



**ATNI Midyear 2025 Convention  
Airway Heights, Washington  
RESOLUTION # 2025 – 32**

**“SUPPORT FOR TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY, INCLUSION, AND CO-  
STEWARDSHIP IN THE NORTHWEST FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT  
PROCESS”**

**PREAMBLE**

We, the members of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants rights secured under Indian Treaties and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States and several states, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following Resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) are the representatives and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, the ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and Indian tribal governments in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California, and Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, the health, safety, welfare, education, economic and employment opportunity, and preservation of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of ATNI; and

**WHEREAS**, creating opportunities for Indian Nations, preservation of tribal sovereignty and protection of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of ATNI; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pacific Northwest and Pacific Southwest Regions of the Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture, are proposing to amend the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) through an Environmental Impact Statement; and

**WHEREAS**, the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) was adopted in 1994 to resolve controversy over logging of old-growth forests and the resulting loss of habitat for imperiled species such as the northern spotted owl and Pacific salmon; and

**WHEREAS**, key elements of the NWFP include: A network of Late Successional Reserves designed to provide old-growth habitat for northern spotted owls and many other species; An Aquatic Conservation Strategy consisting of Riparian Reserves, Key Watersheds, watershed analyses, and watershed restoration; Matrix and Adaptive Management Areas where timber production is generally emphasized; and

**WHEREAS**, the USFS's preliminary need to change focuses on five interrelated topic areas, including:

- 1) Improving fire resistance and resilience across the NWFP planning area.
- 2) Strengthening the capacity of NWFP ecosystems to adapt to the ongoing effects of climate change.
- 3) Improving conservation and recruitment of mature and old-growth forest conditions, ensuring adequate habitat for species dependent upon mature and old growth ecosystems and supporting regional biodiversity.
- 4) Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into planning, project design, and implementation to achieve forest management goals and meet the agency's general trust responsibilities.
- 5) Providing a predictable supply of timber and non-timber products, and other economic opportunities to support the long-term sustainability of communities located proximate to National Forest System lands and economically connected to forest resources; and

**WHEREAS**, while more than 80 federally recognized Tribes have lands and/or territories within the NWFP boundary, there was limited involvement from Tribes in the development of the original Plan during the early 1990s; and

**WHEREAS**, USFS forests support high levels of biodiversity and thus help recover and ensure the continued flourishing of fish, wildlife, plants, and watersheds critical to the treaty rights, traditional and customary uses of lands that are central to Tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, the Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for the NWFP amendment states the USFS should collaborate with Tribal Natural Resources and Wildlife departments, Forests and communities to support efforts to design strategies for climate refugia and habitat connectivity for threatened and endangered and culturally relevant species, vulnerability assessments, adaptation plans, and to build social and ecological resilience to climate change related stressors; and

**WHEREAS**, the Proposed Action described in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement reflected the consensus recommendations of the Federal Advisory Committee for the Northwest Forest Plan Area, including representation from several ATNI member Tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, the Proposed Action included more than 90 plan components that honor and elevate Tribal perspectives and priorities; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 20 Tribes and Tribal organizations provided comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement; and

**WHEREAS**, although ATNI member Tribes have gone far to build their Natural and Cultural resources programs, there may be numerous Tribes that may be capacity-limited to fully engage in this process given the anticipated short time-frame if not adequately funded; now

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that ATNI urges the U.S. Forest Service to ensure early, sustained, and well-resourced government-to-government consultation with all Tribes within the NWFP planning area, consistent with the federal trust responsibility and the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC); and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI urges the U.S. Forest Service to provide the technical assistance and funding support necessary for Tribes to fully participate in the amendment process, including plan review, project development, and implementation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI expects Federal Advisory Committee's ("FAC") Tribal Inclusion plan components be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), and should be finalized on their own and implemented, regardless of the outcome of the NWFP Amendment. At a minimum they should be included in the Preferred Action in the FEIS, as it reflects Tribal priorities, recognizes Tribal sovereignty, and honors the federal trust responsibility; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI requests the U.S. Forest Service provide a response to each tribal comment, and include an explanation regarding how those comments were included and considered in the development of the Preferred Action; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI requests that the U.S. Forest Service provide additional opportunities for tribal stewardship, co-management, and traditional use, including within moist forest Late Successional Reserves (LSRs) in the preferred alternative; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI request that the U.S. Forest Service expand the plan direction associated with additional tribal plan components geared toward the restoration of protected plants that are also culturally important, and which may require disturbance rather than avoidance for restoration; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI request that the U.S. Forest Service provide more tribal input on post-disturbance management in areas that are culturally important to Tribes; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI urges the U.S. Forest Service to retain all Tribal Inclusion provisions outlined in Appendix A1 of the Proposed Action, including provisions related to co-stewardship, Indigenous Knowledge, treaty rights, Tribal workforce, biodiversity, and access and gathering; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that any final amendment to the NWFP must not infringe on Tribal rights or interests, must uphold treaty-reserved rights, and must fully respect traditional and customary uses of ancestral lands; and

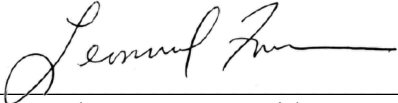
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, ATNI strongly urges the U.S. Forest Service to actively protect Indigenous Knowledge and culturally sensitive Tribal information through explicit recognition of Tribal data sovereignty, robust intellectual property protections, comprehensive data-sharing agreements that mandate Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), and clearly defined exemptions from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), ensuring such protections are consistently applied and enforced across all Forest Service regions and offices.

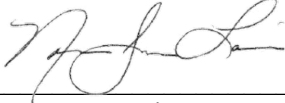
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the final NWFP amendment must incorporate co-management and co-stewardship frameworks, embed Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge, support Tribal-led active management, and include inclusive monitoring and adaptive management strategies co-developed with Tribes; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of ATNI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing Resolution was adopted at the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians 2025 Midyear Convention held at the Northern Quest Resort & Casino in Airway Heights Washington on May 11-15, 2025, with a quorum present.

  
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Leonard Forsman, President

  
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Norma Jean Louie, Secretary