Bureau of Land Management, Western Oregon Plan Revisions Office
333 SW 1st. Avenue Portland, Oregon
Portland, OR 97208

341

RECEIVED

OCT 05 2007

CC: Oregon Congressional delegation

Re: BLM Western Oregon Plan Revisions

Dear BLM,

THE WOPR is a very worrisome plan as it suggests that there is no concerns nor awareness of the effects of global warming on our western forests and that when the remaining old growth forests are cut, there will be the perfect climactic conditions to raise ongoing crops of trees. This assumption is only a guess. The prudent course is to protect our native old growth forests for the diversity of DNA which is present in those trees as well as in each part of that system, from the nitrogen fixing agents to the microrizal fungi which have been known to serve in the inoculation of the trees from the effects of drought and disease. Removing these entire forests from the landscape removes opportunities for recovery from potentially hazardous conditions facing us in the not too distant future. These 2.6 MILLION acres is a tremendously large area to suddenly convert into tree farms where invasive species of all sorts manifest following a clear cut logging operation.

This seems a particularly poor time to introduce such sweeping changes to the management direction of our public O&C lands, much of which is found in already cut over and heavily eroded private lands. Clear cutting our public holdings will exacerbate an already damaged system. As we have noted with sadness, that our coastal fishermen have gone hungry with the massive losses of coastal coho returns, we look to our public agencies to do whatever is necessary to bring balance back into the ecosystems which native wild coho, Umpqua cutthroat trout, chinook salmon all depend. With the cutting of these 2.6 million acres, we will be seeing worsening riverine conditions, more turbidity, warmer temperatures and more soils erosion. The fish will suffer, and, on down through the chain of species, including ourselves.

Harvesting is not a good term to use when it comes to cutting down native old growth forests, which we had no hand in planting or husbanding. We have been the collectors of a rich ecosystem, which we are currently depleting to the point of extinguishing many of her species of plant and animal. This is not what the Congress had in mind when it passed the O&C Act of 1937. In 1937, the Northern Spotted Owl was not threatened with extinction, nor the red tree vole, northern flying squirrel, pacific salamander, pine martin, fisher, lynx and a myriad more plants, fungi and animal species including the tailed frog.

From where I stand, I see this plan as in direct opposition to the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, NEPA, Endangered Species Act and the intent of the Northwest Forest Plan. This is not 1937 and the sustainable forestry which was also part of that ACT, has not fully been implemented on the existing plantations which the BLM oversees and manages. Why would we, the public, wish to turn over another 2.6 million acres of precious, life-sustaining, quality of life enhancing, valuable wildlife habitat over to become a bleeding moonscape? Acres and acres of possibly dying seedling doug fir trees surrounded by bull thistle, milk thistle, scotch broom and himalaya blackberry? Especially when we are seeing more mill closures, -- not due to lack of trees, but to lack of building-- why would we believe that we would be getting the true value for our old growth trees? Why would we want to cash in this priceless asset for questionably sustainable tree plantations? The massive destruction of these forests will have consequences far beyond providing funds to our communities and timber industry. The value that will be funneled into our social sphere is not commensurate with our losses and the accruing losses into the future with the loss of clean water, wildlife habitat, loss of tempering weather conditions which forest routinely provide, clean air and fisheries.

And finally, it is a spoof that managing these forests as tree plantations can also promise protecting endangered wildlife. It is also in the plan that many of the protections would be waived, forgiven, for the quest of the almighty timber dollar. That is not what the public wants. The American public does not want to liquidate their old native forests. The money that could be had from intelligent management of the existing tree plantations would be the sensible path to take. When we have rural forest communities coming together with environmentally sound management of public forest lands, in tree thinning operations, why would we suddenly change course and revert to the days of plunder? Today's culture wants to see the continued move toward second and third growth thinning management programs and the riparian enhancement projects conducted along some of the damaged streams and rivers. Instead, WOPR removes protective buffers and promotes cutting to the stream side. Does this make any sense to any sensible person? The answer is "NO", it does not.

Please protect remaining old-growth forests, focus active management of BLM lands in already logged-over areas, and concentrate job opportunities in restoration thinning projects that benefit watersheds and generate wood products without multiplying past mistakes.

Sincerely,

Susan Jane Applegate
4739 Elkhead Rd
Yoncalla,OR 97499