# **For Immediate Release,** Families for Climate brings parents and youth together to take action for climate justice—in ways that are accessible, inclusive, informative and inspiring.

# Sunrise PDX is a movement of young people working to stop climate change and create millions of good jobs in the process. We are fighting for a Green New Deal at the local, state, and federal levels that addresses injustice and inequity while also fighting the climate crisis.February 27, 2023

# **Contacts:**

# Laurie Kerr, Cascade Volcanoes Chapter, Great Old Broads greatoldbroads.org (360-773-5192

# Adam Bronstein, Western Watersheds Project, adam@westernwatersheds.org, (541) 595-8034

# Chris Smith, WildEarth Guardians, csmith@wildearthguardians.org, (505) 395-6177

# Dr. Suzanne Fouty, Hydrologist/Soils Specialist, suzannefouty2004@gmail.com

# Carole King, Singer, Songwriter and Advocate for the Environment

# **Large Coalition of Nonprofit Organizations, Scientists, and Advocates Call on President Biden to Protect Beaver on Federal Public Lands**

# Today, this [letter](https://www.westernwatersheds.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Biden-Beaver-Letter.pdf) was delivered to President Biden requesting an executive order protecting beaver on federally managed public lands. “In order to fully realize the wide array of social, ecological, and economic benefits that beavers provide to human and wild communities, the federal government must take bold and decisive action,” said Adam Bronstein of Western Watersheds Project. “This executive order would provide clear direction and is needed because state wildlife agencies are too narrowly focused on the interest of hunters and trappers, leading to their continued failure to protect this critical keystone species. Anxieties are high and cut across state boundaries and addressing them requires a national strategy rather than a piecemeal approach.”

# “The recent passage of the Inflation Reduction Act and the signing of climate-targeted executive orders by the Biden administration has created the opportunities to implement key nature-based solutions that will help address the climate and biodiversity crises,” said Dr. Fouty, retired USDA Forest Service hydrologist/soils specialist. “The Inflation Reduction Act has ignited a sense of hope and momentum when it comes to tackling climate change and our request builds on that momentum. Our public lands are the best place to begin landscape-scale stream, wetland and riparian recovery needed to help tackle the challenges our communities face.”

# Why are beavers so important? Beavers and — the habitats they create — sequester vast amounts of carbon, provide vital habitat for fish and wildlife, create natural firebreaks, filter drinking water, store water during drought and temper flooding events. When beavers are removed from the landscape, these important benefits are lost. Beavers nearly went extinct in North America after centuries of fur trapping and extermination efforts, and their populations have yet to recover across most areas of the United States. Protecting beavers by closing public lands to beaver trapping and hunting will vastly improve survival rates.

# “Many bird and salmon populations are declining because of habitat loss,” said Paul Engelmeyer of Portland Audubon. “Expansion of beaver populations will increase their desired habitat, and in doing so, lead to improved water quality and water security for our communities and farmers. It is all connected. Protecting beavers is just smart economics and we need to act immediately.”

# This urgent need to protect beavers is echoed by climate groups that are youth-focused and concerned about the habitability of the planet. “Kids can see it makes a lot of sense for us to help beavers, and allow these amazing engineers to naturally restore our rivers and provide resilience against drought and wildfires," said Noelle Studer-Spevak of Families for Climate, a family-oriented climate advocacy group. Matt Stevenson of Sunrise PDX, a group focusing on efforts to decrease carbon emissions agrees. “It is time to act and let nature work for all of us. Beavers create wetlands that can sequester and store incredible amounts of carbon. By protecting beavers, we can accelerate the drawdown of existing carbon from the atmosphere.”

# Chris Smith, southwest wildlife advocate for WildEarth Guardians points out, "Restoring and protecting beavers throughout the country is one of the most efficient ways to mitigate the devastating impacts of climate crisis, wildfires, flooding, and drought. Like so many other native species, beavers were nearly wiped out before we realized how critical they are to our ecosystems. It's time to reverse that mistake."

# “A wide range of species face increasing threats of extirpation and extinction due to climate change and habitat loss.  Beavers can and should be part of the solution facing these threats”, notes Laurie Kerr, Cascade Volcanoes Chapter of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness.

# "Beavers are a keystone species, meaning that they play a crucial role in maintaining the biodiversity and stability of ecosystems,” adds Dr. William Ripple, Distinguished Professor of Ecology at Oregon State University. "Beavers have been referred to as 'nature's firefighters' due to their ability to create wetland habitats that can act as natural firebreaks, slowing or even stopping the spread of wildfires.”

# And as weather becomes increasingly unpredictable and severe and the economic, ecological, and emotional costs rise, we need all the help we can get. Long-time environmental advocate and singer/songwriter Carole King summed up the reality of the situation, "No matter how far downstream we live, beavers and their dams are beneficial to all of us because they create wetlands, mitigate drought and flooding, and filter pollutants from our rivers and streams."

# Western Watersheds Project is a nonprofit environmental conservation group dedicated to protecting and restoring native wildlife and watersheds throughout the American West.

# Great Old Broads is a national organization, led by women, dedicated to the protection and preservation of wilderness and wild public lands

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# WildEarth Guardians is a nonprofit conservation organization that works to protect and restore the wildlife, wild places, wild rivers, and health of the American West.

# Portland Audubon is Oregon's oldest nonprofit environmental conservation organization with a mission to protect wildlife and habitats and connect people with nature.