

2019 FWOC RESOLUTION ON SAVING THE LOSTINE

material from Brock Evans
drafted by M. McCloskey
Sept. 26, 2019

Background:

The Eagle Cap Wilderness in northeast Oregon is the largest wilderness area in that state. The most cherished entryway into its backcountry is on the narrow road along the Lostine River on its north side. Lush mixed conifers crowd along it for about ten miles, with the wilderness boundary above it about a mile or less on either side.

This forest strip provides a fine scenic introduction to the wilderness and is the site of seven much-used campgrounds.

While the moist forests there rarely burn, the Forest Service has embarked upon a plan to clear it of “ground-fuels.” But, these plans include plans to remove many big, old trees, whose removal will make the forests more flammable. They have planned 20 different cutting units, with miles of new, spur access roads.

To contest these plans, conservationists have sued and, on losing, have appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court. Among the many deficiencies is the lack of an environmental analysis or impact statement, the Forest Service having merely filed a Categorical Exclusion. Hearings have also not been held.

Resolution:

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs opposes the plans of the Forest Service to log in the forest strips along the Lostine River road that serves as the prime scenic entryway into Oregon’s Eagle Cap Wilderness.

adopted by the
Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs
at Centralia, WA
Sept. 28, 2019

2019 FWOC RESOLUTION ON OPPOSING EFFORTS TO WEAKEN THE ESA

from Michael McCloskey

Aug. 17, 2019

In early August of this year (2019), the Trump Administration announced regulatory changes that substantially weaken the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

This Act has been called the “Magna Carta of the environmental movement.” It was first proposed by Republican President Richard Nixon in 1973. It has since been praised as the most far-reaching environmental law ever passed.

These revisions have been called “the biggest attack ... on how it works” since regulations to implement it were first issued.

With the United Nations now proclaiming that, with a changing climate, over one million plants and animals are currently at risk, this law is more important than ever.

Among others, these changes would weaken the ESA by doing the following:

1. by making it harder to list a species and easier to delist species now protected under the ESA.
2. by failing to automatically protect species just listed as “threatened,” as is now the practice. A separate and deliberate decision would have to be made in each case to provide protection.
3. by not putting historic, but unoccupied, habitat of an endangered species into critical habitat when such habitat will be needed when the species recovers its numbers.
4. by publicizing the economic costs of a proposed listing, thereby unleashing political pressures to avoid making it. Congress has already forbidden the regulatory agencies from considering economic questions in making the listing decision, which is supposed to just be based on scientific findings.
5. by narrowing the circumstances under which the wildlife agencies would be required to consult with other federal agencies with regard to the impact of their planned construction projects on endangered species.
6. by making it harder to take climate change into consideration as a factor in making listing decisions.

This set of changes comes on top of a never-ending succession of efforts by the Trump Administration to weaken environmental protection programs. So far, the Trump

Administration has weakened 83 environmental standards by issuing harmful rollbacks in regulatory language. They reach across the board—from air pollution to wildlife. Many are being challenged in court.

Most recently, they have turned over regulatory authority over the pollution from coal-fired power plants to the states (taken from EPA). And, they have tried to freeze future mileage standards for cars at a level far below the levels set by the Obama administration (at 37 mpg rather than 51 mpg).

RESOLUTION

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs deplores what the Trump Administration has been doing to weaken the nation's environmental programs and calls upon the Trump Administration to abandon its efforts to weaken the Endangered Species (ESA) program, and Congress to avoid doing this, because a strong program to save species is needed more than ever and an un-weakened ESA has been incredibly effective.

[Past FWOC resolutions have recognized the importance of the ESA and have sought to protect it; see pp. 39-40 of the summary of past resolutions. However, they do not directly deal with the latest aspect.]

adopted by the
Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs
at Centralia, WA
Sept. 28, 2019