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Salem Audubon Society

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To the BLM:

Please accept these comments on behalf of the 1400 members of the Salem Audubon Society concerning the Western Oregon Plan Revision. We are strongly opposed to the WOPR, as it would be bad for the people of Oregon and a disaster for the environment.

In the Northwest Forest Plan, scientists concluded that endangered wildlife cannot be protected without adequate safeguards for old growth forests on BLM lands. The WOPR does not provide sufficient habitat protections and does not adequately address safeguards provided under the Endangered Species Act. The plan's dramatic increase in logging of old-growth forest is not sustainable, and would inevitably lead to further population declines in already endangered spotted owls and threatened marbled murrelets.

Water quality would also be adversely affected by WOPR. BLM lands help protect clean water for drinking in many communities across western Oregon. Increased logging on these lands will adversely affect water quality for people in cities from Roseburg to Salem. The plan's reduction in streamside logging buffers would increase pollution in streams where salmon spawn.

While logging old-growth forests under WOPR would bring short-term economic benefits, over the long term there is greater economic value in keeping the old-growth forests intact. Beautiful forests enhance the value of nearby properties and help bring in tourism dollars. Many businesses rely on the recreational opportunities offered by clean rivers, healthy fish populations, and intact forests. The commercial fishing industry depends on high quality salmon habitat. Cottage industries that harvest tree boughs for wreath making, collect mushrooms for sale, or take visitors rafting and fishing flourish in the public forests in western Oregon.

There is a better way forward. Many areas that have been logged in the past are now overgrown and ready to be cut. By practicing restorative thinning in these areas, we can meet the demand for timber, provide an influx of money to rural counties and reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire. And we can do all of this without harming wildlife populations or degrading our drinking water.

Please reconsider this ill-conceived plan.

Sincerely,

David Harrison
President
Salem Audubon Society

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