

PROPOSED FWOC RESOLUTIONS FOR 2020
FINAL APPROVED AT NOVEMBER 21, 2020 MEETING

2020-1: NEED TO CANCEL ALL OF THE ROLLBACKS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS BY RECENT REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTS

President Trump has tried to rollback provisions of over one hundred twenty five environmental policies and programs. Among them: efforts to weaken the National Environmental Policy Act, to withdraw the U.S. from Paris Climate Accord, to weaken the Endangered Species Act, to begin drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge, to reduce fuel economy standards, and to shrink the boundaries of new National Monuments in Utah (by over two million acres).

Environmental organizations have contested almost all of these efforts in court. They have won most of these cases (97%), but often Trump's administration has been allowed to go back to try to remedy the procedural flaws in their efforts. Thus, their misguided efforts are often still alive.

Unfortunately, President Obama did not rollback many of the bad regulatory decisions of the second President Bush, especially those involving the Endangered Species Act. These decisions should also now be altered to better protect endangered species and the environment.

RESOLVED:

The FWOC strongly urges newly-elected President Biden to take immediate steps to cancel ALL of the rollbacks of environmental programs that President Trump ordered and has had underway. In fact, he should try to cancel all of the rollbacks of these programs going back to the administration of the second President Bush.

SOURCE: *New York Times* reports
AUTHOR: Michael McCloskey
SPONSOR: Resolutions Comm.

2020-2: OPPOSING FOREST SERVICE MOVES TO OPEN MORE TRAILS TO ELECTRIC BIKES

In late 2020, the Forest Service took administrative steps to open more trails in the national forests to electric bikes. It wants them to be treated differently than other motor vehicles.

Such bikes startle and disturb wildlife because they travel at speeds of up to 55 mph and allow users to cover more terrain in far less time than hikers. They cause wildlife to flee their habitat and move to other areas. They also pose conflicts with other trail users: hikers and horseback riders.

In contrast to hikers and horseback riders, mountain bikers also can displace wildlife. Further, mountain bikers are also trying to be permitted to use wilderness areas, where they are excluded under the terms of The Wilderness Act.

RESOLVED:

The FWOC opposes moves the Forest Service made in late 2020 to open more trails in national forests to electric bikes, especially trails heretofore open just to non-motorized vehicles.

And they oppose entry of mountain bikers into wilderness areas.

INFO. SOURCE: Wilderness Watch
AUTHOR: Michael McCloskey
SPONSOR: Resolutions Committee

2020-3. OPPOSING MISGUIDED LEGISLATION INTENDED TO LIMIT FOREST FIRES

The forest fires in the summer of 2020 have caused panic about the damage these fires have done. While they have burned large areas and many homes in a few states (such as Calif.), the number of forest fires in 2020 in the West is less than the ten-year average.

Remaining large old-growth trees are not the source of the problem; they do not cause such fires. They should not be removed. The thick bark on these trees causes trees to be slow to burn. Such trees cool the forest and increase humidity there. They are an important ingredient in any plan to impede forest fires.

President Trump and the timber industry have said that the answer is more logging, particularly of the older trees. Also, that environmental laws and regulations are standing in the way.

Both suppositions are wrong. Environmental laws ensure thoughtful decisions based on sound data. And, they don't stand in the way of thinning closely-spaced, spindly trees and removing flammable brush.

While prescribed burns can be helpful (especially in the urban-rural interface), unfortunately the window when the weather is right for such burning is narrow. To be treated in this way, the forests need to be dry enough but not too dry, and the winds need to be blowing gently in the right direction. There are not many such days.

Homes and structures should not be built in the forest zone. Those there should not allow trees and brush to grow near buildings. They should meet "Fire-wise Standards." Homes in forests are getting burned increasingly because they have been built in the wrong places.

RESOLVED:

The FWOC opposes misguided efforts and legislation (such as S. 4431) to limit forest fires. These are efforts that focus on removing large, old trees.

