

ACTIVISM 201

Voting and marching are fundamental institutions of democracy that have played an important role in our nation's history; however, our government only functions properly when citizens become more deeply engaged in the political process. At a time when our public lands, bedrock environmental protections, and climate are under attack, Oregon Wild has developed four simple practices you can integrate into your everyday life to enhance your citizen-advocacy:

1 CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL

Your elected officials *literally* work for you, which means you need to steer them in the right direction by communicating your priorities.

A. Find out who represents you



2 Senators, 1 Representative



Governor Kate Brown
Phone: (503) 378-4582



1 State Senator, 1 State Rep.

Important State Agencies

-Ore. Dept. of Fish & Wildlife -Ore. State Land Board
-Ore. Dept. of Env. Quality -Ore. Board of Forestry

- **Helpful tip:** Search your Reps and post their names/phone numbers to your refrigerator!

B. Make your calls! Make phone calls a regular part of your week (i.e. "every Tuesday I make 2 calls"). The more reasonable the goal, the more you'll end up doing it.

C. Send a letter, email, or postcard: Write a simple note explaining your issue and give a personal account of why it's important to you. Don't forget to say "thank you."

D. In-person lobbying: Anyone can schedule a meeting with their elected official's office by contacting the office and requesting a meeting.

- Come prepared with relevant information and questions, and feel free to leave information with the staffer.

- Don't be discouraged if you only get a meeting with a staff person, they will convey your message to the elected official. Be sure to get the staffer's business card before leaving, staying in touch and developing a positive relationship makes a real difference.

Tips on how to make effective calls:

- Phone calls don't have to be eloquent, but should be clear and concise
- Remember to be polite and to *thank* the staffer for taking your call
- Call after-hours or on weekends if you'd prefer to leave a message instead of talking with a staffer
- Sign up for Oregon Wild alerts so you know what issues need your advocacy
- Sample script: *Hi, my name is ___ and my zip is ___. I'm calling today about ___ and I'd like to urge my Rep. to support/oppose/protect ___. Thank you for your time...*

2 SHOW UP One of the most important ways to make a difference is simply to *show up* to public events. It sounds like a passive way to enact change, but don't underestimate the power of a large group of people united on a single issue at a public event!

A. Attend a town hall or public hearing

- Find events on your Rep's website, and don't forget to prepare questions beforehand.

B. Go to an educational event or film screening

- Oregon Wild hosts events throughout the state on a quarterly basis called "Wild Wednesday," which gives local adventurers and community leaders a stage to tell their stories and inspire the rest of us to embark on our own adventures.

C. Mobilize!

- Participate in a march, protest, or rally.
- Attend a sign making party - political art plays a critical role in any successful movement.

3 JOIN A GROUP Right now, millions of people across the country are getting involved in the political process, which means there are numerous opportunities for you to get involved in a group that works for you.

A. Wild Ones: Oregon Wild's grassroots team meets monthly for campaign updates and grassroots training. Learn more at www.oregonwild.org/wildones

B. Embrace your community: Joining a group is a great way to develop your community, but don't stop there! Engaging in constructive and considerate dialogue with family, friends, work colleagues, and neighbors is important too, and don't forget to be a good *listener*.

C. Donate! Another great way to support environmental advocacy is to become a monthly contributor to an organization you believe in. It doesn't have to be a lot (\$5 a month helps), but if you can afford more it will go a long way.

4 SELF-CARE The government moves slowly, which means grassroots activists must take repeated action over a long period of time. Activist burn-out is REAL, so be sure to know *your limits* and develop self-care habits.

A. Unplug periodically: Take a break from the news if the negativity is taking a toll on your mind and body, and turn off the news after a certain point each day (*i.e.* "no news after 6pm").

- End your day on a positive note by practicing a daily rejuvenation practice.

B. Get outside: Make it a priority to get outside and enjoy the places you fight to protect. Strengthening your relationship with your special places will enhance your advocacy and ensure you stay energized for the long term.

- We regularly lead hikes all over the state, learn more: www.oregonwild.org/explore-oregon

Self-Educate!

- Diversify your sources of news
- Be sure to always use critical thinking when taking in new information
- Sign up for news alerts from trusted sources about key issues
- Don't underestimate the importance of fiction to expand your worldview!
- Join email lists of local non-profits to stay updated on current events
- Don't rely on social media for news

