

RESOLUTIONS FOR THE FEDERATION OF WESTERN OUTDOOR CLUBS FOR 2022

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for the Resolutions Committee

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2022-1: Urging President Biden to Overturn More of Trump's Rollbacks

When he was running for President, President Biden pledged to overturn all of Trump's rollbacks of environmental policies. While in his first year, Biden made a good start on this, he now seems to be flagging. Most authorities think he has only over-turned only 30-50 percent of them.

Some of these early moves were significant:

- such as by his restoring the 2016 rule requiring reduction of methane emissions;
- tightening fuel efficiency standards for vehicles to reach 49 miles per gallon by 2026;
- and granting Calif. its waiver to establish tighter clean air regulations.

And, it is important to go about over-turning them methodically and in the right way.

But he needs to keep at it.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs congratulates President Joseph Biden on his progress on overturning things that President Trump did to roll-back environmental policies and urges him to do even more. They all need to go.

2022-2: Saving Mature and Old-Growth Trees on Federal Lands

On Earth Day in 2022, President Biden issued an executive order affording special status to old-growth trees. He ordered the Interior and Agriculture Departments to **inventory the old growth** on lands they manage and to **develop new policies** to give them greater protection.

At the outset, they are also to develop a **shared definition** of mature and old-growth forests. (Initially, they may have been applying the definition just to trees over 150 years of age). They are also being directed to develop policies to **reduce imports** of agricultural commodities grown on recently **de-forested lands**.

Earlier, 70 conservation groups had urged him to stop logging old-growth trees on federal lands, which they consider to be trees over 80 years of age (and ones soon to be).

Conservationists are particularly concerned about the impact of wildfires on giant sequoias in California. There, in just the last two years, wildfires have **killed one-fifth** of all these trees—**some 10,000** of them. These trees are burning at far greater levels than the historic rate (only a few hundred had died from wildfires in the prior 2000 yrs.).

For many years, prescribed burning has been pursued among them to reduce the encroachment of other types of trees. While heroic efforts are now being made to save the giant sequoias (such as by wrapping their basal swells in insulating foil, installing sprinkler systems, and removing interspersed fuel), the rate of climate change needs to be reduced to slow wildfires.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs congratulates President Biden on his efforts to afford greater protection to old trees and urges him to bring cutting of them on federal lands to an end. They need to stay alive for as long as possible to keep the carbon in them out of the atmosphere. The FWOC also urges Biden and his agencies to do more to protect the oldest trees (such as giant sequoias) from wildfire.

2022-3: Opposing New Logging Sales in Mature and Old-Growth Forests on Public Lands

While most sales of old growth on federal lands have come an end, some are still occurring.

One is on BLM land in southern Oregon. It is on 20,000 acres of old growth (many over 150 years old) that lie within Late Successional Reserves set aside to protect habitat for spotted owls. These forests are found along the Rogue-Umpqua divide **in the Poor Windy project** outside of the town of Glendale (west of I-5).

The BLM is pursuing another one on the Wellington Wildlands in the Applegate Valley in southern Oregon. It would be logged in the **Bear Grub sale**, which would harm the population of Pacific Fishers there. It had been in an Adaptive Management Area under the Northwest Forest Plan. Over one thousand people opposed it in planning sessions. And in other BLM areas, old trees are being threatened in Vegetation Management projects.

Another is on Forest Service land in the upper Rogue River basin in southern Oregon. It is in the **Stella timber sale**. Parts of it are in the Riparian Reserve, which includes forests over 80 years old. This sale degrades habitat for the Spotted Owl in various ways, such as by building logging roads in backcountry.

And, the Forest Service is still pursuing the 4400-acre **Flat Country** timber sale in the Willamette National Forest near the McKenzie River west of the giant Holiday Farm fire of a few years ago. Most of the sale is in mature forests (over 80 years old) and some would be clear-cut. It is not only opposed by most environmental groups but by such respected foresters as Dr. Jerry Franklin and Dr. Norm Johnson. They were the ones who wrote much of the Northwest Forest Plan, and this sale would harm the habitat of the Northwest Spotted Owl. [Note: the Forest Service claims these stands are not old growth because they are not over 180 years of age].

