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JUL 5 2012

July 2, 2012

Bureau of Land Management
Oregon/Washington State Office
PO Box 2965
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RE: scoping comment on Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Western Oregon

As a resident of a small town on the Oregon coast and as a citizen concerned about the use of our federal lands, I am writing to provide my comments on the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) RMP for Western Oregon.

Port Orford is only one of numerous towns along the coast which rely on healthy rivers and streams for a healthy fishing industry. Those rivers and streams are, in large part, dependent upon the management practices of the BLM of those lands under its jurisdiction. As we are all aware, healthy forests result in healthy watersheds and healthy streams. The health of forests and watersheds are also important for the water supplies for towns and cities throughout western Oregon and provide essential wildlife habitat as well as various recreational opportunities both for Oregon residents and for the tourists who have an increasing economic impact on our region. For these reasons, I support an RMP based primarily on maintaining and increasing the health of BLM lands.

More specifically, I oppose any management practice which would result in the increase in logging of old-growth forests or reduction in protection for threatened or endangered species. I can see no justification for logging any more old-growth forest on BLM lands. Timber harvest on plantations and other previously-cut lands may be considered renewable but harvest of old-growth is a one time proposition given the hundreds of years necessary for the regeneration of a healthy ecosystem. The only possible justification is for short-term economic gain to a small number of people which ignores the long-term loss to a much larger and wider population, including generations to come. The losses from logging old-growth forests are well known and documented but far more difficult to actually quantify than are the economic gains: degraded watersheds, loss of species diversification and increased wildfires are just the top of the list.

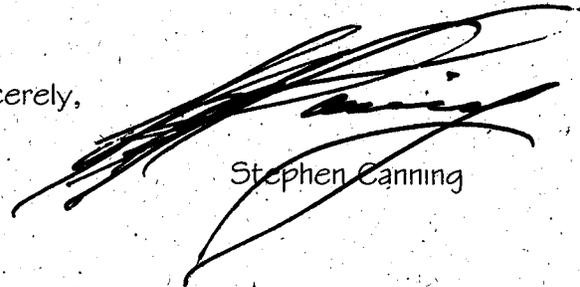
Instead, the BLM should now emphasize forest restoration as the means to meeting the goals of the O&C Act as well as meeting the restoration objectives of the Northwest Forest Plan. Obviously, the Forestland-Urban Interface should be the focus of attention in order to also reduce the likelihood of wildfire losses. Innovation in the utilization of small-diameter trees is imperative. Although not as easy and lucrative as clearcutting old-growth, this is where the BLM and private industry must concentrate efforts in order to meet the competing forest management objectives of utilization and conservation.

By the same reasoning, I support non-motorized recreation opportunities as opposed to the continued degradation caused by under-regulated off-road vehicle (OHV) use. I would like to note that I do not fault BLM for the under-regulation; I am aware that their funding is not conducive to a staffing level which would allow for them to perform this function. This, however, underscores the necessity of judicious management decisions when considering opening new areas to OHV use, especially in geologically and botanically sensitive areas.

Mining activities are nearly always detrimental to healthy landscapes and, although constrained by antiquated mineral rights law, the BLM should attempt in the RMP to minimize the effects of such activities by requiring appropriate remediation and then actually enforcing same.

In conclusion, I restate my main concern, which I would urge the BLM to use as the central precept in developing the RMP: healthy landscapes provide the most value to the most people...

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Canning". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script with several overlapping strokes.

Stephen Canning

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