

# OREGON WILD

Fall 2024 Volume 51, Issue 3



**Old growth,  
new momentum**

The urgency  
of Oregon's  
extinction crisis



# OREGON WILD

Let Nature Live. Let Nature Last.

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Photo by Jeremy Forrest

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

# 4-7

**Old growth, new momentum**

# 10

**The urgency of Oregon's extinction crisis**

# 14

**How a bill becomes a law: the River Democracy Act**



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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

# Growth rings



**SEAN STEVENS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

AS THE LEAVES begin to fall this autumn, many animals in Oregon will be on the move – migrating by land, river, sky, and sea. The change of the season will also mark my time coming to an end as executive director at Oregon Wild. After 17 years, including the last 12 as executive director, I am stepping down with gratitude for all we've accomplished together and with excitement to see a new leader take the mantle at this organization that means so much to all of us.

Oregon Wild is more indispensable than ever in the fight to protect the unique natural beauty of our state. Our unapologetic voice for all things wild is a necessary antidote to those who look at a landscape and can only think of how it could benefit humans. We have a vision of Oregon where nature doesn't just survive, but thrives - and we are primed for success in the years and decades ahead.

Thanks to the support of so many of you, we are financially healthy with solid reserves. We have a staff with immense talent and dedication who are doing excellent work to protect Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters. We have strong leadership in a board that is aligned with our mission and vision and highly motivated to find and support Oregon Wild's next executive director.

I want to thank you all for supporting me and Oregon Wild over the years. This is a movement that only succeeds through the dedication of thousands of people, and your collective actions add up to a transformational impact that we couldn't achieve alone. What an absolute privilege it has been to share this work with you.

The next few months will be my final time at the director's desk, and I'll be making the most of it to support the transition. I will lead our team to finalize our next four-year strategic plan, travel the state to celebrate our 50th anniversary with you in the many communities impacted by our work, and support the Oregon Wild team and incoming executive director in any way I can.

There are very few things in my life more important to me than Oregon Wild, and that won't change when I migrate on to my next chapter. I look forward to seeing you down the road at a legislative hearing, at Call of the Wild, out on the trail, and wherever our love for the wild brings us together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized initials 'SS'.

Top photo: Leading a hike to Memaloose Lake, protected as Wilderness in the 2009 Public Lands Omnibus legislation.  
Bottom photo: At Crabtree Valley, producing an old growth video in his first months on staff.



# Old growth, new momentum

## Final fight for old growth, or one more token gesture from the Forest Service?

**LAUREN ANDERSON**

CLIMATE FORESTS PROGRAM MANAGER



OREGON WILD has been working with our members to protect mature and old-growth forests for decades. Time and time again the federal agencies who manage our forest heritage have refused to take the necessary steps to actually establish protections for these essential forests. In spite of numerous setbacks over the years, we have remained steadfast in insisting on stronger safeguards against logging.

In July the U.S. Forest Service published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Nationwide Old-Growth Amendment. This nationwide amendment could finally put an end to prioritizing profit over protecting our oldest trees, but the draft needs to be overhauled before that dream can become a reality. The current comment period for the DEIS represents a once in a lifetime opportunity to set strong safeguards for our ancient forests, and Oregon Wild is throwing everything we have at the agency to ensure better outcomes.

This work includes partnering with social media impact producer Alex Haraus (@alex.haraus). Alex is better known for helping to generate over one million public comments opposing the Willow Oil Drilling Project in Alaska, but when he reached out to us to learn more about mature and old-growth protections in Oregon, we were thrilled for the chance to work with him.

Alex has spent the last year working on his first documentary project, *Crown Jewels*, which tells the story of threatened mature and old-growth

Alex Haraus walks among the "crown jewels" of the Pacific Northwest

Alden Kranz & Elena Jean





Alex Haraus



Victoria Wingell

forests across the country. The film puts a spotlight on communities trying to preserve these special places, and includes interviews with Oregon Wild staff, Chandra LeGue and Victoria Wingell. The film has screenings scheduled in dozens of locations across the country and is helping to tell the story of mature and old-growth forests during this critical comment opportunity.

Today, Oregon retains only a fraction of the old-growth forests that used to blanket our state. Much of these forests were lost to past logging. Old-growth forests provide clean air and water; fish and wildlife habitat; landscapes for recreation and play; and cultural value to Indigenous communities. And with their thicker protective bark and higher canopies, they are more resilient to wildfire. They are also an essential natural climate-solution that stores vast amounts of carbon. We must ensure these trees are protected and allowed to help us fight the climate and extinction crises.

