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## Legal settlement safeguards lynx habitat in Kettle River Mountains from logging

### Contacts:

Timothy Coleman, Kettle Range Conservation Group 509-775-2667, [tcoleman@kettlerange.org](mailto:tcoleman@kettlerange.org)  
Andrew Hawley, Western Environmental Law Center, 206-487-7250, [hawley@westernlaw.org](mailto:hawley@westernlaw.org)

The Kettle Range Conservation Group [is celebrating](#) the [settlement](#) of its lawsuit challenging the Bulldog Restoration Project in the Kettle River Mountains of northeast Washington. The legal agreement with the U.S. Forest Service, reached on Jan. 23, 2025, protects important lynx habitat in the Colville National Forest generally, and modifies the Bulldog Project to protect lynx habitat and other important ecological value in the area. The group was represented by Western Environmental Law Center.

The Bulldog project will impact three Kettle River Range roadless areas including logging on 5,980 acres, 8,106 acres of thinning, and 13,944 acres of surface fuels treatments. The project would have a significant impact on threatened Canada lynx. The legal agreement includes reestablishing Lynx Analysis Unit (LAU) boundaries established prior to 2020 until such time as a full evaluation of environmental impact of redrawing LAUs and public input to proposed change is conducted.

“We are grateful the Colville National Forest was willing to talk and work collaboratively with Kettle group and our attorneys to achieve this amicable settlement that will not only benefit threatened lynx, but also include dropping some logging units and maintaining 40% or more forest canopy in riparian areas critical for lynx forage, travel, seclusion and breeding habitat,” said Timothy Coleman, executive director of the Kettle Range Conservation Group. “The scenic integrity as viewed from the Kettle Crest Trail, part of the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail, will retain more of its current natural appearance that exists today and that is so important to the recreation experience.”

“It is hard to overstate the importance of protecting the forests of the Kettle Range,” said Coleman. “Unlogged wild forests are a primary source of clean water, contributing significantly to the health of fish and wildlife. Recreation, wildlife viewing, and scenic beauty attract tourism supporting main street businesses, a high quality of life, and solitude and beauty valued by both residents and visitors alike.”

“The federal government is required to protect and recover critically imperiled species such as the Canada lynx, and to ‘look before it leaps’ when taking actions that may work against recovery,” said Andrew Hawley, senior attorney with the Western Environmental Law Center. “When it originally proposed the Bulldog Project, the Forest Service failed to meet either requirement. We are relieved, however, that Forest Service thought better of its approach and agreed to modify the project to better protect lynx and preserve the important recreational and ecological values in the area.”

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