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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**  
**FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON**  
**EUGENE DIVISION**

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**CASCADIA WILDLANDS**, an Oregon  
non-profit organization; **and OREGON**  
**WILD**, an Oregon non-profit organization,

Plaintiffs,

v.

**SECOND DECLARATION OF**  
**MADLINE COWEN**

**UNITED STATES BUREAU OF LAND**  
**MANAGEMENT**, a federal agency,

Case No.: 6:24-cv-01641-MTK

Defendants, and

**AMERICAN FOREST RESOURCE**  
**COUNCIL; ASSOCIATION OF O&C**  
**COUNTIES**,

Defendant-Intervenors.

I, MADELINE COWEN, declare as follows:

1. The facts set forth in this declaration are based on my personal knowledge and if called as a witness, I could and would competently testify thereto under oath. As to those matters which reflect a matter of opinion, they reflect my personal opinion and judgment upon the matter.
2. My name is Madeline Cowen. I am a resident of the United States and over the age of eighteen. I live in Eugene, Oregon.
3. I am the Field and Organizing Manager at Cascadia Wildlands and am otherwise an active member of Cascadia Wildlands.
4. Cascadia Wildlands is a registered 501(c)(3) conservation non-profit corporation in Oregon. Founded in 1998, Cascadia Wildlands' mission is to defend and restore Cascadia's wild ecosystems in the forests, in the courts, and in the streets. We work in the Cascadia bioregion where threats to wild places and wildlife are high. The Cascadia bioregion is the forest zone extending along the Pacific Coast from northern California to south-central Alaska.
5. Cascadia Wildlands envisions vast old-growth forests, rivers full of wild salmon, wolves howling in the backcountry, a stable climate, and vibrant communities sustained by the unique landscapes of the Cascadia bioregion. The organization works to preserve public forests for their values of mitigating the climate crisis by sequestering and storing carbon, providing habitat for imperiled species, maintaining community resilience in the face of global warming by protecting freshwater resources and keeping wildfire hazard to communities low.
6. Cascadia Wildlands has over 12,000 members and supporters, most of whom live in Oregon and Washington. Thousands of our members and supporters live near and/or recreate in public lands, including those managed by the Swiftwater Field Office of the Roseburg

District of the Bureau of Land Management. Cascadia Wildlands' members and supporters derive aesthetic, recreational, educational, spiritual, and other values from spending time on these public lands. Our members and supporters view wildlife, birdwatch, forage for wild foods, swim in lakes and rivers, take photographs, hike, and enjoy spending time in the small percentage of Cascadia's forests that are classified as mature and old-growth forests.

Cascadia Wildlands participated in BLM's administrative planning process for the Blue and Gold Environmental Assessment (Blue and Gold Project).

7. Before becoming a full-time employee with Cascadia Wildlands, I participated as a volunteer with the organization for over four years. One of the reasons why I volunteered and have chosen to continue my involvement with the organization as a full-time employee is that I get to spend time and fight for the protection of places that I love within the Cascadia bioregion, including the forested wildlife habitat and watersheds slated for heavy logging in pristine, incredibly unique habitat within BLM's Blue and Gold project.
8. I have spent a lot of time in the area proposed for logging in the Blue and Gold Project and have gained great enjoyment from experiencing the unique forest ecosystems of this bioregion I call home. I first visited the Blue and Gold Project area in 2019 when the project was in scoping, going on many subsequent trips where I foraged for mushrooms, marveled at the old growth forests and trees, and pursued hobbies in photography, hiking, and botany.
9. The mature and remnant old-growth forests within the timber sale area boast towering Douglas fir, western hemlock, and western red cedars mixed in with a wide diversity of native plants. I've also found many signs of wildlife, including deer, cougar, and black bear scat, as well as small burrowing animals, and birds. In Section 35, T. 23 S., R. 6 W, on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, I came across part of a red tree vole nest that had fallen to the ground.

