



## Stand Tall Oregon Campaign



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### Proposal Questions

#### Mission/History Of Organization

Founded in 1992, Wild Salmon Center's (WSC) mission is to promote the conservation and sustainable use of wild salmon ecosystems across the Pacific Rim. We identify science-based solutions to protect the North Pacific's best wild salmon rivers and populations while they are still healthy and strong. These watersheds provide recreation, clean drinking water, timber, and carbon

#### JEDI Efforts and Impact

WSC's mission to protect salmon strongholds has evolved to embody the fact that we cannot protect salmon without forming authentic relationships with the people most impacted by inequity in the watersheds where we work. Though WSC has worked with Indigenous and rural communities throughout our history and across our geographies, we've institutionalized our

sequestration. Landscape-wide protections are critical for maintaining healthy forests capable of supporting fish and wildlife populations, rural communities, and recreation opportunities. Our approach relies on three basic strategies: protect important habitats, promote sustainable fisheries, and support local communities as they advocate for the health of their own watersheds. Based in Portland, Oregon, WSC has a staff of 48 professionals between our headquarters in Portland, Oregon and satellite offices in Southern Oregon, Washington, and Alaska.

commitment to equity through the following steps:

- Formally created our justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) committee, 2018
- Finalized our JEDI committee charter, 2020
- With outside equity experts, internally published an Indigenous Engagement Framework, 2022

Our justice, equity, diversity and inclusion work is iterative and ongoing. There will be no time in which we are “done” building equity, but we continue to center and be led by our Indigenous and rural community partners who have been most impacted by the threats to salmon and their watersheds.

**Final Success** Wild Salmon Center’s (WSC) goal is to successfully finalize a Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) in 2026 to conserve 315,000 acres of habitat across western Oregon and secure approval of the new Forest Management Plan (FMP), protecting clean water, carbon sequestration, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat for future generations of Oregonians.

**Location Details**

Western Oregon state forests span 634,000 acres, the majority of which comprise the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests (518,000 acres) located between Portland, Oregon, and the Pacific Ocean. This rich, temperate ecosystem is a center of biodiversity, home to over seventeen endangered or at-risk species, and is part of one of the most important ecosystems for carbon sequestration on the planet. In addition to providing clean drinking water for over 500,000 Oregonians, the area is also a globally important salmon stronghold. Home to five world-class wild salmon and steelhead rivers—the Trask, Wilson, Kilchis, Nehalem, and Salmonberry—this region draws salmon and steelhead anglers from around the country and provides excellent opportunities for hiking, hunting, biking, and camping. All told, the area drives a massive \$550 million dollar outdoor economy. For decades, the region has been managed for industrial timber production, including ongoing clear-cutting of older forests to the detriment of fish, wildlife, carbon sequestration, recreation, and local communities.

The health of Oregon’s forests and the fish they support is at risk if the status quo remains. Durable landscape-wide protections on state forestlands are critical to protecting and restoring healthy forests and rivers for wild fish. The State Forest HCP will protect 315,000 acres in dedicated Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs) and Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs) across Oregon’s North Coast, balancing high standards for clean water, fish, and wildlife with more ecologically sustainable timber harvest over the next 75 years. Wild Salmon Center (WSC) seeks support for our Stand Tall Oregon campaign to build local and regional support for finalizing the HCP and protecting Oregon state forests for generations to come.

Efforts to secure the State Forest HCP hit a major milestone in March 2024 when the Board of Forestry voted 4-3 to finalize the plan and defeated three separate motions to stop or delay it. This vote was made possible due to ongoing support from North Coast communities galvanized through our leadership and the “Stand Tall” campaign. Now that the Board has voted to move forward with the State Forest HCP, we have a critical opportunity over the next year to ensure that the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Services) finalize the federal review and the Board votes for final approval of the HCP permit in 2026.

**Biodiversity in Project Area**

Wild salmon are a cornerstone of both natural ecosystems and human cultures across the Pacific Rim. Their survival ensures the health of rivers and forests, providing nutrients that support a diverse range of wildlife and sustaining jobs, economies, and Indigenous traditions that have existed for millennia. Protecting salmonids means safeguarding entire watersheds and the people who rely on them for clean water, food security, and outdoor recreation. Healthy salmon runs are a sign of a well-functioning watershed—one that can absorb heavy rainfall, reduce flooding, and maintain cool, clean water, even as climate change alters precipitation patterns. Intact riparian forests provide shade that stabilizes water temperatures, benefiting not just salmon but all aquatic life. These forests provide critical spawning and rearing habitats for salmonids, supporting a diverse web of wildlife that depends on salmon for food and nutrients. When salmon return to these rivers, they bring essential marine-derived nutrients that sustain everything from aquatic insects to old-growth trees, reinforcing the health of the entire ecosystem. When we safeguard salmon, we safeguard the natural ecosystems that help these forests adapt to changing environmental conditions. Yet, these fish face increasing threats from habitat destruction, overharvest, and a warming climate.

