

# PROTECT OREGON'S BIGGEST TREES

photo: Daniel Howland

## OUR FORESTS ARE AT RISK

In 2020, the Trump Administration and the Forest Service (USFS) rushed through a proposal to eliminate the Eastside Screens and remove protections for big and old trees in Central and Eastern Oregon.

This decision was the result of a coordinated and politically motivated effort that bypassed the potential for meaningful public comment and scientific inquiry on over 9 million acres of public lands.

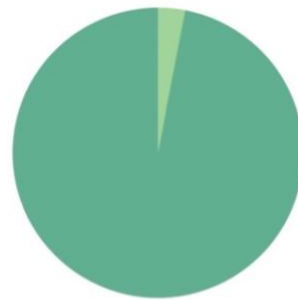
## STAND UP FOR BIG TREES

For over two decades, the Eastside Screens provided the foundational protections for old-growth trees in Central and Eastern Oregon National Forests.

We need to stand up for science and the climate and ask that Oregon's elected leaders work with the Biden administration to keep protections for large trees and old-growth forests.

As Oregonians, we have a long history of defending large trees and old-growth forests on our public lands.

It's time to stand up for our forests again.



3%  
TREES



42%  
CARBON

Central and Eastern Oregon's biggest and oldest trees make up only 3% of our forests. Yet, the old growth that remains stores 42% of forest carbon, provides critical habitat for wildlife, and is resilient to wildfire.

That is why we've had the Eastside Screens, a decades-old federal policy to protect the 3% of our biggest and oldest trees from logging.

A young owl with large yellow eyes and a white face is perched on a tree branch. The background is a dense forest of green trees.

# WHY DO BIG TREES MATTER?

*Young owl in the Ochoco National Forest: U.S. Forest Service*

## Climate

Big and old trees of Central and Eastern Oregon [sequester](#) a significant amount of carbon.

While big trees, larger than 21" in diameter, make up only 3% of our forests, [they hold 42% of the forests' carbon](#). That means the best thing we can do to help mitigate climate change is to leave those trees standing. According to the Forest Service, this decision will add over 1.5 million tons of carbon to the atmosphere and could be significantly higher.

## Wildlife

The Eastside Screens were initially put in place to protect wildlife as old-growth-dependent species were in rapid decline. When the decision was made to remove protections, little research or attention was given to the effects on wildlife that call these forests home. Large, old trees are important sources for species recolonization of disturbed areas, as they have more intact ecological processes (e.g., nutrient cycling, hydrologic and fire regimes) and complex structural attributes (e.g., snags, down logs) that support biodiversity. Our large trees that remain provide [critical habitats for our wildlife](#); the pygmy nuthatch, white-headed woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, Pine marten, fisher, several species of owls, hawks, songbirds, bats, [and many more](#) rely on these trees as critical habitat. Regional species like mule deer and elk rely on protected forested areas for winter and summer rangeland.

## Recreation

Oregon's National Forests east of the Cascade Range include the Ochoco, Malheur, Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman, Fremont-Winema, and Deschutes. These forests provide awe-inspiring recreation opportunities and access to open space, including hiking, biking, birding, fishing, foraging, and hunting. Wildlife-related recreation supports Oregon's rural [economies](#) and brings [benefits to health and well-being](#) for all Oregonians and visitors.

## Wildfire

The Eastside Screens were meant to protect the remaining 3% of our biggest and oldest trees. These are the trees that have survived decades of fire and are naturally resistant to future wildfire. Their roots hold moisture in the soil and keep forest temperatures down, giving us a template for how to live alongside a fire-adapted ecosystem.

## Conservation Perspectives

The biggest trees that remain in the Pacific Northwest support a [diverse and resilient ecosystem](#), with centuries-old trees that pass on the genetic history of the landscape to new seedlings. The Trump administration's decision to remove protections on over 9 million acres of public lands went against the scientifically-based position of [over 115 independent scientists](#), along with dozens of conservation, climate, indigenous, and other organizations. Interested in finding out more? Check out these [frequently asked questions](#) to learn more about Central and Eastern Oregon's biggest trees.