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

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Dear BLM,
I'm writing you to express my total dissatisfaction with the WOPR. I moved to Oregon in 1985. Over the years I have grown to cherish the ancient, wild, old growth forests that remain here. I admit that I have grown complacent over the past 20 or so years as I have enjoyed exploring and hiking old growth – thinking that these giants would always be there form me, my kids, their kids and future generations to enjoy and value. It seemed as though clear cutting old growth on public lands had been abandoned in favor of forest-centered biology and a new economy. But, my complacency was misplaced considering who is in the White House with their huge disregard for science when making policy decisions. From what I've read, forward-looking BLM forest managers had turned us away from clear cuts to thinning and aggressive fire management over the last fifteen years. The results of this seemed great; lower fire danger, wood for the mills, healthier forests, and preservation of the beauty of the area that underpins our successful transition from resource extraction to a more diverse and stable economy. The timber wars of the late 80's and early 90's seemed but a distant memory. Apparently, it was too good to be true.

So, at the risk of pointing out the obvious, clearcutting forests is bad science, bad forestry, bad for the environment, and bad economics.

The changes that the BLM is contemplating will unravel the protections of the landmark Northwest Forest Plan, and will lead to water pollution, degraded habitat, and increased conflict and controversy. The WOPR proposes increasing old-growth logging on public lands in western Oregon by 700%. This base is already too small and needs to be entirely preserved! The WOPR proposal of first decreasing old growth initially (via clearcut logging) and then over the next 100 years slowly increasing it is based on unproven, arrogant assumptions. No one knows what the climate will do over the next 50 years, let alone the next 100. This proposal is myopic and backwards in it's depletion of our ancient forest base for future generations. This ill-conceived plan will be accomplished by weakening protections for forests, creeks, and salmon. It is shocking that the WOPR proposal ignores the role that these ancient forests play in regulating climate.

In the BLM proposal to clear-cut forests older than our nation, these complex ecosystems will turn into much more flammable tree farms. This is nonsensical right now because public support for old-growth protection and second-growth thinning has never been stronger. 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. By focusing on previously logged public forestlands – many of which are now overgrown and in need of thinning – they are providing wood to local mills while actually improving conditions for fish and wildlife and keeping saws out of precious old-growth forests.

proposed by the WOPR, which the BLM describes as having no standing green vegetation, will create landscapes of distracting visual impacts, destroying the scenery that people travel to see. Travelers work hard for their vacation time. If a community doesn't provide the experiences these vacationers seek, then Oregon can expect a large percent of them to travel to communities that will provide these experiences, risking the loss of tourism revenues to another state. The WOPR is a strategy of trade-offs, not job gains.

The biggest concern for future job loss will be triggered by the significant eradication of forest values that attract small businesses, entrepreneurs, innovators, home-based telecommuters, retirees, and others who make significant contributions to a community's economy and can live anywhere they want. Some authorities point to these jobs as the most promising financial foundation for rural communities in the emerging global economy. These people look for and move to communities that offer a high quality of life and bring with them the skills to create their own employment opportunities or small businesses that support jobs. The WOPR will damage the values these people seek and, hence, reduce Oregon's ability to attract an economic sector that represents the future of rural communities in the emerging global economy.

The WOPR will inflame controversy by increasing old-growth clear-cutting for a short-term economic fix. It puts water quality at-risk and would destroy some of Oregon's most special places. We should protect our remaining mature and old-growth forests on public land, not clear-cut these natural treasures as the WOPR proposes to do.

The remaining old-growth forests must be protected. Please focus on active management of BLM lands in already logged-over areas, and concentrate job opportunities in restoration forestry that would benefit watersheds and generate wood products without multiplying past mistakes.

Our ancient forests are precious natural resources – do all you can to preserve them.

Sincerely,

Dee Tvedt

cc: Representative DeFazio
Senator Wyden
Senator Smith