And, in eastern Oregon where old growth sales have supposedly ended, big trees are still coming down under various pretenses, as in the **Big Mosquito project** in the Malheur NF. There plans are being laid to remove big trees in 27,000 acres of roadless forest. In the Fremont-Winema NF, 16,000 acres of old growth are threatened; in the Umatilla NF, 27,000 acres of old growth are threatened; and in the Morgan-Nesbitt project on the east side of the Eagle Cap Wilderness, old trees in 87,000 acres are in jeopardy.

All told, almost a quarter of a million acres of old growth is about to be logged.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs opposes all such projects involving mature and old-growth forests on public lands, and calls for protecting their old growth. Specifically, it opposes the Poor Windy Project, the Bear Grub sale, the Stella and Flat Country sales, and other projects imperiling the big pines in eastern Oregon. They are about to be logged in defiance of President Biden's new executive order.

2022-4: Thanking Those Who Negotiated Oregon's Private Forest Accord

The Oregon legislature this year passed breakthrough legislation that will improve protection for Oregon's streams. As a result of this new legislation, stream-side buffers will be increased, logging on steep slopes reduced, and less-damaging forest roads constructed. Some of the details were worked out by what was called the Private Forest Accord (composed of 13 representatives of conservation groups and 13 from the forest industry).

Groups such as Oregon Wild, the Wild Salmon Center, and KS Wild worked hard to make this happen.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs thanks them for all their productive efforts. And, it thanks those in the legislature who passed this important legislation. The results embody a major step forward.

2022-5: Opposing Rep. Blumenauer's Columbia Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation Act of 2022

This bill adds very little wilderness around Mt. Hood, only 4% of what needs protection—only 7500 acres of the 178,000 acres needing to be added.

Too much logging is called for in the Mt. Hood NRA. In fact, it adds to the proffered justifications for more logging in the NRA. It claims more logging enhances scenic values, addresses climate change, and improves watershed protection (which is **not** the case).

With this bill, the Pacific Crest Trail corridor will be in greater jeopardy.

Oregon Wild believes his bill will do more harm than good to the Mt. Hood area.

Rep. Blumenaur seems to have been trying to work things out with the tribes (to cut them in on management) and with the mountain bikers.

While BARK is listed as supporting the concepts embodied in the bill, their printed statement says they want to uphold natural ecological processes there and looks forward to staying engaged to see that they will be given priority

Kevin Gorman, speaking for the Friends of the Columbia Gorge, says they look forward to improving the bill to insure it is sustainable and brings better transportation options to the Gorge.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs opposes the latest Blumenauer bill (H. R. 7665) and calls for its withdrawal.

It also calls upon him to work with outdoor and conservation groups to develop a bill that they can support.

2022-6: Breaching Dams on the Lower Snake River

U.S. federal district courts in Oregon have long held that more needs to be done to assure safe passage of small salmon through the series of federal dams on the lower Snake River. For years, these judges have found that the biological opinions of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), dealing with the fate of these fish, **to be inadequate**. By law, these opinions provide guidance on what may be done on the river.

Now the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA), which oversees NFMS, has released a draft report calling for major changes in salmon management on that stretch of river, including breaching the dams there. And the federal Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has called for even more serious efforts to restore the salmon runs there.

Talks are now underway in Biden's administration on this recommendation. Recognizing that the Northwest natives also want the dams removed, Biden now proclaims that this a matter of tribal justice.

And some important Northwest political leaders have joined the talks, including Washington Senator Patty Murray and Gov. Jay Inslee. They have both issued a draft report on the costs, benefits, and impacts of dam changes. The long continuing litigation has also been suspended for the second year.

President Biden needs to get firmly behind the recommendations of these two key federal agencies and push removing or breaching the dams. The runs have drastically declined, and fishery scientists have long called for breaching the dams. Removal can no longer await a new political consensus supporting it.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs welcomes the recommendations of NASA and CEQ for salmon protection on the lower Snake River and urges President Biden to direct that the federal dams along the lower Snake River be breached or removed to restore salmon runs.

2022-7: Coping with the Shrinking Colorado River

The Colorado River is now **three-quarters empty** (2022). It is in the midst of a twenty-two, year decline.

The worst drought in twelve centuries is emptying it.

Because of the decline in water levels, a huge crisis grips this basin.

