

# FREE MOUNT HOOD



## OUR FOREST. OUR FUTURE.

Free Mt. Hood is a campaign led by Bark to change the Forest's Management Plan **which currently emphasizes converting much of over one million acres of mature natural forest into managed plantations** instead of managing the forest according to the surrounding community's values—such as **climate change, recreation, and clean drinking water.**



**WE NEED A NEW FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN THAT EMPHASIZES NATURAL PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OVER ACTIVITIES SUCH AS LOGGING THAT DESTROY ESSENTIAL HABITAT AND REDUCE THE FOREST'S RESILIENCE**

### Climate Change

As the most pressing ecological issue of our time, its effects will dramatically alter MHNH's ecosystems. **Neither the Mt. Hood Land and Resource Management Plan adopted in 1990, nor its amendments in 1994, address the impacts of an increasingly warmer and unstable climate** on MHNH's ecosystems. Moreover, MHNH is one of the top 10 carbon storage forests in the U.S. Its trees capture and store immense quantities of carbon dioxide, preventing it from entering the atmosphere and accelerating global warming—a benefit that is lost when those trees are cut down. Not surprisingly, a groundbreaking study by Oregon State University shows that Oregon's logging industry releases far more carbon into the atmosphere than any other industry in the state. The impacts of climate change on Mt. Hood's forest, waters, and wildlife are likely to include more rain and less snow in the winter, an increase in stream temperatures, flooding, and landslide events. The forest's ability to successfully adapt to these changes will be determined by the health of its ecosystem as a whole.

### Drinking Water

MHNH's waters are critical to more than plants and wildlife—over two thirds of Oregonians get their drinking water from the forest. For the cities of Portland, Gresham, Tigard, and Beaverton drinking water begins as rainfall in the Bull Run Watershed, while other communities rely on the Clackamas River and surrounding streams & springs for their municipal water supplies. All told, **98% of the forest provides drinking water to someone.** While the U.S. Forest Service recognizes the importance of keeping forest water clean, the existing plan fails to address three growing threats to the forests waters: climate change, clearcut logging, and population growth. As climate change accelerates, MHNH is likely to experience changes in precipitation and temperature, leading to impacts that could reduce the quality and availability of drinking water. Clearcut logging degrades water quality, raising river and stream temperatures to unhealthy levels for fish and other aquatic organisms. Meanwhile, our region's growing population is certain to put a strain on the MHNH's waters and ecosystems.

### Recreation

In the past 20 years, recreational use of MHNH has skyrocketed, drawing millions of local residents and visitors each year for activities like hiking, backpacking, camping, trail running, fishing, picnicking, and skiing. This has significant economic impact on nearby communities, with outdoor recreational goods and services produced in the region generating \$45 million+ a year in sales. Unfortunately, the existing plan prioritizes timber harvests—which generate <\$2 million per year in revenue for the U.S. Forest Service, actually losing money. **Despite the fact that the outdoor recreation industry contributes three times more to Oregon's economy than the logging industry, the emphasis on timber harvests persists.** While recreational activities are less destructive and more sustainable than logging, their increasing popularity is also having some negative impacts on MHNH. The growing number of recreationists puts a strain on visitor facilities, contributing to degraded recreation & heritage sites, harming natural habitat, and exacerbating the backlog of maintenance on facilities, trails, and roads. Meanwhile, some inappropriate recreational uses, such as off-highway vehicle (OHV) go outside designated areas and are actually being encouraged by logging operations for their destructive activities.

**what does your vision for the forest's future look like?**

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