The current proposals the U.S. Forest Service put forward in the DEIS fail to provide strong enough protections for old-growth trees, and they do almost nothing to ensure safeguards for our mature forests. We know that without strong protections for mature forests (our future old-growth), we won't be able to recover all of the old-growth we've lost. Thank you for everything that you've done to support Oregon Wild in the fight for our mature and old-growth forests. We intend to do everything we can to convince the Forest Service that these trees are worth more standing.

**Top photo: Victoria Wingell and Alex Haraus climbing an old-growth tree with Tree Climbing at Silver Falls to get the perfect shot Bottom photo: Chandra LeGue sits down with Alex Haraus for an interview in a forest**

## Impacts that last a generation

The Northwest Forest Plan has shaped the forests in western Oregon and Washington for thirty years. The current amendment process will have impacts that last for another several decades or longer. It's just one of many examples of how decisions made today can affect the landscape (and those that depend on it) for years and years to come.

Not unlike so much of our conservation work, the decisions made by Oregon Wild supporters like you can also have a lasting impact. With a changing climate, it's difficult to know what the next several rounds of landscape-level policies will address. But can any of us imagine a future in which it won't be invaluable to have a strong voice speaking out for Oregon's forests and the countless species (including us!) that depend on them?

Here's a decision you can make right now to help take care of who (and what) you love. You can choose to include Oregon Wild in your planned giving — and give future generations the chance to experience the majesty of Oregon's forests.

**To help, we've partnered with FreeWill to offer Oregon Wild supporters a free tool to set up your planned giving at: [www.freewill.com/oregonwild](http://www.freewill.com/oregonwild)**

We'd be honored to have your support. Questions? Email Jonathan Jelen at [jj@oregonwild.org](mailto:jj@oregonwild.org).

# Northwest Forest Plan - no more old growth?

JOHN PERSELL  
STAFF ATTORNEY



Robyn Micori

**W**HEN ADOPTED in 1994, the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) dramatically changed how the Forest Service managed national forests within the range of the northern spotted owl. Priorities shifted away from old growth liquidation toward protection and restoration of needed habitat. The plan established Late Successional Reserves (LSRs) to develop more complex older forest stands, Riparian Reserves to buffer streams and provide migration corridors, and “Matrix” areas where commercial logging would continue subject to proper environmental analysis.

While not perfect, the NWFP has proven successful in many ways, providing mechanisms to rein in destructive logging, restore unnaturally dense plantations, and promote natural processes. Despite the suite of tools available in the plan to address emerging issues, the Forest Service now aims to amend it, pointing to past failures to engage with Tribes as well as climate change and wildfire concerns.

Recently, an advisory committee co-chaired by the president of a timber industry lobby group released a report outlining what such an amendment should include. While the report includes laudable calls for meaningful Tribal engagement, it also recommends accelerated logging in mature and older forest stands. These forests offer vital carbon storage, drinking water sources, and habitat for imperiled species, the very things we need to protect and expand to address the climate and biodiversity crises.

The original NWFP limited logging in LSRs to stands under 80 years old. Such younger plantations sometimes require thinning to develop needed

old-growth features. Under the committee recommendations, however, logging would be allowed in moist LSR stands as old as 120 years. Stands older than 80 pre-date the industrial logging boom and almost certainly regenerated naturally. This 40-year shift would constitute a major reduction in protection for species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Meanwhile, the recommendations would authorize expanded logging in moist Matrix stands established after 1905. Even in stands originating as far back as 1825, the committee would allow logging to go forward if the Forest Service stated a “compelling ecological rationale.” In other words, many of the oldest remaining forests would never age into protection but remain on the potential chopping block. The report also recommends accelerated logging across one-third of all dry stands within the NWFP area over the next 15 years, regardless of land use allocation. Only trees 150 years and older would receive any protection from the chainsaw, even though many drier forests contain important habitat.

We only have a tiny fraction of the old growth present before European colonization. If adopted, these recommendations would severely limit recruitment of additional old growth. They also fail to address the need for more carbon storage, the viability of spotted owls and other species, or all the adverse impacts that accompany logging. We expect the Forest Service to officially unveil its NWFP amendment proposal soon, likely incorporating the committee’s recommendations. In the comment period that follows, it is crucial that you share your concerns about any shift away from old growth protection and recruitment toward accelerated commercial logging. Stay tuned for updates as this process plays out!



