



**2024 Winter Convention
Portland, Oregon**

RESOLUTION #24 – 07

**“STATEMENT REGARDING THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE
(USFS) NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) TO AMEND THE NORTHWEST
FOREST PLAN”**

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, Executive Orders 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 representatives of and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

WHEREAS, ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribes 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, 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 NOI 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, President Biden's Executive Order 14072 rightly recognizes the importance of forest health to Tribes and in the fight against the climate crisis, and directs USFS to adopt policies to protect these forests from threats; 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 urge that the USFS prioritize the meaningful engagement and government-to-government consultation with Tribes from the NW Forest Planning Area in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process and provide technical and funding support necessary to Tribes for such participation; and

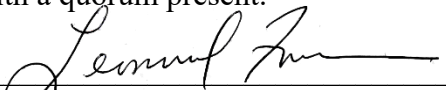
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ATNI urges that the USFS consults with Tribes on proposed amendments to the Northwest Forest Plan prior to the release of a draft Environmental Impact Statement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an amended NW Forest Plan shall not infringe on Tribal rights and interests, including treaty reserved rights, fully respects traditional and customary uses, and shall incorporate co-management/co-stewardship activities that promote Tribal Rights and Interests, fully respects traditional and customary uses, incorporates Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge, promotes active management and continues meaningful, supported collaboration with Tribes in an inclusive land management process integrated with Tribal traditional land and forest management practices; 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 2024 Winter Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at the Hyatt Regency, Portland, OR, January 28 – February 1, 2024, with a quorum present.



Leonard Forsman, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary