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JAN 03 2008

December 29, 2007

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

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am a Southern Oregon architect who has practiced over thirty five years and am therefore very familiar with both the importance of wood products and the related economics as well as the importance of our forests, particularly our "old growth" forests, to the quality of life we in Southern Oregon are privileged to enjoy.

I have spent several weeks reviewing the Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR) and am very concerned that, under your stewardship, the United States government is about to make an grievous error which cannot be corrected. Under the preferred proposed alternative, Alternative 2, the tiny remaining fraction of American's never-harvested, primeval, forests located on BLM lands in Southern Oregon will virtually cease to exist. Two thousand square miles of forest could potentially be clear cut eliminating the cultural, economic, social, ecological, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits bestowed by these ancient forests for all time and all future generations. These forests cannot be reproduced by "management techniques"; once gone, they are gone forever.

I have found it telling that the commonly accepted term "old growth" is not in the BLM lexicon, which, in fact, has no clear term referring to the "forest primeval."

I have flown over America's western forests from Central California to the northern Alaskan Panhandle and witnessed the staggering results of clear cutting. The visual impact alone should be sufficient to convince anyone that as a "management technique" the practice must end. The negative impacts on fish and wildlife have been extensively documented and are clearly recognized (though as acceptable costs) in the Western Oregon Plan Revisions. While clear cutting was not ended with the Northwest Forest Plan, at least the areas of old growth critical to endangered species were protected.

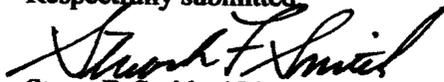
The Western Oregon Plan Revision is flawed because it does not adequately address the economic benefits to the Southern Oregon region and the nation of the "No Action Alternative." The economic benefits of non-extractive uses such as tourism, hiking, rafting, camping, fishing, hunting, mountain biking, and even OHV use are greatly enhanced by the opportunities to visit and experience our few remaining ancient forests.

The planning process is also flawed because the economic impacts of aggressively thinning the overstocked tree plantations on Southern Oregon's BLM lands are not addressed. Such activity could provide billions of board feet of commercial timber for local mills and the construction market; employ thousands of people; allow sunlight into the plantations that would enhance the growth and carbon sequestration abilities of the remaining trees; and greatly reduce the risk of wildfire. These thinning activities could be undertaken within the bounds of the Northwest Forest Plan, greatly increasing the socioeconomic benefits of the "No Action Alternative" far beyond those presented by BLM in the WOPR.

Because it is flawed, the planning process has failed to demonstrate that sufficient harvestable second or third growth timber does not exist to meet the needs of existing mills and provide adequate employment opportunities for the existing labor force. The Plan Revision does, however, demonstrate that by allowing the destruction of our heritage forests, we can create a short term economic "boom" that will overload Southern Oregon's already stretched housing market, raise prices, increase traffic, and crowd our schools, all while over burdening our law enforcement and social services. If the boom works like booms usually do, by the time our institutions adjust by building more schools, roads, and hospitals, by hiring more teachers, sheriff's deputies and social workers, the big trees will be gone, the boom will be over, and there will be nothing left but the bills to pay (this is the "bust" part of the classic cycle).

We Americans have exploited over 95% of forests the Pilgrims found when they landed on Plymouth Rock. Many of those forests are completely gone over to subdivisions and farm land; many have become tree plantations - pseudo-forests managed for commercial harvest and "multiple-use." There are strong forces that would like to eliminate the less than 5% that remains. The Western Oregon Plan Revision is a blueprint to take a substantial portion of that irreplaceable "less than 5%" from the American people and turn it into profits and short term employment. It is clear that the "No Action Alternative," imperfect as it may be, is the only rational option. I ask you to thoroughly explore the potential of creating jobs and industry while protecting what remains of our heritage forests through an aggressive restoration thinning program working within the Northwest Forest Plan.

Respectfully submitted



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