# Heartwood: Climate forests from Cascadia to the northern boreal

JENNA BUTLER  
ENVIRONMENTAL WRITER



Jenna Butler

CALL THE northern boreal forests of Alberta, Canada home: stands of black spruce, paper birch, alder, and tamarack, diminutive in height, but vast in range. In recent years, though, human-caused climate change, cuts to wildland firefighting programs, and forest management practices that fail to allow these stands to burn and renew themselves have taken their toll, and catastrophic forest fires now rip across the northern portion of the country every summer. Already damaged by the logging industry and by the inroads made by oil and gas, the trees are now burning at an unprecedented rate, and the forests are unable to reach old-growth status.

My fellowship work brought me down to Oregon's Shotpouch Cabin, on the north side of Marys Peak, for two stays in the autumn of 2023 and the early spring of 2024. At Shotpouch, I began to learn a very different forest ecosystem: the towering cedars, Douglas-firs, alders, noble firs, mosses, and vine maples of Cascadia. As I walked the forests with knowledgeable colleagues including Chandra LeGue and Oregon State University professor emerita Peg (M.L.) Herring, I came to understand some of the challenges facing this complex bioregion. A donated flight through LightHawk, partnered with Oregon Wild, gave me the opportunity to witness from the air instances of deforestation, wildfire, and the complexities of forest management.

My spring visit took me south to Eugene and the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference

Spring Creek Project's  
Shotpouch Cabin offers  
a forest retreat for writing

at the University of Oregon, where I learned about the history and future of the Northwest Forest Plan, as well as the profound need to center Indigenous traditional knowledge of cultural burning in the development of forest management practices—something that is also at the frontlines of environmental discourse back in Alberta. As I learned from the presentations made by tribal members and researchers including Angela Sondenaa, Howard Arnett, Bobby Bruno, Ayuthea LaPier, and David G. Lewis, I was able to lay this new knowledge about the importance of cultural burning practices alongside what I'd been researching back home through the work of Indigenous fire scientists such as Amy Cardinal Christianson.

My fellowship project, Heartwood, is a slow interweaving between the communities in Oregon's Cascade region and the boreal region in Alberta, centering lived experiences of communities close to these incredible forests and delving into the human impact on old growth. Starting as a series of articles and blog posts, it will eventually take the form of a cross-border conversation that serves to underline the fact that our forests, whether in coastal Oregon or in far northern Alberta, face many of the same stressors, even as they are beloved by those who call their shelter home.

*Jenna Butler is the recipient of the 2023-24 Environmental Writing Fellowship and Residency from Spring Creek Project, in partnership with Oregon Wild. More on Jenna's work can be found at [www.jennabutler.com](http://www.jennabutler.com)*

# The 1984 act that changed Oregon's landscape forever

CHANDRA LEGUE

SENIOR CONSERVATION ADVOCATE



# F

ORTY YEARS AGO, just 10 years into Oregon Wild's history, our little group (comprised of a long list of coalition members) helped reshape the map of Oregon. No, we didn't adjust the Idaho border, but we did help put nearly a million acres of protected Wilderness on the map. Literally.

Prior to 1984, much of Oregon's protected Wilderness landscape was made up of iconic mountain landscapes - from the Kalmiopsis to the Eagle Cap, and the major Cascade peaks in between. Protected Wilderness totaled 1.3 million acres.

The Oregon Wilderness Act of 1984 changed the map of Oregon's protected lands significantly, adding 21 new Wilderness areas and increasing the size of 8 others. Today, the dark-green splotches on public lands maps that dot the central coast, traverse the spine of the Cascades and their western foothills, and march across central Oregon to the east are a product of this Act and the years of political wrangling that led up to its passage.

We've long held up Wilderness (with a capital W) protection as the "gold standard" of public lands designations, ensuring that new roads, clearcuts, dams, and new mining developments can't degrade the wild nature of designated areas. The importance of this standard became crystal clear in the lead up to the 1984 Oregon Wilderness Act. Flawed efforts in the 1970s to identify potential wilderness areas made it clear that the U.S. Forest Service was leaving hundreds of thousands of acres of eligible wild lands vulnerable to ongoing logging, road building, and other development. The flawed roadless inventory process formed the basis of a 451,000 acre Wilderness bill introduced by Senator Mark Hatfield in 1979, and spurred legal action by Oregon

Jim Davis



Wild to try to add more roadless areas to the map. The House and Senate began to introduce different versions of Wilderness bills beginning in 1982, going back and forth as advocates weighed in and wild lands were caught in the middle.