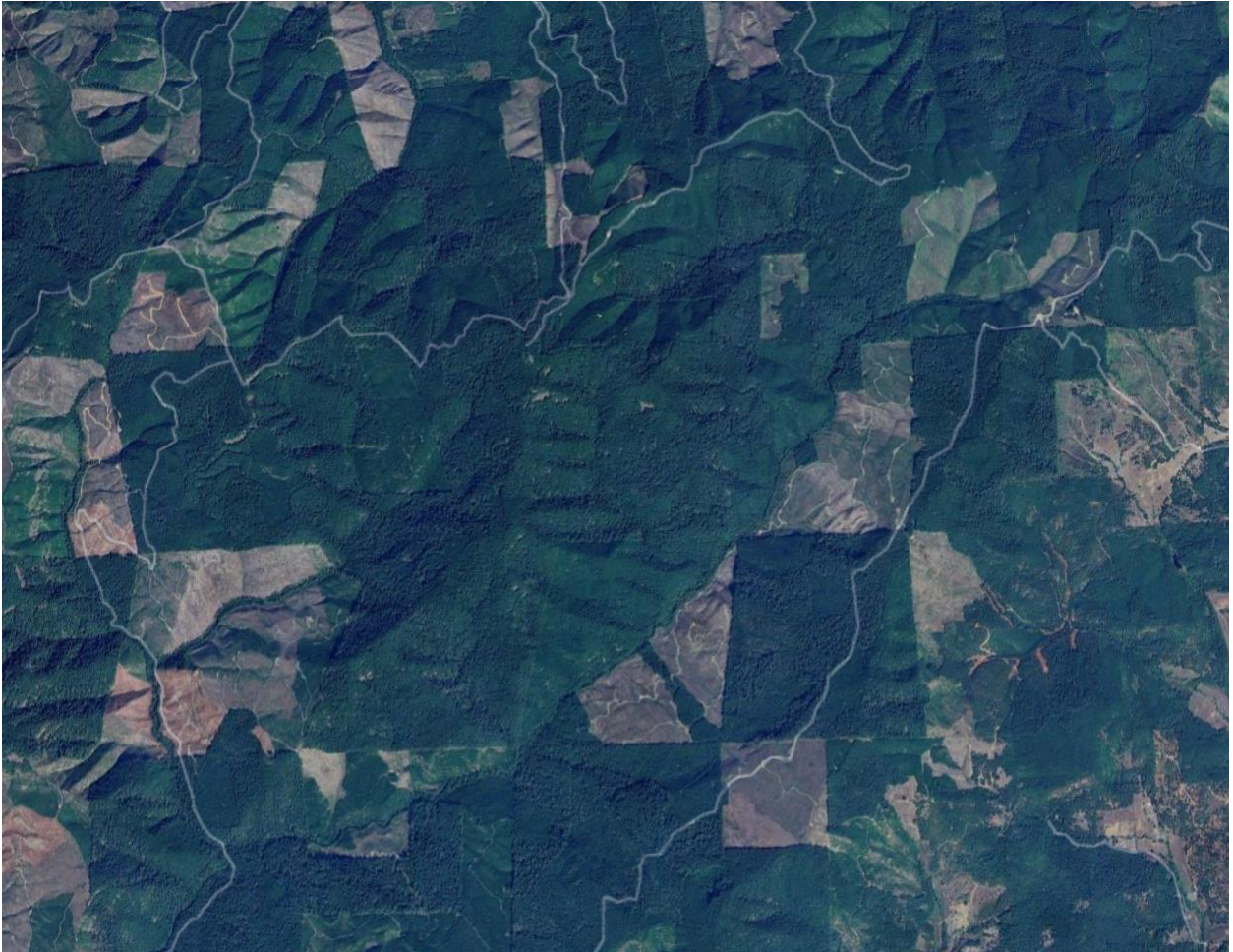
On another visit in the summer of 2024, I was delighted to see a black bear mother and her two young cubs.



*Red tree vole created resin ducts found in a proposed unit in the Blue and Gold Project.*

10. I have a background in geographic information systems (GIS) that enables me to examine geographic areas of interest via satellite or other layers of information prior to going somewhere. This led me to notice a unique area within the Blue and Gold project area: a long ridgeline sitting above the Umpqua River that was almost entirely dark green amidst the checkerboard of brown private land squares and typically green public land squares. This ridgeline, and the sloping streams and forests surrounding it, is one of the last remaining

areas with intact forest on BLM managed lands in Oregon's Coast Range and is commonly referred to as "Yellow Butte." This area provides vital habitat for imperiled species like the marbled murrelet, who tend to favor this topography.



