

To: Jay Carlson, District Manager  
Bureau of Land Management, Roseburg District  
777 Garden Valley Blvd.  
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Although I did not directly participate in the Collaborative Forestry Project until the public field trip to the Major Glasko area on April 10th, I have followed the process on the web and wish to weigh in. I believe in the need for compromise when dealing with forest management issues that affect - and frequently conflict with - the competing priorities of preservationists, wildlife advocates, industry, those whose livelihoods depend on the forest, and government agencies, to name a few.

It seems the representatives of the two environmental organizations present are opposed to any form of forest management other than thinning in dense young plantations. Those plantations are certainly in need of pre-commercial thinning (PCT). However, most stands less than 40 years old offer little or no merchantable timber, and PCT treatments are necessary but expensive projects that cost taxpayer money without generating revenue in the near term. And long term? I imagine these groups will fight any attempt to harvest timber from these plantations when they are ready for commercial harvest, because by then they will be suitable habitat.

These groups oppose the vast majority of timber sales, nitpicking nearly every aspect of any project, and thus are perceived by the general public as obstructionists. They use whatever scientific studies (or portions thereof) that support their hypothesis, and ignore those that do not. While they certainly have good intentions, I fear they often cannot see the forest for the trees. Their intransigence is not conducive to collaborative efforts.

The other side is equally adamant in their support of "get the cut out" regardless of the consequences. I felt like I was in court when reading through the Association of O & C Counties summation of their beloved O & C Act of 1937. I noticed their Exhibit A did not mention that a vast majority of the lands meant to go to "real settlers" went to large corporations instead, mainly timber companies. This antiquated act was intended to rectify an enormous injustice to the American people. It failed to do so. As with other obsolete laws that continue to wreak havoc (such as the Mining Act of 1872), it needs to be modified to reflect the changing priorities of society. The well-intentioned O & C Act addressed illegal actions by the railroad company that took place between 1866 and 1900. Scientific knowledge has grown tremendously in the **144 years** since then! Conditions on the ground have also changed dramatically; there are only small remnants of old growth left, and there are many more endangered species. Additionally, newer and less understood challenges such as climate change and carbon sequestration have developed.

For the Association of O & C Counties (and anyone else sharing their viewpoint) to believe that the BLM should manage those lands for timber production only - or even primarily - is irresponsible and shortsighted. There are too many other forest attributes that society values, including clean air, clean water, healthy wildlife populations and recreation opportunities, to single out timber production as the saviour of county budgets. I believe very few citizens really want to see all Matrix lands converted to monoculture fiber farms.

One of your foresters, Abe Wheeler, said he believes (I paraphrase here) that people can make an environmentally positive difference in some stands while still removing timber: hardwood components could be enhanced, release treatments could add more volume to remaining trees quicker, and species diversity promoted. I agree. Perhaps the BLM should begin - as has been suggested by Umpqua Watersheds - with initially harvesting in less controversial second growth, managed stands. However, as you pointed out, 85% of the Roseburg District lies within NRF areas of the spotted owl. Therefore some compromise seems inevitable, if not always desirable. There is a well-documented need to manage BLM lands to enhance older forests, promote species diversity and wildlife habitats in a landscape shared with private, industrial tree farms. Best management practices applied to carefully selected and designed projects could, I believe, meet the objectives of this collaborative pilot project.

Sincerely,

Tim Ballard, small woodland owner in Douglas County

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