

30x30 Opportunities in Oregon

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State Actions Towards 30x30 in Oregon

- 1. Permanently protect mature and old growth stands in Oregon’s State Forests.** All remaining intact forests should be permanently protected on state lands as part of a critical Climate and Wildlife Reserve System across all public lands. Specifically, remaining old forests should be protected permanently in state forests, including in the Elliott and designated Habitat Conservation Areas in the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests Plans.
- 2. Protect Oregon’s unique marine ecosystems:**
 - a. Expand Oregon’s Marine Reserves.** Oregon’s five marine reserves protect a wealth of natural resources. Protections for these reserves should be expanded and strengthened in 2023 when they are scheduled to be evaluated by the state legislature.
 - b. Expand protections for rocky shorelines using Oregon’s Rocky Habitat Management Strategy.** Recent designations under the strategy include a Marine Garden at Coquille Point and a Marine Research Area at Cape Blanco.
 - c. Leverage Statewide Planning Goal 16: Estuarine Resources and Goal 17: Coastal Shorelands to expand natural management unit designations and identify, restore, and protect historic coastal tidal wetlands.** Goal 16 and 17 inform coastal county estuary management plans, which prioritize estuary function to support nature based industries and coastal communities. The plans are 40 years old and updates are needed.
- 3. Double the size of the State Scenic Waterway System.** This creative tool can be helpful in protecting river corridors on non federal lands in Oregon. Oregon’s State Parks and Recreation Department would need to be empowered to drive conservation gains more than they have been in the past to truly be effective, or move the system over to another state agency.
- 4. Prioritize wildlife crossings and other fish & wildlife connectivity investments.** Protecting intact ecosystems for fish and wildlife is an important first step, but in order for these areas to truly help wildlife in a changing climate it is important that additional

investments be made to reduce barriers to natural movement of fish & wildlife and improve habitat connectivity. These infrastructure projects are often needed as economic investments in rural communities, and ODFW should partner with NGO's and federal agencies to fund these investments. The Oregon Connectivity Assessment and Mapping Project (OCAMP) is another area the state can invest in to facilitate this work.

5. **Permanently protect Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW):** Outstanding Resource Waters are high quality waters that constitute an outstanding state resource due to their extraordinary water quality or ecological values, or where special protection is needed to maintain critical habitat areas. The Oregon Environmental Quality Commission has already voted to designate Crater Lake and Waldo Lake as Outstanding Resource Waters in the state of Oregon, and should identify additional areas across the state for future designations.

Federal Executive Actions Towards 30x30 in Oregon

1. **Implement a national rulemaking to protect all remaining mature and old growth forests on federal lands.** Oregon's remaining intact temperate rainforests store more carbon per acre than tropical rainforests, are some of the least fire prone landscapes, and protect numerous vulnerable species. They should be permanently protected as part of a climate and wildlife reserve system in the U.S. This action will both prevent emissions from future logging, and ensure that these critical carbon sinks remain in place. These protections should qualify for GAP 2 and should prohibit commercial natural resource extraction. Examples of old forest protections should include the following areas:
 - a. **Strengthen Late Succession Reserve (LSR's) protections under the Northwest Forest Plan and on western Bureau of Land Management forests.** Currently, logging is still allowed in LSRs under the Northwest Forest Plan and BLM's 2016 Resource Management Plan. These protections should be strengthened to qualify for GAP 2 and should prohibit commercial natural resource extraction.
 - b. **Strengthen protections for all areas identified as habitat for Northern spotted owls (RA 32).** The RA32 designation should be expanded to be more inclusive of all suitable nesting, roosting, foraging habitat to ensure spotted owls have a better chance of coexisting with barred owls, and protection under RA32 should be strengthened to qualify for GAP 2 and should prohibit commercial natural resource extraction. Currently, logging is still allowed where it should be excluded under RA32.
 - c. **Update Maps and Protect Late-Successional/Old-Growth (LSOG) Forests in Oregon's Willowa Whitman, Umatilla, Malheur, Ochoco, Deschutes, and Fremont-Winema National Forests.** The largest trees in Oregon's eastern forests store the vast majority of the landscape's carbon, are the most resistant to the impacts of wildfire, and help counter other impacts of climate change such as

drought and excessive heat. Areas with late successional and old growth trees should be protected, and these protections should be strengthened to qualify for GAP 2 and should prohibit commercial natural resource extraction.

2. **Strengthen protections for Roadless Areas to meet Gap 2 qualifications.** Roadless Areas already qualify for high levels of protections, but do not yet GAP 2 level qualifications, and should be strengthened accordingly.
3. **Expand the Roadless Area Conservation Rule to include areas of 1,000 acres or more.** Currently, roadless areas are defined as 5,000 acres or more. Adjusting this to 1,000 acres as a minimum could expand protections significantly. Further, this administration should extend the roadless rule to lands managed by the Department of Interior. These protections should qualify for GAP 2 and should prohibit commercial natural resource extraction.
4. **Strengthen protections for BLM Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC's).** LWC areas are not designated protected areas like Wilderness Areas or Wilderness Study Areas, though they do exhibit the same uncommon intact ecosystems that are protected under other management frameworks. These protections should be strengthened to qualify for GAP 2 and should prohibit commercial natural resource extraction. These should also be expanded to include all roadless areas 1,000 acres and larger.
5. **Expand and strengthen protections for land within the Greater Sage-Grouse Comprehensive Conservation Strategy.** Lands in Oregon that are covered by the conservation strategy should be set aside to ensure the conservation of the greater sage-grouse. These protections should be strengthened to qualify for GAP 2 and should prohibit commercial natural resource extraction.
6. **Designate new National Marine Sanctuaries.** Oregon has a vast wealth of marine resources, and some marine areas should be better managed off Oregon's coast. To date, Oregon has no designated National Marine Sanctuaries off its coast.
7. **Establish new National Estuarine Research Reserves.** Currently Oregon only has one National Estuarine Research Reserves — the South Slough. The state should work with NOAA to identify and to establish additional Research Reserves amongst its incredible estuaries.
8. **Designate New and/or Expand National Monuments.** The Antiquities Act authorizes the President to declare by public proclamation lands and structures with historic or scientific interest on federal lands as national monuments. These proclamations state the purposes for which lands are designated, as well as how they must be managed - meaning that strong language can ensure meeting GAP 1 or GAP 2 qualifications. Numerous locations and landscapes in Oregon should be considered as new national monuments, while some existing monuments such as the Cascade-Siskiyou should be expanded to meet scientific recommendations.