**Expected Economic & Recreational Impact**

Thriving salmon runs sustain recreational fishing opportunities, support local economies, and contribute to the cultural and outdoor heritage of the region. The Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests are not only essential for wildlife but also for outdoor recreation. Over 600,000 acres of state forests attract anglers, kayakers, hikers, and campers who come to experience the beauty of Western Oregon’s rivers, trails, and landscapes. All told, these lands boast a \$550 million dollar outdoor economy and support over ten thousand jobs. For decades, the region has been managed for industrial timber production, including ongoing clear-cutting of older forests to the detriment of fish, wildlife, carbon sequestration, recreation, and local communities. Wild Salmon Center is joining together with citizens, business owners, and conservation groups up and down the coast and across Oregon who overwhelmingly support fish and wildlife habitat, clean water, and recreation on our state public lands.

**Strategy & Timeline For Final Success**

WSC leads a coalition of conservation and fishing organizations to advocate for more balanced management of state forests and to secure 315,000 acres in dedicated Habitat Conservation Areas and Riparian Conservation Areas in and around the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests, balancing high standards for clean water, carbon sequestration, recreation, and fish and wildlife with more sustainable timber harvest.

In 2025, WSC and coalition partners will continue to lead the State Forest

**Key Decision Makers**

The second prong of our strategy is to successfully educate and advocate for state and federal support by demonstrating to decision-makers the tremendous value that state forests provide for clean drinking water, recreation, carbon storage, and habitat for fish and wildlife. Throughout our work on the HCP, we created relationships with the Governor, Board of Forestry members, local officials, and legislators to counter the timber industry’s narrative and build dynamic discussions around the importance of balancing timber

Coalition with a four-pronged approach: build the record, educate key stakeholders, win the communications battle, and defend core conservation protections under the current administration. With growing uncertainty at the federal level, our efforts to ensure that durable protections for forest and fish are in place to safeguard some of the last best places to protect wild salmon across Oregon's coast are more critical than ever.

This year, the Board of Forestry (BOF) will begin rulemaking to develop a new Forest Management Plan for state forests, with public comment expected for the summer of 2025 and plans for the BOF to adopt the plan in 2026. This is the management plan that supports implementation of the State Forest HCP, and we anticipate significant opposition to conservation measures. We also anticipate that the federal agencies will release their Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on the HCP sometime in 2026. Leading up to these key milestones, WSC will remain vigilant and engaged to see the HCP over the finish line. Support from TCA will support WSC and coalition partners in building the administrative record, galvanizing grassroots support, and ensuring that the permitting entities take a hard look at the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of delaying a finalized HCP.

#### Build The Record

In 2025, WSC will engage coalition partners and community members to advocate for conservation protections on Oregon's state forests before the Board of Forestry and state decision-makers. We will ensure that any final Forest Management Plan (FMP) includes strong conservation measures, including implementation of ODF's Climate Change and Carbon Plan. WSC will also provide resources to support coalition partners and community leaders to engage in all state forest planning processes.

#### Educate Key Stakeholders & Defend Core Conservation Protections

In 2025, with significant uncertainty at the federal level, WSC will ramp up engagement with coalitions, organizations, and key decision-makers at the federal and state levels to protect core environmental laws that underpin state forest protections. WSC will apply a multilayered approach and continue to meet with stakeholders to clear the record and educate decision makers on the value that state forest protections provide for clean drinking water, recreation, carbon storage, and habitat

harvest and ecological conservation.

In 2025, the BOF is expected to maintain its conservation majority with only one seat up for either replacement or reappointment. With significant efforts over the past three years, WSC and coalition partners have worked to ensure a strong foundation of support from key members and to lower the temperature on opposition from Oregon counties and the timber industry to the State Forest HCP. By growing grassroots support through the Stand Tall campaign and meaningfully engaging in conversations about stabilizing revenues for counties, WSC will continue these tactics to shore up BOF support.

