

GREEN NEW DEAL

for

PACIFIC NORTHWEST FORESTS

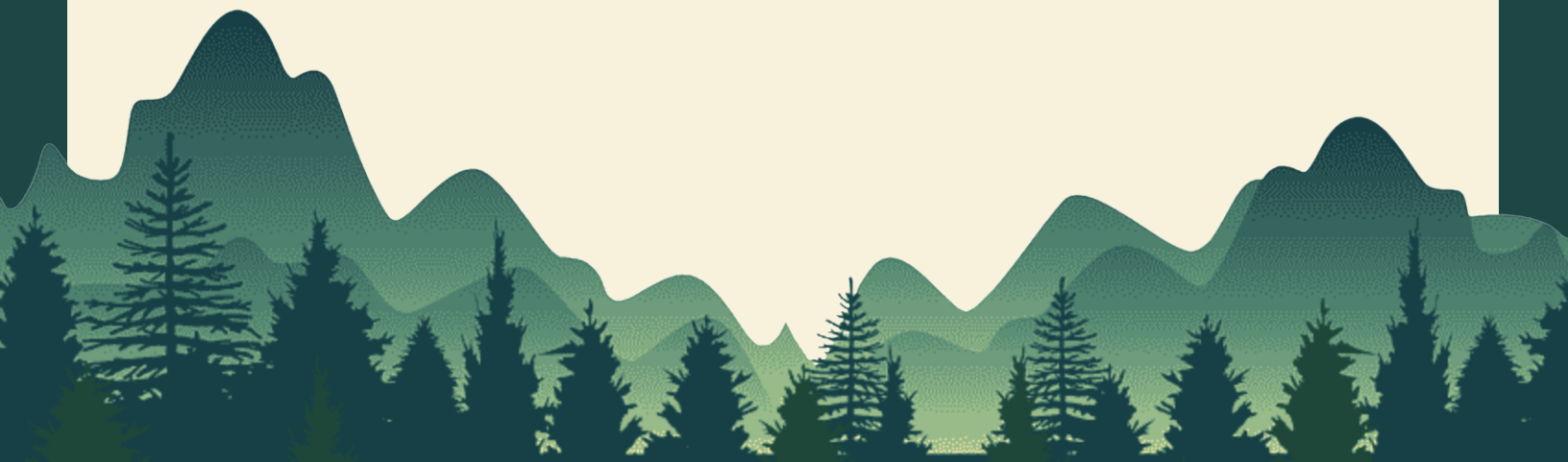




GREEN NEW DEAL for PACIFIC NORTHWEST FORESTS

Our planet is in a climate emergency. For decades, scientists have been highlighting the need for immediate action on climate change to no avail. Now, climate scientists warn that we have less than ten years to drastically reduce emissions before we face serious consequences (IPCC 2018). Simultaneously, long-festered social, racial, health, economic and environmental justice issues have come to the surface, revealing deep structural inequalities within our nation and resulting in acute civil unrest. If we are to mitigate the climate crisis, we must also address the systemic injustices plaguing our society.

Every sector of our economy from housing and transportation to energy production and manufacturing will need to be transformed to reach urgent climate goals, reverse racial and economic inequalities, and provide for people and communities. As the Pacific Northwest is a landscape defined by forests; this document offers a vision for the region's forests and forest-reliant communities that will meet the pressing need to mitigate the climate crisis, defend our communities against its worst impacts, and advance a just transition consistent with the framework of the Green New Deal.



THE ROLE OF PACIFIC NORTHWEST FORESTS IN THE GREEN NEW DEAL

The forests of the Pacific Northwest have the potential to take up and store as much if not more carbon per acre than any other forest in the world – including the Amazon rainforest (Law 2018, Keith 2009, Krankina 2014). Throughout the region, forests provide our society with numerous benefits including clean air and water, food, habitat, cultural and spiritual significance, and recreation opportunities, all while naturally removing carbon from the atmosphere. With more protections, a concerted shift away from industrial forestry, and repairing harms from past logging practices, federal, state, and private forestlands in the Pacific Northwest can become central in drawing carbon out of the atmosphere and defending against the worst impacts of climate change, all the while supporting the local economies and rural communities that rely on forestlands.

A Green New Deal for our forests challenges the long-standing myth that pits jobs against forest ecosystems, a false dichotomy that has mired meaningful reform of industrial timber harvest practices for decades. There is no reason why rural communities should have to choose between prioritizing forest ecosystems or having a robust economy – we can have both. In fact, the massive investment in a just transition that the Green New Deal envisions addresses both the urgent need to end rampant destructive forest practices and the need for guaranteed work with a liveable wage.

Shifting the way that forests are valued to most effectively contribute as part of a global effort to reduce greenhouse gases will require dramatic changes. Thankfully, there are opportunities on federal, state and private forestlands to transition the forest sector from one of exploitation and commodity production to one that supports long-term ecosystem stability, carbon storage and rural economic prosperity.

For forests to be valued as part of a climate solution and to anchor this solution within the broad intersectional movement calling for justice, a Green New Deal will be rooted in the following foundations:

- Recognizing the role of the Pacific Northwest's forests in meeting the scale and urgency of the climate crisis
- Empowering disenfranchised and historically marginalized communities
- Transitioning away from industrial logging
- Guaranteeing decent jobs & raising the standard of living
- Investing in Pacific Northwest communities
- Acting on the best available independent science

VISION FOR A JUST TRANSITION

In the face of the ongoing climate crisis, it is imperative that we not only embrace our vital role in contributing to a global reduction in carbon emissions, but also center a just transition for disenfranchised and frontline communities and workers currently employed in, or impacted by, the industrial logging industry. We must demand a bold vision from leaders at local, state and national levels; a willingness to truly reimagine all aspects of our economy to create a society based on principles of solidarity and ecology instead of competition and extraction.

We envision a future in which forests are valued both as ecological communities and for the countless benefits which they provide to society. We can no longer afford to allow our forests and communities to be sacrificed for corporate greed or false solutions that threaten the health of future generations and the planet.

**It is time to realize a Green New Deal
for Pacific Northwest Forests.**