As the final bill solidified, some incredible wild lands fell victim to the negotiations - including Joseph Canyon, the Old Cascades, and Hardesty Mountain. The size of other proposed areas including the Middle Santiam, Red Buttes, and Waldo Lake Wilderness areas was reduced. In the end, the Act added more than 860,000 acres to the Wilderness preservation system in Oregon, bringing the total to almost 2.2 million acres protected across the state.

More than just lines on a map, the protected areas included in the 1984 bill include ecologically vital habitats and connections. They included extensive stands of old-growth forests in places like Badger Creek, Bull of the Woods, Drift Creek, and the Middle Santiam; connections along the Cascade crest and into the foothills in the Waldo Lake, Rogue-Umpqua Divide, and Sky Lakes Wilderness areas; and remote watersheds across central and eastern Oregon home to wild fish and rugged canyons.

Today, Oregon Wild is still defending and working to protect the ancient forests, unprotected roadless wildlands, free-flowing streams, and wildlife that call these places home. Since 1984 350,000 acres of additional Wilderness has been designated, and Oregon's protected landscape stands at just 4% of its land base, far less than neighboring states. As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the 1984 protections, we can't help but look to a future map of Oregon with even more dark-green protected areas to highlight.

Chandira LeGue

Mariele Cowdin



## EXPLORE THE BADGER CREEK WILDERNESS

The 29,000-Acre Badger Creek Wilderness, on the east of Mount Hood, has more than 50 miles of trails. While a few of these offer some of the views more typical of Mount Hood's wild areas, the trail that follows Badger Creek 12 miles upstream from the Bonney Crossing Campground to Badger Lake has no vistas more distant than the opposite rim of the canyon that the creek runs through. Focusing on the wide diversity of trees (we counted 20 species on a recent trip - from ponderosa pines to Englemann spruce!) and the classic old-growth structure of layers, snags, openings, and a mix of ancient giants and young upstarts is a big part of what makes this Wilderness a joy to explore. Other joys include following the babbling stream for most of its length, plentiful campsites for backpackers, abundant wildflowers in May and June, and ripe huckleberries in August.

**Top photo: Coastal Wilderness areas like Cummins Creek protect stunning old-growth trees and forests. Bottom photo: The Strawberry Mountains Wilderness was expanded in the 1984 bill, nearly doubling its original size.**

# Think global, act local

## Cultivating a movement to stop the extinction crisis in Oregon

DANIELLE MOSER,  
WILDLIFE PROGRAM MANAGER



**S**IXTH MASS EXTINCTION.

Reading those words sends a chill down my spine. Globally, we are losing species at an alarming rate, including a decline in the biodiversity of our ecological systems which are critical for all species' health and well-being (including ours). A recent report, *Biodiversity in Focus*, estimates that in the United States “34% of plants and 40% of animals are at risk of extinction, and 41% of ecosystems are at risk of range-wide collapse.” That’s staggering.

Unfortunately, Oregon is not immune to these impacts. Currently, we have 294 species at an elevated risk of extinction and 11 native habitats of conservation concern. Ongoing threats from habitat loss and fragmentation, climate change, development, and invasive species are pushing these already vulnerable species to the brink. While that information is enough to put anyone in a downward spiral, acknowledging the scary trendlines is foundational for creating a grassroots movement for change. Which is exactly what we need in Oregon.

### **HISTORICAL ROADBLOCKS**

Oregon is known for its ‘green’ reputation. There’s a perception that passing strong environmental laws is easier here. While that may be true for certain environmental policies, the preservation of Oregon’s natural resources, including wildlife and the habitat they rely upon, has always played second fiddle. There is a huge disconnect between our weak state policies and the strong conservation values of the Oregon public. It’s important to understand the preconditions that have contributed to this dynamic.

Canva



## ODFW MISSION AND LEADERSHIP

Though the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has a conservation mission that seeks to protect and restore all of Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitat, in practice agency leadership (including the Fish and Wildlife Commission) has emphasized maximizing hunting and fishing opportunities and appeasing agricultural interests over that conservation mission. As such, the 'good ol' boys club' has dominated agency culture for decades, making change challenging, if not downright impossible.

