



## STATE OF OREGON: EAST MORAINE WALLOWA LAKE

The East Moraine of Wallowa Lake is one of the world's most perfectly formed glacial landscapes and an icon of eastern Oregon. Through the USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program (FLP), Wallowa County acquired 1,533 acres of this landscape to conserve its ecological, cultural, and economic significance in perpetuity. This conservation initiative has been supported by a remarkable coalition of local and state government agencies and nonprofits, resulting in additional lands along the East Moraine being protected since the FLP property was acquired.

*“The East Moraine captivates locals and visitors alike. It’s among the crown jewels of Oregon ... and a geologic wonder ... the Moraine is an iconic viewshed and its preservation will contribute to bringing tourists to the county, maintaining this vibrant part of the economy.”*

— The Observer Newspaper



Zoning of the property allowed for the building of 15 homesites including three on the Moraine's iconic crest. In addition, a conference center and associated outbuildings along with a private dock on the lake could have been built. If the forest lands had been converted, the idyllic landscape would have been fragmented, losing its rural character, with it the loss of 1,791 acres of public access.

Protection of this property is part of a larger effort by Wallowa Land Trust, Wallowa Resources, Wallowa County, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, and Oregon Department of Forestry to conserve the entire East Moraine, some 3,000 acres.

The Wallowa County Comprehensive Land Use Plan highlights the open space and habitat values of the project lands, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife maps the area as important game habitat. Identified as a “high fire risk,” protection of the property is key to supporting Wallowa County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Managing the landscape as a working forest, instead of opening it to development and the expansion of the wildland-urban interface, is critical to managing wildfire risk, wildlife habitat, and ecological benefits.



The East Moraine provides high quality habitat and is a key wildlife corridor between the valley floor and the mountains.

The ecological benefits of the conservation of the East Moraine include the protection of habitat for numerous species, including gray wolves, an important Oregon species in recovery, and Spalding's catchfly, a federally recognized threatened wildflower. Habitat is also supported for several species listed in the Oregon Conservation Strategy: hoary bat, long-legged myotis (bat), ferruginous hawk, and white-headed woodpecker. Protection of the property also supports the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Mule Deer Initiative by providing critical winter habitat for this declining species.

For over 16,000 years, the Nez Perce have lived in the Wallowa Valley. The project lands, which lay within the greater Wallowa Lake basin, are considered sacred to the Nez Perce, Umatilla, Cayuse, and



Walla Walla peoples. The area was a central summer encampment with a nearby fishing area, and today Old Chief Joseph's gravesite is located at the south end of Wallowa Lake, clearly visible from the project lands, which have great cultural significance.

As an active working forest, the project lands are managed under the guidelines of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

The property will be managed by a multi-resource management plan that was created by a coalition of local land management experts to include forest management, graze management, public recreation, and cultural resources. Periodic timber harvests and land management activities will continue to support the local economy.

As a community forest owned by Wallowa County, harvested timber supports the Integrated Biomass Energy Campus, an economic catalyst project developed to create a market for small diameter logs.

Aside from forestry, the property supports the local economy through livestock grazing and is a critical component of the Wallowa Lake viewshed, the area's primary draw for tourists and recreators. Nearly a million people visit the county each year to enjoy the area's iconic landscape and public lands.

The East Moraine is a crucial element of a landscape that is both an incredible example of glacial history, a working forest, and a tremendous tourism draw for eastern Oregon. The Forest Legacy Program ensures that its ecological, economic, and cultural benefits will be preserved in perpetuity.



Photo © Rick McEwin

### AT-A-GLANCE



Property is adjacent to **1.7 million acres** of protected lands.



Visitors generate **\$26 million** in local revenues and **10% of local employment**.



Property provides habitat for: elk, red foxes, coyotes, bobcats, cougars, marmots, bald eagles, and blue grouse.



Habitat is supported for several species listed in the **Oregon Conservation Strategy**.



Integrated Biomass Energy Campus supports **26 full-time jobs**.



Property supports the **local economy** through livestock grazing and is a critical component of the Wallowa Lake viewshed.

**Top L:** Iconic moraines glacial landscape. (Photo: Leon Werdinger); **Middle L:** The East Moraine forest will continue to support public access and educational events. (Photo: Dave Jensen); **Top R:** (Photo: Wallowa Moraines Partnership); **Bottom R:** The Moraines have long held cultural significance. (Photo: Rick McEwin)

For more information, visit

<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/aboutodf/Pages/grantsincentives.aspx>.