

I write to strenuously oppose the Western Oregon Plan Revisions to BLM's management of nearly 2.6 million acres of federal forests under the Western Oregon Plan Revisions. The changes the agency is contemplating will unravel the protections of the landmark Northwest Forest Plan, and will lead to water pollution, degraded habitat, and increased conflict and controversy.

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 would be put in "Timber Management Areas," where clearcutting is emphasized.

By logging closer to 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. Please leave the existing protections for riparian areas in place.

Wildlife such as elk and black bear and threatened species like the northern spotted owl and the marbled murrelet rely on BLM forests. The WOPR would reduce protections for wildlife populations and diminish habitat for countless plant and wildlife species. Please choose an alternative that leaves habitat protections for wildlife, especially in existing old-growth forests, in place.

There are many less sensitive and more practical places to generate wood fiber than our last remaining ancient forests, like the millions of acres of young, even-age tree plantations that have grown since previous clearcuts. By focusing on previously logged public forestlands - many of which are now overgrown and in need of thinning - the BLM would provide wood to local mills while actually improving conditions for fish and wildlife and keeping saws out of precious old-growth forests.

Instead, the WOPR proposes to inflame the controversy by increasing old-growth clearcutting for a short-term economic fix. The WOPR puts water quality at risk and would destroy some of Oregon's most special places. We should protect our remaining mature and old-growth forests on public land, not clearcut these natural treasures.

Sincerely, and with great hopes that the comments will actually be taken into consideration by the BLM,



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