## FUNDING

As the saying goes, money talks. Even though 88% of all species in the state are not hunted or fished, only roughly 4-6% of ODFW's total funding and resources are earmarked for non-game conservation. That's because a majority of the agency's budget comes from hunting and angling revenue. Whether through the sale of licenses and tags or excise taxes on ammunition and fishing tackle, ODFW's prioritization of 'game' species is reinforced continuously by this funding regime. So much so that ODFW staff often refer to these members of the public as their "customers," ignoring a huge swath of the public who value our state's wildlife in other ways than through the scope of a rifle.

## APATHETIC POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Oregon's politicians (even those considered environmentalists) do not prioritize fish, wildlife, and habitat protection policies - despite polls showing strong public support for these values. For example, in 2023, the Democratic-controlled legislature weakened public oversight of Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitats by changing the

Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) structure to limit proportionate representation. The Commission structure originally consisted of seven members, with five tied to each congressional district, and two at-large. Redistricting - and the addition of a sixth congressional district - required the legislature to amend the establishing language. However, agribusiness and their allies in the legislature used the opportunity to make wholesale changes to the Commission structure; making it more challenging to reach good outcomes for fish and wildlife that align with the values of the majority of Oregonians.

## WEAK LAWS

Unsurprisingly, when you combine weak political leadership, the influence of special interests, and inadequate conservation funding you get (drumroll please): weak wildlife protections. This includes policies like our state Endangered Species Act (ESA), which sounds good on paper but lacks necessary provisions - such as enforcement, the inclusion of private land, and Tribal consultation - to recover species and their habitats effectively. Attempts by advocates to amend these laws have been thwarted by an unsupportive (and at times, hostile) legislature.

## PLANTING SEEDS OF CHANGE

Where do we go from here? Is change happening - or even possible? The short answer is yes. Oregon Wild has been working tirelessly to shift this paradigm which has plagued Oregon's politics and

policies for decades. Advocating for better commissioners and securing more robust funding for wildlife conservation are just a few examples of where we'll continue to push for progress. Additionally, ODFW recently hired a new director; someone who is committed to securing long-term funding for wildlife conservation, and making sure the agency's mission and work are relevant to all Oregonians. This is a welcome change from previous leadership. While incremental improvements in agency culture, leadership, and funding are important; to effectively combat the twin crises of climate and extinction, we need a monumental shift away from business as usual.

And that's exactly what we're focused on moving ahead. We are exploring better solutions to adequately address the scale and scope of these growing threats, building a constituency that wants change (that's you!), and galvanizing the public into action. It won't be easy, and at times may seem daunting. However, overcoming immense obstacles to preserve our natural legacy is part of the Oregon Wild DNA.



Boyce Weade

# Holding agencies accountable when they violate the law

**JOHN PERSELL**  
STAFF ATTORNEY



John Persell

**W**HEN AGENCIES VIOLATE the law in ways that harm Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters, we are not afraid to take them to court to hold them accountable. Our current litigation docket reflects that.

With a broad coalition including the Nez Perce Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, we challenged the state's last minute change to the regulatory definition of "fish passage" at stream barriers like dams. Without notice, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife altered the definition from a default requirement that barriers must allow "volitional" passage by fish. Under the new definition, "trap-and-haul" is considered a form of fish passage, even though it results in much greater fish mortality. Our coalition's case will be heard by the Oregon Court of Appeals in Salem in September.

Also in September, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals will hear our challenge to the South Warner, Baby Bear, and Bear Wallow projects on the Fremont-Winema National Forest. Our appeal focuses on the Forest Service's "categorical exclusion" of 29,000 acres of commercial logging from National Environmental Policy Act analysis. This is the largest amount of commercial logging ever categorically excluded from such analysis by the Forest Service.

In June, we joined forces with WildEarth Guardians to file suit regarding the Youngs Rock Rigdon

Project, which targets over 1,000 acres of older natural stands on the Willamette National Forest near the Middle Fork. The Forest Service authorized aggressive "thinning" in these stands that more closely resembles clearcuts. Meanwhile, our lawsuit regarding the Grasshopper Project south of the Badger Creek Wilderness on the Mount Hood National Forest is ongoing. In that area, the Forest Service authorized aggressive logging in thousands of acres of mature and old-growth stands with no protections for the biggest, oldest trees. In addition to highlighting the severe impact these projects would have on spotted owls, we also called out the agency's failure to conserve forests as a natural climate solution. Watch for further updates as the litigation process plays out in these cases.

