

January 7, 2008

Bureau of Land Management
Portland, Oregon

Subject: WOPR Comments submitted via the BLM website forum

We object that the BLM Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR) places timber production above all other uses of our public lands managed by the BLM, including clean water, wildlife habitat, fish and recreation. Such myopic management of public forests threatens to dirty our waters, degrade important habitat, and negatively impact salmon and other fish species. It is time to stop spending money to log old growth forests and selling Oregon's ancient forests.

- We are very concerned with the direction the BLM is headed in the management of nearly 2.6 million acres of federal forests under the Western Oregon Plan Revisions. The changes the BLM 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.
- The economic vigor of our community should not depend on an increased level of timber extraction. Rather than hitch our stability to a highly volatile industry that has over-harvested much of the region, we should continue economic diversification and adjust to a leaner, trimmer timber industry based on restoration thinning, not old growth clear cutting. While timber is certainly a piece of southern Oregon's economy, it is but one amongst a variety of resources and value that forests provide. Communities in the urban-wildlands interface are at great risk of wildfires due to lack of appropriate small diameter tree thinning and brush management, not because of large diameter tree forests. Forests supply ecological services such as water filtration, soil stabilization, air purification and climate control that are vital to a healthy future.
- We are opposed to the designation of 13 "Off Highway Vehicle Emphasis Areas" concentrating OHV use on more than 100,000 acres in the area between Ashland, Jacksonville, Gold Hill, Rogue River, Grants Pass and the Illinois Valley. More than half of the acreage is privately held – not BLM land. The plan encourages OHV usage and actively discourages other forms of "quiet type" recreation like bird-watching, camping, fishing, hiking and botanizing. Focusing on OHV use when all other outdoor recreation is far greater is a serious mistake. We do not want more OHV use in our surrounding areas. This kind of activity is not appropriate nor in the best interest for the homeowners who live within the boundaries and has significant negative implications for the future of outdoor tourism for this entire area.
- The WOPR ignores environmental protections in the O&C Act, as well as the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act and other laws put in place to protect these forests and streams. The WOPR puts creating more tree plantations ahead of protecting clean water, wildlife habitat, recreation or producing a reliable small diameter wood supply.

In summary, there are no acceptable alternatives in the WOPR except NO ACTION. We urge the BLM to go back to the beginning and designate REASONABLE plans which would benefit the local communities, giving the appropriate consideration to ALL types of uses, not merely the harvesting of old growth forests and OHV uses. It is disgraceful that a government agency would waste so much time and effort (which equals money – our taxes) in proposing such outrageous useless "alternatives."

Sincerely,

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