It must make **major, planned, and systemic reductions** in its use of water. These reductions must include:

- **reducing the size of crops being irrigated** there, particularly ones in surplus and for crops for non-essential foods [note: 70% of the river's water is used for irrigated crops];
- **reductions in turf being watered**, including:
 - replacing lawns with desert vegetation in parks, along roads, and around houses; [note: Nevada has already done this];and eliminating golf courses;
- **reducing waste in distributing water;**
- **better indoor recycling;**
- **using water desalination systems;** and
- counteracting toxic, desert dust.

The Bureau of Reclamation has just told the basin states to reduce their water use next year by 15% (which they missed doing this year); this small reduction is only a beginning. Without bigger reductions, the basin faces imminent reductions in water deliveries and hydropower production. Las Vegas has just reduced its water use by a third—to show what can be done.

In 2019, the seven basin states and Mexico signed an agreement to work together to reduce use of the river's water.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs recognizes the Colorado River basin faces a crisis with its shrinking levels and believes that major, planned, and systemic reductions must be made in its use of water.

2022-8: President Biden Must Declare a National Emergency to Cope with Climate Change

As President Biden has discovered that he cannot move his ambitious climate change program of \$3.5 trillion through Congress, he must face the fact that he must declare a national emergency to meet international time-tables to keep down temperatures and to keep levels of greenhouse gases from rising even more.

The IPCC has warned us all that we must prevent average world temperatures from rising further by more than 1.5 degrees C., or the adverse trends underway will become irreversible. Since then, they have already risen by 1.2 degrees C.--putting us in a precarious position.

We should remember that America can make major reductions. To reach goals set for 2012, our country achieved twice the amount of the assigned reductions.

Last year, President Biden declared that “climate change is literally an existential threat to our nation and to the world. It is an emergency, an emergency.”

The enactment of his modest spending program of \$369 billion for climate protection will not meet these goals, though it is an important step forward.

Among other things, it also provides clear statutory authority for EPA to regulate emissions that raise the levels of greenhouse gasses (overcoming a recent bad Supreme Court decision).

To put this amount of \$369 billion in perspective, this amount and all the other new outlays for the next decade are not an unconscionable sum. They amount to only one-third of one percent of expected GNP.

President Biden can make this declaration under the provisions of sec. 201 of the National Emergencies Act, opening up a host of legal options to invest in clean and renewable energy.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs urges President Biden to declare a national emergency to be able to take necessary steps to protect our climate.

But, the Federation does compliment him and his party for allocating \$369 billion to provide incentives for the immediate reduction in use of fossil fuels. It is the biggest step America has yet taken. By the end of this decade, it is expected to put our emissions 40% below the 2005 level.

But, we regret that compromises had to be made to achieve it, such as by opening 60 million acres in the waters of the of Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf of Alaska to new oil leases and 2 million acres of federal land to such leases. (see Res. 4, 2021 calling for a bigger climate bill).

**2022-9: Congress Needs to Protect the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska
(withdrawn)**

WITHDRAWN BECAUSE OF NEW INFORMATION [Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has vacated 3-judge approval of the road, with the entire court re-considering the matter.]

Longtime efforts to build a damaging road through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in western Alaska are, regrettably, moving forward. During the Trump administration, land exchanges were made to clear the way. In 2021, the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs urged the Biden's administration's Department of Justice to stop defending the effort to build the road (see R. 2, 2021). The road would damage habitat for Black Brandt (among other things).

During the Obama administration, the Interior Department had denied permits to build the road.

The Izembek NWR is one of the world's most important staging grounds for migratory birds. Birds stop there going to and from summer breeding grounds in the Arctic.

Recently, an *en banc* panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a road **can** be built through the Izembek NWR in Alaska.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs urges Congress to intervene to prevent this road from being built in the Izembek NWR.

2022-10 Biden Administration Should Classify the Monarch Butterfly as Endangered

The numbers of monarch butterflies in their Mexican sanctuaries have been trending down over the last 25 years, even though their numbers fluctuate from year to year.

While their summer numbers in the American West went up in 2022 after being very low the year before, it is fair to conclude that their long-term situation is perilous. After being declared a threatened species in 1983 in the IUCN's Red Book, the IUCN has now declared they are an endangered species.

They are threatened by logging in their winter Mexican sanctuaries and by destruction of the milkweed plants that they eat in the summer in the American Mid-West. They are being killed there by widespread use of the herbicide ROUND-UP and by mowing verges along roadways.

But, the Biden administration has yet to **classify them as endangered** and grant them the protection of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs calls upon the Biden administration to classify the monarch butterfly as endangered under the ESA.