On the BLM side, Oregon Wild and Cascadia Wildlands are taking our effort to protect marbled murrelets near Coos Bay to the Ninth Circuit. After an unfavorable, cursory ruling from the district court in our challenge to the Big Weekly Elk Project, we appealed. We will soon begin briefing our claims that the agency failed to fully assess logging impacts to murrelets, and that the BLM violated its own management plan protections for this secretive seabird that nests in old-growth. Stay tuned for updates as the appeal process unfolds. Also, a shout-out to our attorney partners at Crag Law Center, Cascadia Wildlands, and WildEarth Guardians for providing excellent representation and co-counsel on many of these cases!

Rogger Meadow,  
South Warner  
Project area



# Diverse allies unite around green identity

**SAMI GODLOVE**

CENTRAL OREGON FIELD ASSOCIATE



Sami Godlove

**J**UST LIKE THE ecological and geographical diversity of our public lands and waters in Oregon, our state has a diverse group of people and organizations enjoying those public lands and working to ensure they are protected and accessible to all. Oregon Wild is proud to have so many partners in this rewarding work and leaders to look to in our efforts to make Oregon public lands more diverse, inclusive, and equitable.

In May, we attended the GreenLatinos National Summit in Puerto Rico. This summit was a gathering of conservation, climate, outdoor equity, and environmental justice activists and leaders from around the nation to network, share ideas, and build partnerships. We attended with our Bend-based friends at Vamonos Outside and came away inspired from our conversations, new friendships, and excursions through the El Yunque National Forest - the only tropical rainforest in the U.S. National Forest system!

It wasn't long before we were able to put these new partnerships into action. We signed onto a letter from GreenLatinos, Friends of the Inyo, and 60 other organizations—and co-wrote an op-ed with Vamonos Outside—calling on the U.S. government to share America the Beautiful passes as a welcome gift to newly naturalized citizens. In addition to reducing barriers that often prevent immigrant families from being able to visit and enjoy these places, it would help America live up to the promise that our spectacular National Parks,

**Top photo: The monthly ReConnect is an opportunity for our Public Lands for All partners to reconnect with each other and with our passion for nature and the outdoors**  
**Bottom photo: Sami Godlove and Wesley Heredia of Vamonos Outside at the GreenLatinos National Summit in Puerto Rico**

Wilderness Areas, and Wild & Scenic Rivers are treasures for everyone to use and enjoy, and help inspire a new generation of public lands defenders.

Oregon Wild was well represented at this year's Public Interest Environmental Law Conference, held annually at the University of Oregon Law School. If you attended any panels at the conference, chances are an Oregon Wild staffer was on it! JT Flowers, our Public Lands Coordinator, moderated a panel discussion titled Public Lands for All: Blackness Outside in front of a packed, standing-room-only crowd.

Lastly, we have co-hosted several successful ReConnect happy hours with our friends at Wild Diversity and other partners! These meet-ups are an opportunity for BIPOC conservationists, climate justice advocates, and outdoor enthusiasts to reconnect with each other and with our passion for nature and the outdoors.

This September, we will be co-hosting an event in Bend with Vamonos Outside and The Environmental Center Bend in conjunction with Hispanic Access Foundation's Latino Conservation Week and the City of Bend's Welcoming Week. The event will provide a fun and educational glimpse for BIPOC youth and families into the world of monarch butterflies, other native pollinators, and their habitats. Monarchs remind us just how important migrants—both human and non-human—are to the world around us.

# We'll see you out in the wild

**RACHEL MIRELES**  
MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR



**H**AVE YOU EVER been to the St. John's Farmer's Market? How about the Hillsboro Farmer's Market? The one out in Sandy? Or the McMinnville one? Did you go to Pride? What about Mississippi Street Fair? Well, I've been to them all and many more.

Throughout the summer, I get to set up at community events all across Oregon. If I've talked to you at one of those spots and this is your first newsletter, welcome!

Oregon Wild loudly and proudly boasts that the majority of our income comes from our members (psst.. that's YOU!). And over this last year we have successfully gained over 750 new members like you through a myriad of ways, but my favorite by far is by having face-to-face conversations with the people who love the natural beauty of Oregon as much as I do.

