

1766

Avona L'Carttier
Sterling Farms
P O Box 309
Jacksonville, Oregon 97530

RECEIVED

JAN 09 2008

January 5, 2008

Bureau of Land Management
Western Oregon Plan Revisions Office
333 SW 1st. Avenue
Portland, OR 97208

Dear Bureau of Land Management.

I am writing as a person neighboring BLM managed lands and as a concerned American citizen regarding what is currently one the greatest threats to the environment of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest: the Western Oregon Plan Revisions to Northwest Forest Plan of 1994 (WOPR). We live and farm in southwest Oregon, where the summers are very dry and the winters often bring very heavy downpours and flooding.

This combination of very dry and very wet seasons makes our landscape extremely fragile. Any loss of vegetation through logging or OHV usage subjects the land to many problems. Fire being one of the largest during the summer and fall followed by flooding and severe erosion in the rainy seasons. Many of the forestry practices being set forth in the WOPR have well documented to increase fire and erosion.

Our farm is bordered on several sides by public lands managed by BLM. I learned of an editorial that criticized landholders bordering BLM lands as irresponsible NIMBY'S who think public lands are part of our private backyards. I want to say that as citizens in sight of public lands that it is our civic duty to our fellow public to alert them when their heritage is being threatened and their best interests and opinions are being ignored.

Backpackers, birdwatchers, sportsman, and others travel from around the country to enjoy the peaceful beauty of the pristine wilderness and old growth forests that I am privileged to live near. As a backpacker and horseback rider I can't tell you how heart retching it is to travel to a favorite place only to find that it has been clear cut. Someone who lives in New York who travels here every few years is unlikely to learn of what is being proposed here until it far too late. Hundreds and hundreds of letters have been presented to the Medford District BLM office from people around the country documenting their use of these public lands for non-motorized recreational activities. They represent a small sample of the numbers that visit the forested backcountry being threatened under the WOPR.

Old growth forests have become a rare and precious commodity. They are precious not because of the timber they might yeild, they are invaluable to the environment and to the myriad of life supported under and by the canopy and surrounds. Old growth forests

contribute to the cooling the atmosphere in the summer; water retention for slow release throughout the year preventing drought and then by slowing runoff thus preventing flooding during our heavy rains. They are rare because most have been logged and will never be allowed to recover. The remaining forests are far more precious intact than as logs because they are vital for the life on the planet in so many ways. No amount of money or any known effort can ever replace an old growth forest other than a **LOT** of time without human influence.

The science presented in the WOPR document has been documented by experts as flawed and ignores the **FACTS** around global warming and other topics¹. We cannot ignore the relationship between deforestation and global warming, flooding, fire and the degradation and/or loss of watersheds. Furthermore, the BLM is ignoring its own governing policy; United States Department of the Interior Order Number 3226 signed into law on January 19, 2001 by Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt by omitting consideration of the effects of the deforestation as proposed by this WOPR. I suspect the word deforestation does not appear in the WOPR document as result of its implementation. I was not able to review each and every one of the 1606 pages. However, credentialed experts and veterans of the field acknowledge that the end result of the carrying out WOPR will result in just that - deforestation.

The rest of world appears to understand the relationship of deforestation to global warming as evidenced by an article published by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations entitled "***Deforestation causes global warming; Key role for developing countries in fighting greenhouse gas emissions***" on September 4, 2006. The first paragraph states; "Most people assume that global warming is caused by burning oil and gas. But in fact between 25 and 30 percent of the greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere each year – 1.6 billion tonnes – is caused by deforestation."² This is only one example of many, many credible documents reminding us of what most intelligent individuals intuitively know.

It is sadly amazing that BLM staff can produce a 1600 plus page document and fail to consider facts that any lay person can easily find. It is also an embarrassment, no it is an outrage, to me as an American taxpayer whose hard earned dollars fund the paychecks of those who prepared the WOPR to call clear cuts "**regeneration harvests**" with "**no green tree retention**" in the "Timber Management Areas." Is this a ploy to gain acceptance of this disastrous plan hoping that the public will think of something other than a clear cut?

BLM manages a lot of public land; however, the only land that is forested is that here in the Northwest. It seems that it would be much more efficient and effective if these forest lands were transferred to the Forest Service so that they remain an integral part of the

¹ "***BLM timberlands draft is a failure***" By Ron Sadler, Published: Tuesday, November 13, 2007, Eugene, Oregon Register-Guard.