And, the federal government should make it a policy objective to restore the original numbers of milkweed plants. We need to stop mowing verges where milkweeds grow and reduce use of Round Up around these plants, and plant them in our yards.

2022-11: Re-Evaluating the Proposed Lithium Mine Along the Oregon-Nevada Border

Serious questions arise over the proposed lithium mine near Thacker Pass along the Oregon and Nevada border near the Ft. McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone reservation (accessed from U.S. 95).

The proposed mine is in the McDermitt Caldera. It has some of the highest concentrations of lithium in America (though most of those are on the Nevada side).

Over two-square miles would be dug up in an open-pit mine. Valuable habitat for the Greater sage grouse would be lost, which some believed is endangered. Questions have also been raised about use of scarce water in operating the mine, which might hurt trout habitat.

5800 tons of sulfuric acid would be produced each day. That acid would be used in inordinate amounts to remove the lithium from the clay—the amounts probably exceeding federal standards.

Other concerns arise over what will happen once the ore is mined out. Dangerous heavy metals are then likely to contaminate the ground water supply, heavy metals such as antimony. No plan has been prepared to monitor water pollution there.

Lithium is used in rechargeable batteries. However, it is found in many places in Nevada; the only operating mine in America is found in Nevada at Silver Peak. America's new Inflation Reduction Act provides incentives to produce more electric cars, but requires that their batteries use lithium that comes from North America, or from a country with which we have a trading agreement.

The BLM, which manages the area, *rushed the approval process*, despite protests from federal biologists and the EPA. Neither the Trump administration nor the Biden one has slowed the process down to address environmental concerns.

Processes do not need to be used that harm the environment. Geothermal steam can be used to extract lithium in the least harmful manner. But that is not the process to be used here.

The Shoshone tribe was not informed about the environmental impacts of the mine, and it is now concerned. Some 18,000 acres of their traditional lands might be mined over time. They have joined environmentalists and ranchers in suing the government over plans to mine here.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs is concerned about the environmental impacts of this Thacker Pass lithium mine and calls for the preparation of a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on all federal activities there and use of as many safeguards as possible for the environment in mining (if it proceeds). In the meantime, if development of the mine proceeds, work should go slowly under the guidance of the environmental policies of the Federal Land Policy & Management Act (FLPMA).

2022-12: Great Salt Lake Must be Saved

The Great Salt Lake in Utah has now shrunk by two-thirds in its size. It is headed toward disappearing entirely.

Its exposed bed contains high levels of heavy metals, as well as arsenic. As the lake dries up, winds will pick up these toxic materials and they will get drawn into the lungs of people living in Salt Lake City, making them ill.

And, the tiny shrimp and flies that grow in the lake bed (and that millions of migratory birds would normally eat) will be gone—with their habitat having been destroyed. These birds may then starve.

One of the causes of this shrinkage is that the water that had been going into the lake is being used by the growing population of Salt Lake City. The city uses this water at profligate rates—at rates exceeding those of almost all other desert cities.

The people there must drastically reduce their water use. Otherwise, what has been called an “environmental nuclear bomb” will go off there.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs urges the people of Salt Lake City and the agencies involved to make **major** reductions in their use of water that used to flow into the lake. This is the only way to save the lake, protect their health, and maintain food for migratory birds.

2022-13: Opposition to Proposed Ambler Road in Alaska

Miners have been pressing for a 211 mile-road in north, central Alaska to open the way for a huge new mine in the Ambler Mining District.

It was approved by the Trump administration, and then operations were suspended by the Biden administration because of an inadequate environmental review. Now, the BLM is beginning the process of trying to prepare an adequate one and public comment is being sought on a draft EIS.

The road is objectionable for a number of reasons. It would cross the Arctic National Preserve and come close to the Arctic National Park, which is a wilderness one. It would cross 11 major rivers, including the Kobuk Wild River, as well as nearly 3000 streams, many wetlands, and major caribou migration routes. The area is home to grizzly bears, wolves, Dall sheep, moose, and wolverines. Mine traffic would degrade the wild character of the area with noise, dust, and night lights.

While it would be closed to the public during mining, once it is over pressure would build to open to the public. And thereafter, general use would introduce harmful intrusions.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs opposes approving the Ambler Road in Alaska and opposes building it.