*Area of contiguous public land where the Noble Steed and Prince Butte timber sales are located.*

11. While hiking in the units in Sections 22, 27, 28 and 33, T. 23 S., R. 6 W that are proposed for logging as part of the Noble Steed timber sale, along or near the above-mentioned ridgeline, I witnessed some of the most incredible forested areas I have ever seen in my life. BLM planning documents for the Blue and Gold Project note that these forests range from 120-140 years old. As evidenced by present fire scars on trees, and a lack features indicating previous

commercial logging activities such as stumps, tree scars and old skid roads, it is apparent that much of the forest in this area experienced varied wildfire activity roughly 100 years ago, likely resulting in these age classifications. However, as someone who has spent many years deeply studying fire ecology in this region, I know that most fires in Oregon typically burn in mosaic patterns of high and low severity. As such, I have been astonished to come across and marvel at pockets of truly ancient groves of forests that have not experienced grand disturbance events like high severity wildfire or intense logging. These groves in the Blue and Gold Project area are dominated by trees most likely upwards of 500 years old.





*Above: Burn scars on old-growth incense cedar trees in the Noble Steed timber sale. Below: Old-growth Douglas-fir with unique, large branching ideal for marbles murrelets, also located in the Noble Steed timber sale.*



*Volunteers hiking and learning about forest ecology in an area proposed for logging in the Noble Steed timber sale.*

12. On multiple occasions from 2022-2025, I have explored and hiked through Section 7, T. 24 S., R. 6 W, an area proposed for logging in the Mean Mustard timber sale. The forest here is incredibly diverse, with many old-growth trees, native plant species, downed logs, and snags. As part of my role with Cascadia Wildlands, and on additional visits on my personal time, I have brought friends, family, volunteers, reporters and photographers to this forest. The area is easily accessible from the highway and offers an easy and direct way for people to experience some of the last remaining old-growth forests left in the country. As part of the Mean Mustard timber sale, the BLM plans to build Spur 1 into unit directly through multiple, large, irreplaceable trees.



*Old-growth western red cedar trees that would be removed as part road building Spur 1 in Unit 1 of the Mean Mustard timber sale. Photo taken by David Herasimtshuk, professional photographer.*



*Local advocates of all ages and backgrounds enjoy and explore the forest in Unit 1 of the Mean Mustard timber sale. The old-growth Douglas-fir in the background has a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 84 inches.*

13. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, I visited this same area within the Mean Mustard timber sale (Unit 1, EA Unit 24-6-7B) and was heartbroken to find that logging was happening at this unit. Beyond the devastation of the road building, I also saw at least seven old-growth western red cedar trees that I measured to be greater than 40 inches in diameter. I counted rings on these trees and even with some of the inner bark hollowed out, I reached at least 221 years-old,. Some of the fallen trees were likely upwards of 250 years-old. It is my understanding that felling of these trees on public lands is illegal.









*The above photos are at different locations within unit 1 of the Mean Mustard timber sale and are located outside of the spur road area. These trees, plus additional downed trees throughout the unit are well over 40 inches in diameter and close to 250 years-old.*



*Decking of trees in the Mean Mustard timber sale.*

14. I am extremely concerned that if the Noble Steed, Prince Butte, Mean Mustard, and Sternbreaker timber sales are implemented, the forests I have come to know and cherish will be devastated. These timber sales are located within that Yellow Butte area, the large block of contiguous old-growth pictured above. The logging units in these sales are old-growth forests, dominated by old-growth trees. It will be impossible for BLM to commercially log these areas without felling these old-growth trees. The BLM has already approved

implementation of the Gallagher Canyon and Tidy Bowl timber sales, and what I witnessed there was nothing but a giant clearcut. The BLM claims they do not part take in clearcutting practices, and that they retain a certain percentage of trees, but it is important to understand what these prescriptions look like on the ground.

