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## Great NW Forests Campaign

<b>Application Date</b>	5/31/2024		
<b>Applying Organization</b>	Methow Valley Citizens Council	<b>Grant Type</b>	Member Directed
<b>Requested Amount</b>	\$40,000.00	<b>Project Name</b>	Great NW Forests Campaign
<b>Contact Name</b>	Jasmine Minbashian	<b>Project Location (State or Territory)</b>	WA
<b>Contact Title</b>	Executive Director	<b>Project State/Province</b>	WA
<b>Contact Email Address</b>	jasmine@mvcitizens.org	<b>Project Multiple Locations</b>	
<b>Notes</b>		<b>Status</b>	Submitted
		<b>Created By</b>	Nancy McKinney Milsteadt Milsteadt, 5/29/2024, 2:35 PM

### Organization Details

<b>Organization Name</b>	Methow Valley Citizens Council	<b>Annual Operating Budget</b>	\$667,000.00
<b>Applying Contact</b>	Nancy McKinney Milsteadt Milsteadt	<b>Tax Status/Organization Type</b>	501c3 Organization
<b>Staff Size</b>	9	<b>Main Phone</b>	509-997-0888
<b>Total Membership</b>	1,000	<b>Website Address</b>	https://greatnorthwestforests.org/ and https://www.mvcitizens.org
<b>BIPOC-led</b>	Yes	<b>Address</b>	PO BOX 774 Twisp, Washington 98856 United States
<b>C-Suite Staff</b>	Our Executive Director is of Middle Eastern descent, 2 of 8 board members are tribal members of the Colville Confederated Tribes (25%)		

### Proposal Questions

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| <p><b>1. Purpose/History Of Organization</b></p> <p>MVCC's mission is to raise a strong community voice for protection of the Methow Valley's natural environment and rural character. Founded in 1976, the Methow Valley Citizens Council (MVCC) has a distinguished 40+year history of advocating for progressive land use and environmental values in the bucolic</p> | <p><b>2. Final Success</b></p> <p>Working through an effective, efficient regional coalition, we are working to secure a climate smart amendment under the NW Forest Plan for 24.5 million acres of federally managed lands in western Oregon, Washington, and northwestern California.</p> |
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Methow Valley. In 2019, we led the Methow Headwaters campaign (supported by Conservation Alliance) which led to protection of over 340,000 acres from industrial mining in the upper Methow Watershed. The healthy rural character of this community, with low-density development, considerable open space, and clean air and water, has been preserved in a significant part through our advocacy on land use planning and public land issues. Today, MVCC is the Methow's 'go-to' advocacy organization, lending a collaborative and credible voice from rural eastern Washington.

### 3. Location Details

The Pacific Northwest region of the United States is home to some of the most biodiverse and carbon-dense forests outside the tropics. These forests are crucial to carbon sequestration and play a vital role in climate resiliency and biodiversity.

Old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest are particularly important for climate action. They are carbon sinks that absorb and store large amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The forests' carbon sequestration capacity is due to the presence of large trees that store carbon in their biomass and soil. These trees also provide habitat for a wide range of species, including threatened and endangered ones. The forests' biodiversity is further enhanced by the presence of lichens, mosses, and other flora and fauna that thrive in the clean air of the region.

However, the Pacific Northwest forests are under threat from climate change. Iconic tree species such as the red cedar, known as the "Tree of Life," are dying due to climate-induced drought. The forests' vulnerability to climate change is further exacerbated by human activities such as logging, road-building, and fire suppression.

To mitigate the effects of climate change on Pacific Northwest forests, the Biden administration is looking to protect mature and old-growth forests on federal lands in the Pacific Northwest through an update of the Northwest Forest Plan.

The Northwest Forest Plan is a landscape approach to federal land management designed to protect at-risk species while also contributing to social and economic sustainability in the Pacific Northwest. It was intended to provide an ecosystem approach to forest management approach to federal lands that is scientifically credible, socially responsible, and legally sound. Since its adoption in 1994, climate change and other developments have prompted the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to now

### 4. Strategy & Timeline For Final Success

On December 15th, 2023, the Forest Service published a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to amend the 17 land management plans of the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) that provide management direction of those national forests and grasslands. The process is informed by robust engagement with stakeholders across all affected geographies to address urgent land management concerns including wildfire resilience, climate change adaptation, and greater tribal inclusion in the plan.

An efficient and effective group of organizations who have a deep history with the NWFP have been working together for five years in preparation for this moment. These groups are: Methow Valley Citizens Council (WA), The Wilderness Society (regional), Sierra Club (regional), Conservation NW (WA), Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center (OR/CA), and Cascade Forest Conservancy (WA/OR).

