# Protecting Freshwater Resources in Mt. Hood National Forest: Draft Recommendations for Policy Change

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- Adopt riparian buffer widths of two site-potential trees without distinction between fish-bearing and non-fish-bearing streams, or permanent and seasonal/intermittent streams, excluding timber harvest within the first site-potential tree length

  At a minimum, the buffer must apply to the outer edge of the channel migration zone, the outer margin of floodplain-fringing wetlands, springs, and shallow alluvial aquifers, and unstable or potentially unstable slopes contiguous with either of the above or the stream channel itself

- Restrict timber harvest in the *second* site-potential tree length, allowing thinning only after applying the following screening criteria:
  1. Field inventory and analysis of forest and aquatic conditions justify a site-specific objective and treatment
  2. Canopy reduction will not cause warming of streams or wetlands
  3. All larger woody material is retained on site
  4. Treatment can be accomplished from existing roads
  5. Cumulative riparian area impacted by silvicultural treatment, yarding, and transportation does not exceed 10% over a ten-year period in any 6th field sub-watershed
  6. Firm agency commitment exists to monitor and report silvicultural and environmental outcomes

- Restrict mechanical fuel treatments in riparian areas and along headwater streams to locations in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), with no exception for municipal watersheds

- Exclude livestock from riparian and headwater stream areas through retirement of vacant/inactive allotments, off-stream watering sites, and/or wildlife-friendly fencing

- Restore beavers to the forest and range landscapes

- Extend protections to roadless areas of 1,000 contiguous acres or greater

- Use available information to identify and assess aquatic risks and treatment options for all roads existing on the landscape that are not yet documented or ground-confirmed as hydrologically stabilized (including unauthorized routes and those not included as system roads)

- Establish road density standards at the 6th field sub-watershed scale Forest-wide, with a density of less than 1.5 miles/per square mile as an initial target

- Establish hydrologic connectivity limits for the road network at the 6th field sub-watershed scale Forest-wide, with an initial target of less than 10% connectivity

- In anticipation of climate change and population growth, establish the Forest's reserved water rights in the Clackamas and Sandy River basins by engaging in Oregon's adjudication process; in preparation for such adjudication, quantify the volume of water currently needed to satisfy the Forest's multiple use mandates, as well as anticipated future need

- In anticipation of climate change and population growth, establish and protect water quality and quantity as the leading use of the Forest, noting that such a commitment both complements and allows for other multiple uses of the Forest, including recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, municipal water supplies, and healthy forest conditions