15. Below is a photo of the recently implemented Gallagher Canyon timber sale, a sale authorized under the Blue and Gold Project. The implemented prescription of the pictured unit below is a variable retention harvest prescription in the LITA where BLM claims 30% of the existing forest was retained. We believe the “retention” was simply a small block of trees retained along the edge of the logging unit.



*Clearcut logging on a steep slope as part of the Gallagher Canyon timber sale (part of the Blue and Gold project). A small sliver of trees on the left-hand side of the clearcut were marked for retention.*

16. While this logging unit was a younger forest than those along Yellow Butte, this is a clear demonstration of the effects of BLM logging practices. While BLM purports to require “retention,” where this retention is located or how it is allocated is generally left up to the discretion of the timber purchaser and can be grouped or aggregated in a single area. This is what the “variable retention” part of the logging prescription name indicates that retention can either be dispersed or aggregated. Timber purchasers almost universally elect to group retention in an area along the timber sale boundary because this is the most financially and practically advantageous approach. Thus, this is what occurs on the ground when BLM claims 30% of the existing forest will be retained. The Noble Steed, Prince Butte, Mean Mustard, and Sternbreaker timber sales have similar levels of retention, this is what we are going to see if they are implemented, except much bigger stumps.
17. BLM has claimed it will retain the old-trees in these areas per direction in the RMP, but this representation is misleading. The RMP protections for old-growth only apply to trees **identified by BLM** as being older than 170 years old. BLM already incorrectly declared in the EA that these forests were uniform in age and do not exceed 140 years in age. Timber purchasers will rely on this claim to assert that BLM has not identified any old-growth trees, and will log these forests in the most financially advantageous way possible. They hinted at this at the hearing before this Court.
18. Even assuming the timber purchaser will retain the old-growth trees that make up the canopy in the Yellow Butte area, and somehow log around these trees, this logging will devastate the existing area. The remaining older trees will die from all the heavy machinery and soil

compaction or be blown over in a matter of months. Healthy forest ecosystems should maintain complexity and "messiness," which refers to a diversity of overstory tree species (Douglas fir, western hemlock, and western red cedar), down and dead wood, standing dead snags, and a forest floor with native plants. The Blue and Gold Project will leave these places void of health, and limit the chance of survival of the forests, the species that depend on them, and my own personal health and spiritual wellbeing. Again, there is simply no functional way for BLM to do this anyway, especially given the proposed reductions in canopy cover, which is almost entirely comprised of old-growth trees.

19. This is not to say that thinning will always devastate a forest. I studied ecology in college, volunteered with Cascadia Wildlands for many years, and now work as a full-time employee at the organization. Through these experiences, I have learned a tremendous amount about how forest ecosystems in the region function. This includes an understanding of how, at times, some very thoughtful restoration thinning can truly help a forest thrive and grow to eventually contain old growth characteristics that support climate resilience and habitat for species who depend on these ecosystems. However, the proposed logging here is not restoration focused but instead intended to generate volume. How and what is retained will be left to the discretion of the purchaser. If this logging moves forward, I would be happy to take the Court and its staff to see firsthand an example of BLM variable retention logging and we can count the rings on the stumps of the old-growth trees that will be illegally logged.
20. The recreational and ecological values provided by the remaining mature and old-growth forests in the project area and adjacent watersheds where BLM's proposed Blue and Gold logging units are located are increasingly rare. This is in large part due to the past and ongoing logging in several Blue and Gold units and surrounding public/private

“checkerboard” lands. The proposed logging and road construction on BLM lands in the Blue and Gold project area will remove mature trees and degrade forest character that I highly value and that Cascadia Wildlands seeks to protect and enhance. I intend to visit this area again in the spring of 2027, and again in the summer, with the hope of seeing an owl. I also plan to continue visiting a few spots that I return to year after year to collect chanterelle and hedgehog mushrooms to enjoy and share with family and friends.



*The areas surrounding Yellow Butte have been devastated by private industrial forestry practices.*

21. Beyond my professional responsibilities with Cascadia Wildlands and my volunteer advocacy, I have many hobbies that rely on public forests in Oregon, including those in the Coast Range. As a naturalist, I rely on forests to relax and study. Often, I spend time hiking

through areas and working on my skills with plant, fungi, and lichen identification. I enjoy photographing interesting species and routinely document my observations, findings, and thoughts in a journal or on my phone. With the advent of new applications like iNaturalist, I can share my discoveries with a global community of nature lovers, providing further benefits.