INFO. SOURCE: Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics
AUTHOR: Michael McCloskey
SPONSOR: Resolutions Committee

2020-4: OPPOSING INCREASED LOGGING IN ALASKA'S TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

Late in 2020, President Trump tried to exempt all of the roadless forest areas of the Tongass National Forest in southeast Alaska from President Clinton's 2001 Roadless Rule. This was at the request of the state of Alaska. It wants to let loggers into these forests, which are composed mainly of spruce, hemlock, and cedar trees. 9.36 million acres are affected.

These are the largest intact temperate rainforests in North America. They are America's largest carbon sink.

Logging there would also seriously damage salmon runs.

The Forest Service just completed its EIS on this proposal, finding "it would do no significant harm." Opposition to this finding will undoubtedly come in court from environmental groups. Tribal groups also oppose this action.

In late October, this action became final.

RESOLVED:

The FWOC opposes exempting the Tongass National Forest from the Roadless Rule. Commercial logging should not take place in the remaining roadless areas in that forest. They should be protected as an incredibly valuable carbon sink. **Past resolutions:** See Res. #20 [2002] calling for roadless areas there to be protected.

SOURCE: NPR news
AUTHOR: Michael McCloskey
SPONSOR: Resolutions Committee

2020-5. OPPOSING GOING FORTH WITH THE PEBBLE MINE IN ALASKA

For over two decades, controversy has swirled over the proposed Pebble Mine at the headwaters of Bristol Bay in Alaska. It is being proposed to mine gold, copper, and rare earths over twenty some years.

Bristol Bay supports the world's largest intact salmon fishery, particularly of huge runs of sockeye salmon.

Its critics think it will risk seriously damaging their habitat by a host of developments on these headwater wetlands, such as by damming tributary streams for tailing ponds. The mining process will impact over a square mile of earth.

Experts at the Fish and Wildlife Service say it will de-stabilize the habitat for these salmon runs. In addition to environmentalists, tribes oppose the mine. In 2014, President Obama blocked plans to move forward with development of the mine.

A deficient EIS by the Corps of Engineers at first found problems but then, under pressure from President Trump, said the mine could go ahead. He had done this under pressure from Alaska's governor, who sent in a letter supporting development that was drafted by mine officials.

Polls show a majority of Alaskan residents oppose the mine.

RESOLVED:

The FWOC opposes development of the Pebble Mine in Alaska because it will seriously impair the salmon habitat of Bristol Bay. This salmon fishery is a world-quality resource of immense importance.

INFO SOURCE: CNN news
AUTHOR: Michael McCloskey
SPONSOR: Resolutions Comm.

2020-6: RESOLUTION ON THE CHEHALIS RIVER IN SOUTHERN WASHINGTON

On July 24, 2020, Gov. Jay Inslee of Washington state put a hold on moving forward with the proposed dam on the Chehalis River.

Inslee told the two agencies, which are planning a dam on the biggest river in southwest Washington, to suspend their work until January 21, 2021. In the six months afforded, he ordered them to look into whether the non-dam options would sufficiently reduce the flooding around Chehalis. Flooding has long been a problem, particularly when Interstate 5 is flooded and is shut down.

The Chehalis River Flood Control Basin (a local body of government) has proposed building a 250-ft. tall dam on the upper part of the river basin, near the town of Pe Ell. A levee near the Chehalis Airport would also help hold back floodwaters.

The dam would temporarily flood up to 850 acres of forest land. Water would only be held back when floods are occurring.

The environmental impact study on the project found that the dam would harm salmon and steelhead populations and the river's quality. However, it would provide tunnels for salmon to swim through.

In contrast to putting new dams up, in other parts of Washington state dams have been coming down--on the Elwha, the Nooksack, and the Pilchuck rivers, for instance.

The proposed Chehalis Dam has aroused controversy, particularly among salmon advocates and tribes. Both the Chehalis and Quinault tribes catch salmon on the Chehalis River. By restoring floodplains and relocating buildings and roadways, they say flood damage can be reduced without hurting salmon.

Additional things that they feel ought to be considered include: buying land, more restoration, and work on I-5. Chehalis Tribe Chairman Harry Pickernell, Sr., says "our job now as the Chehalis Basin Board is to find a solution that satisfies both farmers, the loggers, and the salmon harvesters." The Board provides oversight for the efforts to reduce flood damage without hurting salmon. It was set up by the Governor's office in 2017.