As it became clear the USFS would take steps to update the NWFP, our organizations recognized this effort as a key opportunity to maintain and expand protections for mature and old forests, renew the USFS's commitment to the NWFP's regional framework, retain the successful Aquatic Conservation Strategy, better reflect Tribal interests, and remedy any adverse effects the implementation of the original NWFP had on rural and indigenous communities. We also recognize that Tribal interests were not reflected in the 1994 Plan and they are largely absent from the Northwest forest conservation community. We have been working together with experts to develop recommendations for the updated NWFP based on the best available science, develop and implement communications strategies for effectively engaging people in this effort, and build relationships with rural and indigenous communities to elevate their voices and, where appropriate, support their priorities in the modernization process.

pursue a modernization of the Plan. Such measures would help meet U.S. carbon-reduction goals by 2030.

To achieve these goals, our campaign has three primary campaign objectives during 2024: (1) engage rural organizers in each state (Oregon, Washington, and California) to generate community support and elevate tribal engagement; (2) build a strong base of scientific advocacy around the revision effort and (3) run an earned and digital media campaign that elevates the values of Pacific Northwest national forests undergoing revision and taps into Pacific Northwesterners' love for public forests and rivers.

Strategic Objective 1: Employ rural organizers in each state to demonstrate broad and diverse support across the region (Oregon, Washington, and northern California) through the comment periods that will take place in late spring/summer of 2024. We will be strategic in our approach to 'lead with the community voice' and demonstrate support from rural communities for climate-smart strategies to protect Northwest forests. We will work with tribal leaders and community members, business leaders, community members and supporters to take action to raise a strong and unified voice for safeguarding the ecological values of these public lands. A broad and diverse support base will also help us secure strong bipartisan support from locally elected leaders.

Strategic Objective 2: Work with key scientists to ensure a strong legal and scientific foundation around the revision effort. We will use a set of science-based principles for forest management that will be the framework for our call to action and advocacy during the Plan Revision process. We began this process last year by contracting Dr. Bill Gaines of the Washington Conservation Science Institute and Dr. Susan Prichard who are on the leading edge of fire ecology and science. We will continue to convene this group of scientists to develop a framework and conservation approach to managing forests under the NW Forest Plan. We will work with the science team on the FACA committee to advocate for scientifically-sound recommendations for the NW Forest Plan.

Strategic Objective 3. While a strong scientific framework will be critical to our success, also critical to our success is winning people's hearts and minds. Over the last 5 years, visitation to our public lands has grown exponentially. During this time, our campaign has been able to build outreach and communications tools including a website, social media site, and a compelling video series. These tools helped us reach a new cadre of hikers and recreationists that have

emerged after the pandemic and help them engage in protecting their cherished public lands.

With a public process kicking off in the summer of 2024 and running through most of the year, we will use these tools to elevate the community voice for protecting old and mature forests in the face of climate change. Community organizers will work with media consultants to strategically place op-eds and letters to the editor in support of science-based improvements to the NW Forest Plan. The Forest Service's timeline aims to complete the process by the end of the year.

#### 5. Key Decision Makers

The key decisionmakers for the NW Forest Plan Amendment include high-level staff at the USDA Forest Service, BLM, and the Departments of Agriculture and Interior. We are in direct contact with policy leads in Washington DC working on the revision process and meet with them regularly.

Ultimately, the Biden Administration will have the final say, but support from congressional leaders will be important as well. We organize regular congressional briefings for staff of the legislators in the geography of the NW Forest Plan.

The FACA committee convened by the agencies will have a big influence on these decision-makers. Any recommendations or consensus achieved through this committee will likely be supported by the agency and congressional leaders, as it has a diverse array of representation that includes scientists, conservationists, tribal members, industry representatives, recreation, and others.

Two of our coalition partners, Mike Anderson (representing the Wilderness Society) and Susan Jane Brown (independent attorney working with our coalition) hold seats on the Federal Advisory Committee (FACA) that is helping guide the Forest Plan revision process. Through their participation we will be monitoring and commenting on the FACA process. The FACA COMMITTEE IS POISED TO SUBMIT THEIR FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO US FOREST SERVICE at their June meeting. A growing consensus among the committee exists to support the protection of old and big trees across the NW Forest Plan area. We will be poised to reinforce this message during the public comment period which is estimated to begin this summer. Regardless of the outcome of the November election, the consensus built through the FACA committee

#### 6. Elevate Voices

MVCC's work is on the ancestral, unceded lands of the Methow and Sylix People, constituent tribes of the Colville Confederated Tribes, who have lived in what is now called the Methow River and Okanogan Valleys from time immemorial. MVCC is committed to toward strengthening relationships with tribal citizens of the Colville Confederated Tribes to protect and restore the land, air, and water on which we all depend, as well as supporting the tribe in asserting tribal sovereignty in their traditional territory. Our vice chair, John Sirois is the Traditional Territories Advisor for the Colville Tribes and has been helping us grow as an organization to be better allies for the indigenous community. We have also provided significant support to youth tribal leadership to engage in water protection issues, providing funding and mentorship.