22. I gain tremendous joy from wildlife sightings when I'm out in the woods. From birds to ungulates and other forest-dwelling animals, I spend time in these places to catch glimpses of these beautiful creatures. I derive significant satisfaction from visiting intact forests in the biodiverse Coast Range region of Oregon.
23. Intact old-growth forests, such as the forest stands proposed for logging in the Blue and Gold project area, provide the necessary habitat for threatened northern spotted owls and their prey species. It is my understanding that greater conservation of mature and old-growth forest habitat is needed to reduce adverse competitive interactions and increase the likelihood that spotted owls can co-exist with barred owls that are invading and occupying the spotted owls' habitat. BLM logging practices that remove ancient forests that provide northern spotted owl habitat directly harm my personal hobbies and professional interests. While BLM has claimed that spotted owls no longer occupy most of these areas, based on conversations with surveyors, I know that these no occupancy detections are a product of a failed and rushed owl survey protocol. Spotted owls are there.
24. When seasonally appropriate, I gather certain foods from the forests that I explore, including huckleberries, fiddleheads, chanterelles, hedgehogs, morels, and cauliflower mushrooms. These foods provide no-cost nutritional value to supplement my diet, and I also share them with my family and friends. Foraging for wild foods also serves as a unique spiritual

opportunity. It helps me feel connected to local ecosystems. This hobby is reliant on intact native forests, like the ones that the proposed Blue and Gold Project will impact.

25. My long-time partner of seven years and our dog Finn gain great enjoyment and benefit from visiting the Blue and Gold project area. We frequently visit our friends who live in the town of Drain, which is a community that relies on healthy, intact forest lands near the project for their drinking water. My partner and I attend various events in the community including weddings, potlucks, music jams, and hikes throughout BLM lands in the Blue and Gold Project area. I plan on returning to this forest, and the communities in the area frequently for the above-listed activities. I tend to travel to the area spontaneously to spend time in the unique forests of the region.
26. If the proposed BLM logging and roading building activities go through as planned, my ability to recreate in this forest and experience the spiritual benefits associated with my hobbies will be directly and significantly impacted. Furthermore, considering the frequency of my visits to the area, and the importance of this area to me and my loved ones, the loss of this place will cause me irreparable damage.
27. If instead the proposed BLM logging and roading activities are dropped, I will continue to be able to visit the forest regularly and benefit both from the carbon storage associated with forests in the Pacific Northwest, including those within the jurisdiction of the Roseburg BLM District, as well as the spiritual and recreational value I gain from being able to pursue my passions for naturalism and foraging.
28. I have a significant personal and professional interest in the restoration of forest habitat in the Blue and Gold project area and the prevention of further forest wildlife habitat removal and degradation.

29. Cascadia Wildlands and our members and supporters have an interest in ensuring the BLM appropriately applies the mandates of the National Environmental Policy Act and other bedrock environmental laws. Ensuring that sound forest management decisions are being made by the Roseburg BLM District and across all public lands managed by the BLM is an interest shared by Cascadia Wildlands as an organization, and myself as a concerned Oregon resident. These interests are undermined when the agency fails to follow the law.
30. Cascadia Wildlands' 2026 legal budget is \$11,000.00. With this budget, Cascadia Wildlands covers all legal expenses and fees for our ongoing litigation and initiation of new cases. This budget leaves little flexibility for large expenses other than filing fees. Cascadia Wildlands would be unable to post anything other than a nominal bond in this litigation. The posting of a non-nominal bond would effectively stop our ability to meaningfully participate in the democratic legal process that allows for public scrutiny of government actions that impact public resources.
31. Cascadia Wildlands has no financial interest in the outcome of this litigation, and we cannot benefit financially from a grant of injunctive relief. Considering the foregoing, any additional bond would pose serious — and undue — hardship to Cascadia Wildlands.

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 12th day of May 2026.

*Madeline Cowen*

[Madeline Cowen \(May 12, 2026 09:51:13 PDT\)](#)