Chief Pickernell says that because "our salmon harvests are dwindling as

it is,” the Chehalis Tribe is striving to find more ways to “maintain or improve our salmon harvest and the water quality in the basin.”

RESOLVED:

The FWOC supports Gov. Inslee’s temporary hold on building the Chehalis Dam and calls for it to be permanently abandoned because of the conclusion of the Environmental Impact Statement that the proposed dam would harm salmon and steelhead populations and the river’s water quality.

The FWOC also supports looking into restoring its floodplains, and where needed, relocating buildings and roadways so that the natural and historic area of floodplains on the Chehalis River may be returned.

INFO SOURCE: Pacific Rivers, KUOW News
AUTHOR: John Rettig / **EDITS:** Michael McCloskey
SPONSOR: Mazamas

2020-7: FWOC RESOLUTION ON REVOCATION OF 21 INCH RULE

FOREST SERVICE SHOULD NOT REVOKE THE 21 INCH RULE IN EASTERN OREGON NATIONAL FORESTS

- For twenty-five years, the Forest Service has had a rule that on its national forests in eastern Oregon, no trees 21 inches in diameter or larger could be cut in the screens along roads.
- This rule had its virtues and its drawbacks: it was clear and definite, but it was also somewhat arbitrary. However, it had the virtue of saving a lot of old trees from being cut. It was easy to apply.
- This rule was originally applied to 10 million acres and was initially applied in eastern Washington as well. It was supposed to be temporary, but it has lasted so long that it seemed to be permanent.
- But in the summer of 2020, the Forest Service decided it wanted to revoke the rule and replace it with a more flexible one—with different rules for different kinds of trees. The 21 inch rule would just apply to ponderosa pines.
- In the next few years under this change, the allowable cut in these forests is projected to go from 229 million board-feet to 255 million board-feet.
- The change applies to six national forests in Eastern Oregon.
- The Forest Service claims the change is being made because of various circumstances: “changing conditions, ... updated science and because of management priorities.”
- Its spokesman said, that with these changes, “the forests will better withstand and recover more quickly from wildfire, drought, and other disturbances.” The stands will then grow to be both dense and homogenous, he claimed. “The potential for die-off will be lowered,” he said.
- Under it, old trees are defined as those of at least 150 years old, while large trees are those over 30 inches in diameter in the case of grand fir, white fir, and Douglas fir. For other species, such as Ponderosa Pine, the limit on cutting will still be 21 inches.
- It should be noted, however, that back in the 1990’s, the panel of Eastside Scientific Societies recommended adopting BOTH the limitation on cutting trees 21” inches or larger AND the rule against cutting trees older than 150 years.
- The Forest Service Research Station here issued a report in February justifying the change, but conservationists think it was hastened along by the Trump Administration. And, the Forest Service always wants more discretion.

- The Station said the forests were becoming more shade-tolerant and dense, with species such as white fir and grand fir taking over. They get big fast but are not that old, and are less fire resistant than Ponderosa Pines. Practically speaking, not all big trees are old, and not all old trees are big.
- Oregon Wild asserts that the Forest Service is going from an enforceable rule to an unenforceable guideline, which amounts to a mere suggestion.
- They argue that the existing rule fosters large structures in the forests, habitat for snag-dependent wildlife, appropriate hydrology, soil health, and carbon sequestration.
- 27 conservation organizations have joined them in opposing the change.
- Shortcomings it also should be noted occurred in the public involvement process on this matter.

RESOLVED:

The FWOC opposes revoking the 21 inch rule in eastern Oregon national forests and urges its retention because of its many ecological benefits. It has a good record in protecting big trees. As written, it provides enough leeway for exceptions. A judge has ruled that the Forest Service can't just break the rule a lot.

INFO SOURCE: Northwest Public Broadcasting (July 20, 2020)
Capital Press (Aug. 10, 2020)

AUTHOR: Michael McCloskey

SPONSOR: Resolutions Comm.

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