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2007 DEC -5 A 11:52

EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE
EUGENE, OREGON

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Woodpecker Ridge
86070 Cougar Lane
Eugene, Oregon 97402
December 3, 2007

U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Western Oregon Plan Revision
P.O.B. 2965
Portland, Oregon 97208

Dear Sirs:

Below is my commentary on the Western Oregon Plan Revision, Preferred Alternative 2.

I live in rural Lane County near Crow, and my husband and I own a 100-acre second-growth forest. I am strongly opposed to Alternative 2, B.L.M.'s preferred alternative. It would take many areas out of Late Successional Reserve and move them to Timber Management Areas that can be clearcut.

In my area of B.L.M.'s Eugene District, the southwest quadrant, several contiguous squares (T. 18 S. R. 7 W., Section 31 and T. 19 S., R. 8 W., Section 1 and nearby areas T. 18 S., R.7 W., S. 33 and T. 19 S R. 7 W., S. 3 and 19 S., R. 7 W., S. 5) consisting mostly of forest over 200 years old, would be moved from LSR status to TMAs. I have recently visited these places, after noticing them on B.L.M.'s age-class map. They are beautiful, diverse areas of outstanding natural value. I believe that cutting these old-growth groves would be an enormous blow to the ecosystems, water quality, and wildlife of our area. Their absence would create a six-mile-wide strip without mature forest, which could destroy east-west connectivity for wildlife.

Alternative 2 would greatly shrink riparian buffers, which protect streams and rivers and provide "dispersal habitat" for many species. It would also promote aggressive clearcutting, getting rid of green standing trees, snags, and downed trees in many cuts, although science shows that cut-over areas recover much better with these protections. Alternative 2 would support salvage logging, even in Late Successional forests, which is bad science and an invitation to arsonists. It would reduce habitat for spotted owls and murrelets. It would increase global warming by causing oxidation of the forest floor after clearcuts, especially in older forest.

Alternative 1 is less bad than Alternative 2 because it would preserve more Late Successional Reserves/Areas (at least in the Eugene district) but like Alternative 2, it would greatly shrink riparian buffers, reduce protected habitat for the spotted owl, and promote aggressive clearcutting practices.

I urge the B.L.M. to stay with the Northwest Forest Plan/No Action Alternative, which was carefully, intricately worked out as a compromise among many parts of our community and is based on sound science.

In order to bring in more money for rural communities, I suggest:
1) asking the federal government to pay for ecosystem services the forests provide: absorbing carbon, providing clean water, and protecting wildlife.
2) Rural counties should be paid a higher percentage of the money that comes from smaller trees that are cut in thinning younger plantations.
3) The federal government should be asked to pay for any county services that the presence of its federal lands in our county make necessary, such as sheriff protection over greater territory, or longer school bus trips because students travel to school across the checkerboard of the O & C lands.
4) The tax paid on trees cut on private forest land should be increased. The tax on private land where trees are growing and not being cut should not be increased. This would only encourage forest owners to cut more trees.

No matter which alternative is chosen, please keep T. 19S. R.06W. Sec. 17 as a Late Successional Reserve/Late Successional Management Area. This section contains an old-growth grove, the Grandmothers of Wolf Creek. Although the B.L.M. has turned this forest down three times so far as a formal Environmental Education Area, it is greatly valued for environmental education and recreation by students, teachers, and residents in Crow and Eugene. Fortunately, it is currently included in the Late Successional Management Area even in Alternative 2.

Please note that I do NOT own land adjacent to this forest. It is about 12 miles from my house and land. But like many Oregonians, there are places on B.L.M. land that are important in my life. This particular forest is important in the lives of many people.

Sincerely yours,

Kate Rogers Gessert

Kate Rogers Gessert
katerg@igc.org
541-935-8843

In addition, I enclose a letter about the W.O.P.R. that I have sent to county, state, and federal legislators.

Dear .....

Crisis is opportunity, and we have several crises, both global and local, that intersect with each other:

1) global warming
2) Bureau of Land Management's W.O.P.R.
3) no money for O & C counties.

I think the answer (our local part of the answer) for all three is the same: give O & C counties money to store carbon by preserving standing B.L.M. forests. As a rural O & C county dweller, a forest owner, and an advocate for climate protection, I'm delighted to realize the extent to which all of this fits together.

According to some estimates, deforestation accounts for twenty percent of global carbon emissions. Recent research shows that when forests, especially old forests, are clearcut, enormous amounts of carbon are oxidized from the deep duff layer and soil and released to the air as carbon.

B.L.M.'s preferred Alternative 2 would triple the amount of logging in O & C counties and multiply by seven the logging of old growth, greatly adding to Oregon's share of national and global carbon emissions. Since B.L.M.'s *Draft Environmental Impact Statement* dismisses global warming as too unpredictable to consider, the document does not address this.

Legislation needs to be written and introduced to pay the O & C counties for being the sites of large reservoirs of carbon - our older and old-growth forests that absorb and store many tons of carbon every year, as well as providing other important functions, such as water and wildlife protection, and recreation for humans.

In addition, legislation needs to be written to protect all older and old-growth forests from any further cutting on federal land.

Please work to make this happen as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Kate Rogers Gessert

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katerg@igc.org
541-935-8843