

Dear BLM,

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Top Ten Reasons the WOPR is a Bad Idea

The Bush Administration proposes the Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR) to undo protections for Bureau of Land Management-administered public forests. Here are the top ten reasons why gutting protections for some of our last, best old growth forest is a real bad idea:

10. **Quality of life.** The WOPR proposes widespread clearcutting of public forest, which could reduce property values and the quality of life of thousands of Oregonians living near BLM lands. Over 1,000 miles of new logging road and 140,000 acres of clearcuts in the first decade alone would scar Oregon's spectacular landscape.
9. **Peace and quiet.** Clearcutting of old growth forest and proposed "Off Highway Vehicle Emphasis Areas" threaten peace and quiet for rural residents and visitors. Over 100,000 acres would be promoted as destinations for OHVs, most adjacent to Oregonian's private residences.
8. **Clean water and salmon.** By logging near streams the WOPR reduces important protections for clean water and Pacific salmon. High quality drinking water originates on BLM lands for the citizens of Salem, Corvallis, Eugene, and 70 other Oregon communities. Salmon need cool, clean water, but the WOPR would remove stream buffers that shade streams and keep sediment from the water.
7. **Ancient forests.** BLM lands in western Oregon contain about 1-million acres of our remaining older forests. The WOPR would increase logging of forests over 200 years sevenfold, and threatens some of Oregon's best remaining ancient forests. Two thousand square miles of forest (an area the size of Delaware) would be put in "Timber Management Areas," where clearcutting is emphasized.
6. **Wildlife and plant habitat.** Wildlife rely on BLM forests such as elk and black bear and threatened species like the northern spotted owl and the marbled murrelet. The WOPR would reduce protections for wildlife populations and diminish habitat for countless plant and wildlife species. An increase in noxious, invasive weeds and wildlife species is predicted under the WOPR.
5. **Sustainable economies.** Healthy, protected forests are one of Oregon's most important natural assets. While rampant old growth clearcutting promises short-term economic boom to a few well-connected mill owners, an economic bust is easily foreseeable under the Bush plan as fish, wildlife and the old growth forests that they rely on dwindle.
4. **Northwest Forest Plan.** The Northwest Forest Plan is a landmark agreement that private, state and federal landowners rely on to protect threatened old growth species while producing timber in compliance with environmental law. Removing BLM forests would unravel the whole fabric of the Plan and produce uncertainty for other landowners.
3. **It is illegal.** The BLM cannot eliminate protection for old-growth forests, without undermining the Northwest Forest Plan and protections for threatened and endangered species and clean water. To do so, the BLM needs to violate the Endangered Species and Clean Water Acts and other laws.
2. **Global warming and fire.** While the Bush administration ignores climate change in the WOPR, by converting moist old growth forests into dry flammable tree plantations, the WOPR will increase the amount of carbon in the atmosphere and places communities at enhanced risk of uncharacteristic fire.
1. **There is a better way.** We should protect what is left of Oregon's old growth heritage forests, and restore those forests that have been degraded. Half of BLM forests were clearcut in the past century and converted to overstocked tree plantations. Thinning small trees could offer more than 2 billion board feet of commercially valuable timber if actively thinned while preserving our last, best public lands for generations to come.

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