Federal Legislative Actions Towards 30x30 in Oregon

1. **Pass the River Democracy Act of 2021.** This includes designation of 4,700 miles of Wild & Scenic Rivers across Oregon with protected buffers covering 0.5 miles on each side of the waterways. Oregon is home to approximately 110,994 miles of streams, of which 2,173 miles are designated as Wild & Scenic — only 2 percent of the total. Rivers offer critical habitat for fish and other wildlife, and protected riparian corridors can dramatically improve water quality and habitat connectivity across the state.
2. **Pass the Roadless Area Conservation Act.** Oregon has nearly 2 million acres of inventoried Roadless areas, but these areas are still vulnerable until Congress passes legislation to ensure lasting protections. Roadless area protections should be strengthened to meet GAP 2 criteria, should be codified in law, and should prohibit commercial natural resource extraction.
3. **Pass the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act.** In addition to protecting core habitat and intact ecosystems for wildlife, policymakers must also prioritize supporting actions such as habitat connectivity that can help wildlife survive the impacts of habitat loss and climate change.
4. **Pass the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.** Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife needs additional funding and capacity to conserve at-risk, non-game species in Oregon. Without this additional funding and support, it will be challenging to meet the full potential benefits of additional land protections.
5. **Designate New and/or Expand Existing Wilderness Areas:**
 - a. **Expand protections for the Mount Hood area.** Mount Hood has seen a dramatic increase in usage in recent years, and is in need of additional protections and new infrastructure to support the people and wildlife that depend on it. Additional Wilderness, Wild & Scenic, and National Recreation Area designations would advance these goals.
 - b. **Expand protections for the Wild Rogue.** The Rogue River is one of the state's premier recreational destinations, attracting tens of thousands of visitors every year and contributing millions of dollars to the local economy. Congress has had pending legislation for 60,000 acres of Wilderness protections that should be passed as soon as possible.
 - c. **Expand protections for Oregon's desert wilderness areas.** The Greater Hart-Sheldon area and Owyhee Canyonlands offer some of the largest remaining intact areas of sagebrush steppe remaining in the West and require additional protections to enhance wildlife habitat and enable more outdoor recreation opportunities.
 - d. **Designate the Crater Lake Wilderness.** Wilderness protections for the wildlife and recreational corridors that lead into and out of the park would benefit future generations of people and wildlife. This proposed 500,000 acres of protection

would include the headwaters of numerous iconic Oregon rivers and thus benefit clean water as well.

- e. **Designate Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's) as new Wilderness Areas.** WSAs are places that have wilderness characteristics – in size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for recreation. The BLM manages 88 WSAs in Oregon and Washington, covering over 2.6 million acres. These areas are primarily located in southeast Oregon in the Prineville, Lakeview, Burns and Vale Districts. These protections should be legislated and these areas should be designated as official Wilderness areas.
- f. **Seek opportunities to expand existing wilderness areas** to include adjacent lands with wilderness characteristics, including lands acquired since the existing wilderness designations were made.

6. Designate New and/or Expand National Parks.

- a. **Expand Crater Lake National Park.** Currently, Crater Lake is Oregon's only national park and should be expanded to ensure better protections for the valuable natural resources in that region.
- b. **Consider designating new national parks in Oregon.** There are incredibly beautiful and unique landscapes in Oregon that should be designated as new national parks. These include:
 - i. The Newberry Crater National Monument, which covers over 54,000 acres of lakes, lava flows, and incredible geologic features in central Oregon,
 - ii. Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, which covers 652,480 acres, including the deepest river gorge in North America.

City and Urban Actions Towards 30x30 in Oregon

It is critical to intentionally include urban ecosystems in the 30x30 strategy. Protecting habitat on urban landscapes will help protect biodiversity, reduce air and water pollution, provide local access to nature, increase landscape resilience and sequester carbon in the face of climate change and advance environmental justice. Urban areas are too often neglected in landscape scale conservation initiatives because remaining habitat areas are often fragmented, isolated and relatively small. However, 30x30 offers an opportunity to advance a vision of urban areas that are resilient, green, healthy, biodiverse and equitable. We recommend the following:

1. **Support urban bond measures** to advance acquisition of interconnected systems of natural areas, protect fish and wildlife and promote climate resilience and climate justice.
2. **Promote creation of urban National Wildlife Refuges** (e.g Tualatin National Wildlife Refuge)
3. **Support implementation of the 2016 National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinion for the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in Oregon:** Implementation of this program would increase protections for floodplains in

development situations, advancing protection for listed salmonids and other species, and increasing landscape resilience.

4. **Allocate funding in the state budget to support acquisition of urban natural areas of statewide significance** (e.g. West Hayden Island).
5. **Strengthen Goal 15 (Willamette River Greenway)**: to increase habitat protection and restoration along the Willamette River.
6. **Strengthen Goal 5 (Natural Resources)**: to include more explicit and enforceable mandates to protect natural resources in urban areas.