their tracks are being sighted in wolf activity areas, supporting the theory that the presence of wolves encourages recolonization of wolverines due to increased scavenging opportunities.



#10 Waldo Lake

Threat: Motorboats and float planes that spoil quiet recreational experiences and threaten the purity of one of the cleanest large lakes in the entire world

The Place: Waldo Lake, high in the Cascades and protected by wilderness on three sides, is one of the cleanest large lakes in the entire world. Waldo Lake's watershed is largely undeveloped; there are no homes or resorts on its shores. The paved road and two campgrounds were built within the last 50 years and affect only a small part of the watershed. The Willamette National Forest manages the entire area with a focus on water quality, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

Waldo Lake's water quality surpasses even that of Crater Lake – a purity level similar to distilled water. Designated by the state as a scenic waterway, Waldo is the source of the North Fork of the Middle Fork of the Willamette River, federally recognized as a Wild & Scenic River.

The Threat: After convening a Waldo Basin Planning Committee, the Forest Service recognized that the noise from motorboats and float planes interferes with the expectation of quiet recreation and such motorized craft are inconsistent with the official emphasis on non-motorized recreation. The Forest Service decided to phase out gas boat motors and float planes, while allowing quiet electric boat motors.

Pro-motor advocates sued and although the case was never fully resolved, the issued shifted to the State Marine Board. With the encouragement of the Governor, the Marine Board entered into a 2009 agreement with the Forest Service to ban gas motors

and float planes. While rules banning gas boat motors were adopted, the Marine Board could not get the concurrence of the Aviation Board – which went so far as to adopt an emergency rule to specifically allow float planes. Most recently, the Aviation Board deliberated over permanent rules that would allow float planes to pierce the silence and use Waldo Lake as a runway and parking lot.

The Solution: A wide spectrum of the public and government officials – from the Governor to the Parks Department to the Marine Board – have asked the Aviation Board to reject their proposed rules and fulfill the intent of the original agreement between the federal and state governments.

Concurrently, the Oregon legislature is considering a bill that would protect Waldo Lake by banning both gas motors and float planes.

Fast Fact:

Waldo Lake is so clear that one can see more than 100 feet into its deep blue waters.

Update: In May 2013, the Oregon Legislature voted to protect Waldo Lake, banning motorboats and sea planes to keep one of the purest lakes in the world pristine for future generations!

"This is a victory for the thousands of Oregonians who have attended countless meetings, endured dozens of public hearings, and stood up for keeping Waldo Lake clean and quiet every step of the way." – Sean Stevens, Executive Director of Oregon Wild

GREG ZURBRUGG Thanks to thousands of everyday Oregonians, the pristine waters of Waldo Lake and the quiet recreation enjoyed here will be preserved for generations to come.



Take Action!

Strong citizen action is the key to many of our victories. Here is how you can join the front line to fight for our wildlands:

Speak Out: Call Senator Ron Wyden

Oregon Senator Ron Wyden, who chairs the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, is under tremendous pressure to also support a return to clear-cutting on O&C lands. The logging industry and some county officials want to link revenue from expanded clear-cutting to a bailout of cash-strapped county budgets.

But these forests are on public land, and belong to all Americans. These are OUR forests, and a legacy for current and future generations of Oregonians. Tell Senator Wyden to oppose any legislation that would undermine the Northwest Forest Plan, and to oppose any attempt to increase clear-cutting on Oregon's public forest lands.

Call Senator Wyden's office in:
Portland: (503) 326-7525
Eugene: (541) 431-0229
Bend: (541) 330-9142
DC: (202) 224-5244

Kindly tell the staff person who answers the phone (or the voicemail, if you can't get through) you are calling to oppose any legislation that would weaken the Northwest Forest Plan or allow for renewed clear-cutting on America's public lands. Or write to him:

Senator Ron Wyden
Portland Office
1220 SW 3rd Avenue
Suite 585
Portland, OR 97204

Key Points to Make:

- A dramatic increase in logging, especially clear-cutting, on our public forestlands is shortsighted. It would harm Oregon's clean drinking water, salmon and wildlife, and put our growing tourism and recreation industry at risk.
- Senator Wyden should reject logging industry demands for the weakening of laws like the Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act, and undermining the Northwest Forest Plan. Focus, instead, should be on restoring our forests and watersheds.
- Like most municipalities in the country, the so-called O&C counties need to pay their own way. It is ridiculous to consider expanded logging, including clear-cutting, to bail out budgets in counties that have the lowest tax rates in Oregon and have been unwilling to take any significant steps to address their own funding shortfalls.
- Sen. Wyden should focus instead on extending the successful Secure Rural Schools program at reasonable levels. This program provides federal funding to support important government services without harming our clean water, wildlife, or public lands.

For more information on how you can get involved and help fight for our public wildlands, visit:

www.oregonwild.org/take_action



OREGON WILD