Businesses, including recreation, tourism, sport, and commercial fishing, have an important role to play in the conversation about the future of Oregon's state forests. If the State Forest HCP fails, Oregon will be left with weaker protections for rivers and fish, increased litigation costs, and likely increased timber harvest across these lands. Outdoor and recreation businesses can advocate for sustainable forest management and speak to the costs to their businesses if the State Forest HCP is not finalized.

for fish and wildlife. WSC will provide resources to coalition members and work strategically with partner groups and community leaders to engage with BOF members, the Governor's office, and other critical stakeholders. In 2025, WSC will continue to meaningfully engage with timber industry groups, representatives from Oregon counties, and other community members that care about how state forests are managed to find creative solutions to diversify sources of revenue. This will help temper opposition to the State Forest HCP and identify viable strategies to stabilize revenues.

#### Win the Communications Battle

In 2025, WSC will continue to grow the Stand Tall campaign to counter the timber industry's continuing efforts to delay, weaken, or kill the HCP and to mobilize Oregon's North Coast communities in support of strong conservation protections for state forests. We will use social posts and emails to provide resources and support community engagement in the Forest Management Plan rulemaking and other state forest planning processes, such as proposed state forest timber sales. In 2024, activists set a new record for volumes of comments on planned timber sales, and this is an important way to continue to engage impacted communities. Throughout the year, we will continue to maintain strong local support for a final approved State Forest HCP. We will ramp up communications efforts around the State Forest HCP in Q3 and Q4 using paid media, videos, social posts, and emails, anticipating federal action in 2026. Throughout 2025, we will continue to advance our outreach efforts through community education events, field tours, signature gathering, and media outreach. WSC's grassroots organizer will advance community support into 2026, continuing to recruit concerned citizens to attend the Board of Forestry meetings and public hearings. Through these actions, WSC will drive the narrative and ensure that the BOF understands that Oregonians overwhelmingly support clean water and healthy forests.

#### Elevate Voices

WSC's mission to protect salmon strongholds has evolved to embody the fact that we cannot protect salmon without forming authentic relationships with the people most impacted by inequity in the watersheds where we work. Therefore, we are ramping up our efforts to build durable layers of protection in key salmon strongholds by empowering communities on the Oregon coast to change the conversation. For decades, industrial timber production has dominated the conversation, arguing that

#### Measurable On-Ground Outcomes

The Board of Forestry (BOF) adopts a final HCP in 2026 to conserve 315,000 acres of habitat across western Oregon, including over 250,000 acres in the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests, and secures approval of the new Forest Management Plan (FMP) for state forests, incorporating strong conservation measures, including the implementation of ODF's Climate Plan.

WSC and our grassroots organizer will hold four community events on the North



ongoing clear-cutting of older forests is the only economically viable option. Our Stand Tall grassroots campaign gives underrepresented voices a seat at the proverbial table and shifts the narrative to one that benefits the community as a whole by creating a dynamic conversation around forestry management. In July 2024, WSC contracted a north coast grassroots organizer who lives in the community and is directly impacted by the outcome of the HCP. Leveraging his local knowledge, he engaged over 500 community members through tabling at events, successfully driving high turnout to Board of Forestry Meetings (average 15-20 testimonies per meeting) and collecting 591 signatures in support of the HCP in 2024 alone.

Coast, table at 20 events, gather 1,000 signatures, and generate 5,000 comments in support of the State Forest HCP and a new Forest Management Plan.

Develop a plan to diversify and stabilize revenues for counties that rely on state forest timber revenue, tempering opposition to HCP implementation.

Defend against efforts to roll back core protections under the Endangered Species Act and defund critical federal agencies (NOAA, USFWS) that are tasked with reviewing the State Forest HCP.

**TCA Funding Plan**

This grant will support critical state forest protections by strengthening community engagement, advocacy, and strategic communications. Funding will drive the Stand Tall Campaign through targeted op-eds, paid media campaigns, and public events to build momentum. It will also support grassroots organizing to recruit and mobilize community members, ensuring they are engaged in public testimony and advocacy during the BOF's rulemaking process. This will help build a strong administrative record, defend against legislative rollbacks, and ensure federal and state permitting entities thoroughly assess environmental impacts of delaying the HCP. Funding will enable proactive outreach efforts through field tours, tabling at community events, and media engagement. These actions will empower local voices and make it clear to Governor Kotek and the Board of Forestry that Oregonians overwhelmingly support clean water, healthy forests, and strong conservation protections.

**How long it took to complete application**

**Confidential Items**

**Other Relevant Application Details**

Thank you for the opportunity to apply. We are always grateful to be considered and appreciate our past work with The Conservation Alliance.