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Dear BLM People;

As a thirty seven year resident of the Illinois Valley in Southwest Oregon, I would like to offer the following comments regarding the BLM's Western Oregon Plan Revision process:

Overall, it seems to me that the WOPR is a step backwards in forest management. It basically advocates a return to the "bad old days" of clearcuts and declining resource quality.

Heavy reliance on clearcutting will only further reduce old-growth habitat, cause soil erosion and create a more fire prone landscape. As time goes by our native, unlogged forests have become more and more precious. So I urge you to heed the values of the general public and to stay out of them. There are miles and miles of overstocked and brush-filled plantations out there that could use your attention and treatment. Even though the WOPR gives lip-service to slash treatments and thinning of brush on managed stands, the reality is that lip-service does not guarantee a budget for these projects. In fact, local history shows that the first priority is to get the timber out. There are lots of old BLM cuts around here that are now filled with incendiary brush generated from canopy reduction.

The amount of public land that the WOPR suggests designating as ORV "playgrounds" is unconscionable. ORV use is incompatible with most other non-disturbing forms of recreation and is directly harmful to many resources. I am particularly concerned about the spread of Port Orford cedar root disease that can result from ORV transported mud and soil.

Logging in older forests stands is only going to further push the northern spotted owl towards extinction. The Northwest forest plan was formulated at a time when the barred owl had yet to start its incursions into spotted owl habitat. Now, when barred owls are aggressively threatening spotted owls, the BLM's WOPR seeks to reduce protections on old-growth habitat. This is the exact opposite of what is needed. Spotted owls need LARGER blocks of habitat not more clearcuts!

Especially egregious is the cutting of large diameter trees in the "Zane Grey" area near the Rogue River. This area is a natural gem and should be left alone---not turned into another timber farm.

The WOPR's attempt to REDUCE protections for riparian areas is another indication that it is a throwback to the days of sacrificing other resources to get out the timber.

There are a few parts of the WOPR that make sense: Adding a few more ACEC 's to the landscape is a positive step towards ensuring diversity and and protecting the tourism-based parts of the economy. Unfortunately there are significant parts left out of some of the ACEC designations: the Western slopes of Hope mountain are left out of the Waldo-Takilma recommendation, for instance... And in general, I feel that ACEC's should be larger.

Finally, I have to say that implementing the WOPR as presently envisioned would sacrifice any trust and goodwill that may have been engendered by interactions and meetings with local communities and the BLM. The whole "top-down", political nature of the WOPR process is demoralizing to a public that has seen some real progress in forestry science and issues these past decades. I can imagine that a good many BLM managers and employees must find the WOPR disappointing as well. I guess we can all look forward to more court-ordered, rather than cooperative forest policy in BLM's future if the WOPR goes through as it stands right now...

Sincerely,

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