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Oct. 1, 2007

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

Dear BLM:

I am very concerned with the direction the Bush Administration is going with the management of nearly 2.6 million acres of federal forests under the Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR. Following a cursory review of the proposals, it appears to me that the Bureau of Land Management is considering changes that will unravel protections written into the landmark Northwest Forest Plan -- changes that I am convinced will lead to water pollution, degraded habitat and increased conflict and controversy.

It appears from proposals being considered that the administration would place half the public land the BLM manages -- most of it appearing to be most of the bureau's best old-growth stands -- in "Timber Management Areas" to be clearcut every 80 years. The administration's prefered alternative, it seems, proposes to clearcut 110,000 acres of Oregon's old-growth timber -- trees that are 120 years old or older. At the same time, the proposal suggests building 1,000 miles of new logging roads every decade while creating more thn 100,000 miles of new Off Highway Vehicle Emphasis Areas -- all at the expense of roadless areas, threatened species, water quality vital to people and wildlife, and non-motorized recreation. Interestingly, and contrary to prevailing wisdom on global climate change, it also appears the proposal ignores the role our forests play in climate regulation. I find the bureau's stance unacceptable and request that more time be given for study and evaluation of proposals before possibly detrimental decisions are made that could seriously impact the environment.

Beside the potential general environmental impacts suggested with the present preferred proposal, I am particularly concerened about specific impacts that do not appear to be addressed in the proposals. As a resident of south Benton County, which contains a large amount of BLM land in the Oregon Coast Range near my home, I am particularly concerned about increasing clearcuts in the foothills that could heighten water runoff problems exacerbating yearly flooding of flatlands surrounding the community in which I live. Yearly flooding of streams coming from Coast Range foothills frequently covers our roads to the point that getting into or out of the community is difficult or impossible for days at a time. At the same time, this flooding clogs the streams with waterborne silt that is detrimental to fish populations. Increasing water runoff through increased clearcutting in the foothills would only compound these problems, which also hasten roadway deterioration and increase road maintence expenses for everyone.

Some studies suggest that most Americans want federal land managers to embrace thinning second growth forests, safeguarding communities from wildfire, and protecting what remains of our nation's ancient forests. In fact, some forest managers are already moving beyond past conflicts to focus on thinning previously-logged and often overgrown forestlands -- providing wood to local sawmills while actually improving conditions for fish

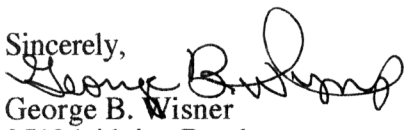
and wildlife and keeping saws out of surviving old-growth stands. I have observed that some timber cutters, primarily small operators, appear to be doing a good job of protecting the environment during thinning. Others, however, appear to be violating existing environmental protection laws with somewhat shoddy logging practices -- suggesting more, and tougher, oversight might be necessary to assure compliance with existing timber cutting rules aimed at protecting such values as wildlife habitat and water quality in perennial and ephemeral streams.

In contrast, WOPR proposes to inflame present controversies by increasing old-growth clear cutting for short-term economic gain, a situation that encourages, rather than discourages, improper logging practices. Agency proposals also put water quality at risk and would destroy some of Oregon's special places. This comes, I believe, at a time when management decisions should be focused on protecting remaining mature and old-growth forests, not clear cutting what some people regard as national treasures.

I find it disappointing that, at a time when public consensus for old-growth protection and second-growth thinning has never been stronger, the BLM is proposing to clear-cut forests older than the nation and turn complex forest ecosystems into tree plantations susceptible to devastating wildfire that is a severe drain on budgets to fight. Such positions don't make environmental, or economic, sense. It would seem there must be a better way.

Please protect remaining old-growth forests, focus active management of BLM lands in logged-over areas, and create jobs through restoration thinning projects that benefit watersheds and generate wood products without compounding past mistakes.

Sincerely,



George B. Wisner
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cc: Oregon Congressional delegation

Senators Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith
Representatives Greg Walden (R-2nd); David Wu (D-1st); Earl Blumenhauer (D-3rd); Peter DeFazio (D-4th); and Darlene Hooley (D-5th).