Through the FACA committee, our coalition has worked with tribal members to develop a set of new tribal standards and guidelines to include in the Forest Plan Amendment. These have broad support on the committee and are powerful new additions to the NW Forest Plan. Additionally, many of the local, rural organizations in our coalition have spent the last few years forming relationships with a diverse array of organizations representing new voices working on forest issues, representing historically underrepresented groups (especially among the Latinx and tribal communities). We have invited these groups to join the various forums we engage in, such as forest collaboratives, and we share our comment guides and forest reports so that there is better sharing of information and access to public comment opportunities for agency projects and processes.

recommendations and the outpouring of public support for a climate smart forest plan amendment sets a strong scientifically supported agreement which broad consensus for the next phase of the NW Forest Plan.

#### 7. Measurable On-Ground Outcomes

1. A decision by the end of 2024 for a climate-smart Forest Plan amendment that protects mature and old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest.
2. A set of scientific principles that are the centerpiece of advocacy effort during the Northwest Forest Plan revision. We will host forums to help key communities understand the rationale behind these principles and generate public support.
3. At least 25 high profile rural and tribal community members are speaking out in favor of climate-smart amendments to the NW Forest Plan through an impactful earned media presence. The campaign will use the dossier we have built over the last five years that contains information about community leaders, views on forest management and the Forest Service (for example), identifying spokespeople, etc.
4. Generate at least 5,000 letters in support of science-based, climate-smart forest amendments to the NW Forest Plan during the public comment period this summer of 2024.

#### 9. TCA Funding Plan

Funding from the Conservation Alliance will be administered by Methow Valley Citizens Council for the benefit of the whole coalition. We will use Conservation Alliance funds to support the salaries and expenses of rural organizers who will be engaging community outreach in generating letters of support and letters to the editor in support of a climate-smart Forest Plan amendment. We will also use funds to organize a science forum for the public to cement the case for protecting mature and old-growth trees as part of a climate strategy for Northwest forests, as well as other strategies such prescribed burning in drier forest types. Lastly, we will use funds to convene a couple in-person strategy sessions for our coalition over the course of the year. Given the broad geography, in-person meetings are important but can be costly, so providing some assistance to smaller groups will ensure full participation.

#### 11. Confidential Items

No.

#### 8. Evaluate Your Progress

We will evaluate our progress and success in the following ways:

**Community Organizing and Outreach:** Using indicators such as number of connections made, letters of support, level of partner engagement, number of supporters, and letters to the editor in support of the campaign, will allow us to evaluate our reach in rural communities and with tribal leaders.

**Advocacy:** By regularly checking in with stakeholders, agency and legislative staff we will continually gauge whether we are on track to accomplishing our goals and adjust our strategies as needed.

**Regular campaign check-in meetings and calls:** We will continue to hold biweekly calls and regular strategy sessions with our coalition to evaluate our progress and course correct as needed.

#### 10. JEDI Efforts and Impact

After participating in the Community Foundation of North Central Washington's "Learning to People Together Better" - a 9-month discussion and skills-building series to improve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), we developed a DEI plan for our organization. Our staff holds monthly DEI lunch meetings, and our board has a standing agenda item dedicated to tribal learning. The staff reviews our annual program goals they are aligned with our DEI-related program goals. We frequently partner with the Indigenous and Latinx communities in our work, we have also three tribal members into leadership positions on our boards. We hold many outreach meetings to connect with organizations and community members underrepresented in environmental issues, including members of the Colville Confederated Tribes, Yakama Nation, local indigenous youth, health practitioners at Family Health Centers, Progreso Latino, and the Commission for Hispanic Affairs.

#### Other Relevant Application Details

Forest Service's timeline for completion:  
 Winter/Spring 2024: Forest Service incorporating feedback from Tribes, FACA committee, and agencies to further develop proposed action and draft EIS.  
 Summer 2024\*: Release Draft EIS with 90-day public comment period and further tribal and public engagement to inform final EIS.  
 Late Fall 2024\*: Final EIS available for

review.  
Early 2025\*: Updated amendment complete.  
\*Estimates are subject to change in the project schedule.

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