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Western Oregon Plan Revisions
P. O. Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208

In examining the Table of Contents of the WOPR, I notice that one title, "Appendix N— Cultural Resources," refers to the cultural impact of activating the WOPR. Most of this appendix is devoted to a review of the tribal status of each Native American group in the WOPR-affected area, from the date the U.S. government officially disbanded a particular tribe to the date of its official restoration as a tribal entity.

Although the plan acknowledges the devastation to the lives of Native Americans due to arbitrary and often genocidal policies of our government, it makes little or no mention of their impact upon Native culture, specifically upon Native religious and spiritual practices. In fact, the words "religion" and "spirituality" do not occur at all.

Native Americans do have religions, and their spiritual practices are not only Earth-centered but also *place*-centered. Each tribe and band, both pre- and post-Contact, developed a sacred relationship with the homeland upon which they lived, including earth, water, and sky, and the plant and animal beings with which they interacted. The recognition of *sacred place* is vital to Native American religions, far more than it is to religions of the dominant culture such as Christianity or Judaism.

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States asserts, in part, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, *or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.*" (Italics mine.) Activation of the WOPR would, without doubt, devastate a considerable area of sacred land by the use of clear-cutting and other disrespectful methods, thus violating the Constitution in preventing the free exercise of their religion by Native American citizens.

Sincerely,



Charleyne Gates
3936 Hilyard St.
Eugene, OR 97405
saintambersrose@yahoo.com

"Our land, our religion, and our life are one." --Hopi

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References: Vine Deloria, Jr., *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion*, 3rd ed., 2003; Joel W. Martin, *Native American Religion*, 1999; Sam D. Gill, *Native American Religions: An Introduction (The Religious Life of Man Series)*, 1982; and many others, including Leslie Marmon Silko, Frank Waters, Black Elk, and N. Scott Momaday. See also "Human rights of indigenous peoples: indigenous people and their relationship to land: preliminary working paper prepared by Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes, Special Rapporteur." United Nations, Commission on Human Rights.