I've had the privilege to share stories, exchange ideas, and learn about what matters most to our community. It's in these moments that I see the passion and commitment of Oregonians to preserving our wild places. Every new member, every handshake, and every conversation reinforces the power we have when we work as a collective.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank every single one of you for being here with us, helping us keep Oregon Wild!



## MIGRATIONS

After two and a half years of taking our social media game to the next level, Communications Associate Hanna Anderson left the Oregon Wild team in June to pursue new adventures. Hanna worked to bring a whole new generation of nature-lovers into the Oregon Wild orbit and launched our TikTok presence. While her accomplishments were many, perhaps the most blockbuster was the partnership she organized with Pattie Gonia that reached more than one million people (including the likes of music superstar Lizzo!). A big thank you from the whole Oregon Wild team for Hanna's contributions to Oregon Wild.

We're excited to announce the opening of the Oregon Wild online storefront! Now you can show your support for Oregon's wild places with our new range of merchandise, including t-shirts, hats, stickers, and books. Each purchase helps fund our mission to protect Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters. Shop the store and discover products that let you wear your passion for conservation at [www.oregonwild.org/store](http://www.oregonwild.org/store)



# How a bill becomes a law: the River Democracy Act

**SAMI GODLOVE**

CENTRAL OREGON FIELD ASSOCIATE

**ERIK FERNANDEZ**

WILDERNESS PROGRAM MANAGER



Priscilla Macy



REGON RIVERS RECEIVED big news in recent weeks when Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley re-introduced the River Democracy Act in Congress! This historic bill (S. 4449) would expand Oregon's network of Wild & Scenic Rivers by 3,215 miles, providing new safeguards for clean drinking water, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat in key watersheds across the state like the Deschutes, Rogue, Grande Ronde, John Day, Clackamas, McKenzie, and many others.

When passed, the River Democracy Act would become Oregon's largest river conservation feat to date, more than doubling the mileage of protected streams in the state. That would mean families could create new memories fishing for salmon on the South Fork Alsea River, the water managers for Eugene won't need to worry as much about runoff and increased filtration costs from clear-cuts in the McKenzie watershed, and kids can glimpse their first elk migrating through a protected wildlife corridor along Tumalo Creek near Bend.

Shortly after reintroduction, the bill received a successful subcommittee hearing which included an outpouring of support from experts and the public. To date, over 300 Oregon businesses, 50 breweries, 75 community organizations, 26 fish biologists, hundreds of anglers, and thousands of individuals have signed on in support of the River Democracy Act.

But we still have a lot of work to do in order to get this bill passed.

The South Santiam River provides outstanding recreational opportunities, critical habitat for migratory fish, and drinking water to downstream communities—all values that would be protected by the River Democracy Act.

Those who watched Schoolhouse Rock will remember that, ultimately, the River Democracy Act needs to be passed out of the House and Senate and signed by the President. It's no secret that Congress is fairly dysfunctional these days, creating an obvious challenge to passing good bills like the River Democracy Act. Fortunately, the legislation has been a priority for Senator Wyden since 2019 - and now it's time for him to get it across the finish line!

The next step is to pass the bill out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Typically bills that clear this key hurdle can then be included in a national package of bills. We are cautiously optimistic about a rumor circling around D.C. that there might be a public lands bill in the "lame duck" session of Congress - after the election but before the new Congress and administration takes office.

While the results of the Presidential and Congressional elections will create new challenges and opportunities, we'll keep the fight going as long as it takes to ensure our rivers are adequately protected. With the current and impending threats of climate change, mining, aggressive logging, and unchecked development impacting Oregon's rivers and watersheds, the time to act is now. The River Democracy Act is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to do that.



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# Call of the Wild Party Like it's 1974!

Join Oregon Wild for a special edition of the annual Call of the Wild benefit to celebrate 50 years of protecting Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters!

This year's camp-inspired event is one you won't want to miss and we've got some special surprises in the works. As an homage to Oregon Wild's founding 50 years ago, we're going to Party Like it's 1974! That's right - we're bringing the great outdoors inside for a '70s-themed party with music, food, drink, games, a silent auction, and even a wildlife dance-off!

Thanks to our amazing sponsors, every dollar raised at Call of the Wild will help us advance our mission of protecting and restoring Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters!

It will be the most fun way ever to show your support for protecting Oregon's forests, rivers, wildlife, and climate! So just scan the QR code or visit [oregonwild.org/callofthewild](http://oregonwild.org/callofthewild) to grab your tickets!

We can't wait to see you there!