² <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2006/1000385/index.html> accessed January 4, 2008

Northwest Forest Plan. After all that is the business and expertise of the Forest Service and they have been doing a fair job at it.

Harvesting old growth and reducing riparian buffers is not acceptable. Threatening already endangered and reduced salmon runs and degrading recreational areas are not acceptable. It has come to my attention that there are many different sportsmen's groups also protesting WOPR such as hunters and fishermen³. Again, these are a sample of many visitors to our area annually who agree that cutting old growth forest and reducing riparian buffers are both short-sighted and irresponsible. BLM must be accountable and follow the laws of the land and will of the public that owns the land. BLM employees are public employees paid by taxes collected from the hard working American public who owns these forests. The management of those lands is not to be dictated by the greedy whims of private timber processors. The Endangered Species Act and The Clean Water Act are law and must be followed with no exception. Furthermore, public comment has repeatedly shown that clear cutting is not an acceptable practice on public lands! The obsolete O & C Act of 1937 should be repealed in favor of law that best serves the land and people as a whole now in 2008 and for the future.

Further, it would appear that the logging industry does not expect to continue with the harvest of large old growth trees; almost of the mills in Oregon have been re-tooled to accommodate smaller diameter trees. It is my understanding that there are many harvestable trees in existing plantations that need to be thinned. Reasonable and responsible thinning provides trees sized to what most mills can now handle and is acceptable to the public.

It is also impossible to comprehend how BLM concluded that the American Public wants OHV sites in fragile wilderness areas despite the fact that statistics buried in the 1600 plus page document proposing this WOPR predict only a 2% increase of OHV usage of public lands over the next 10 years as opposed to 27% increase in "quiet" activities. Further, one of the proposed areas; Anderson Butte, is a very steep, grassy mountainside that sports dry grasses most of the season. OHV or any type of motorized vehicle usage creates an *extreme* fire hazard. They also introduce noxious weeds such as star thistle and napweed. This area on Anderson Butte borders private farm land as well as the proposed Dakubetede Wilderness area. Fire, our greatest concern, admittedly overshadows our concerns of noxious weeds and erosion, however, we find the weed problem costly and serious. Already there are deep ruts that form small muddy "rivers" during times of heavy rain that wash down onto Anderson road and our property.

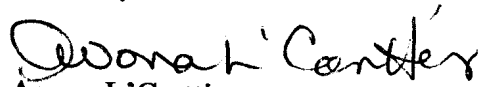
I have not visited other proposed OHV sites, however, the Medford district is dry in summer throughout and our precious forests needs to be protected from these spark making, ear shattering, pollution machines. Litter is another major concern; we find beer cans wherever these machines tear through the fragile environment. So, we also note that there is consumption of alcohol by a significant number of these riders. I have to say, for these reasons; OHVs are not very welcome in our neighborhood. We do welcome the

³

many hikers, horse back riders, bird watchers and others who travel from afar to respectfully enjoy the magnificent and unique beauty of our pristine wilderness.

I could go on and on, however, I believe that there has been so much published by experts that BLM must already know that the WOPR is seriously flawed and in violation of a number of laws. So, instead of spending lots of time quoting experts while citing errors, flaws and violations of the law documented in the 1600 plus pages detailing the proposed WOPR, I will close by saying that I hope and pray that you will follow the law of the land, the will of the majority, and common sense and scrap the Western Oregon Plan Revision. Turn the lands over to the Forest Service or at least develop a truly sustainable plan to manage our precious and fragile forests. If for some insane reason WOPR is not scraped, I will support in every way I can whatever legal and appropriate recourse is necessary to see that it is never implemented.

Sincerely,


Avona L'Cartier

cc: Senator Ron Wyden: 1220 SW 3rd Ave., Suite 585, Portland, OR 97204
Senator Gordon Smith: 121 SW Salmon St., Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204
Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-4th): 405 East 8th Ave. #2030, Eugene, OR 97401
Rep. Greg Walden (R-2nd): 843 East Main Street, Ste 400, Medford, OR 97504
Rep. Earl Blumenhauer (D-3rd): 729 N.E. Oregon St., Suite 115, Portland, OR 97232
Rep. Darlene Hooley (D-5th): 315 Mission Street SE #101, Salem, Oregon 97302
Rep. David Wu (D-1st): 620 SW Main, Suite 606, Portland, OR 97205
Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) 7904 Day Drive, Parma, Ohio 44129