This is what we want

Solution 3

Selectively harvest timber to retain forest values that generate values for all Americans.

Timber is harvested but is done in a way that creates a forest that is usable to the public for recreation, tourism resources, and quality of life values that attract business development as well as home-based entrepreneurs and service providers who create their own jobs and work from their home. A forest that retains its canopy and shades the forest floor has less underbrush that needs to be removed at tax payer expense. A tall stand of trees is less susceptible to fire, which tax payers are responsible for controlling. Lower fire hazards means safer communities. Everyone wins.

This is an approach where all stakeholders share the wealth of the forest. The timber industry benefits along with the tourism and recreation industries as well as the residents and business owners in the communities of the O&C corridor. The only downside of this solution is someone in another state, Texas for example, won't get filthy rich at the expense of Oregon's heritage, its residents, and the tax payers of this nation.

The current draft version of the WOPR plan proposes to clear-cut O&C land, making it completely unusable to the public while making us pay for all the problems the WOPR plan will create. **The WOPR needs to be scrapped and rewritten** to be a more productive document that embraces the values that benefit a wide range of businesses and industries and treats tax payers as valued stakeholders rather than a wallet to patch all the flaws in one of the worst forest plan and public-exclusion documents I have seen in my life. It's a tax payer nightmare.

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There are three alternate solutions that have been used by the BLM or private land owners to deal with the brush problem. The communities in the O&C corridor most commonly ask for the third solution because it is more useful to the entire community of residents and businesses, less of a fire hazard, and less controversial. I am uncertain why the BLM does not pursue the third solution.

Solution 1

Plant more Douglas fir to shade out the brush.

This BLM plantation on O&C land is saturated with Douglas fir seedlings. It has become an extremely volatile fire landscape located next to a road where a cigarette thrown from a vehicle could easily ignite a fast moving and deadly fire. Tax payers must pay to thin these stands with no economic benefit generated for the community.

Closer examination reveals that the dense stand of Douglas fir still does not completely shade out brush and, together, this vegetation has become an impregnable thicket that is unusable by both humans and wildlife. Note that the twentyfive year old Douglas fir in this BLM planation is barely six feet tall, illustrating that more trees does not add up to more productivity. I am unsure why the BLM pursues this option.

As this forest matures, weaker trees will die resulting in a forest crisscrossed with dead debris that is both unusable to humans and wildlife but also poses an extreme fire hazard. It will cost tax payers to fix the problem with no economic benefit generated for the community. An ineffective investment.

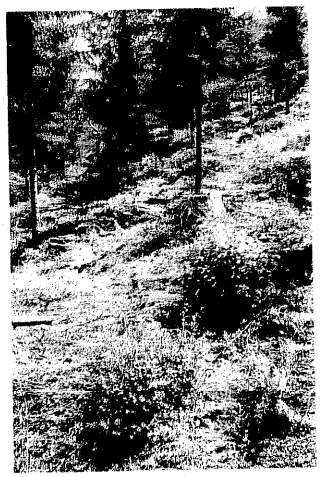
Solution 2

Spray O&C lands with herbicide that kills the brush as well as all broad leaf such as herbs, forbes, berries, and a multitude of native plants that are all important to the survival of wildlife.

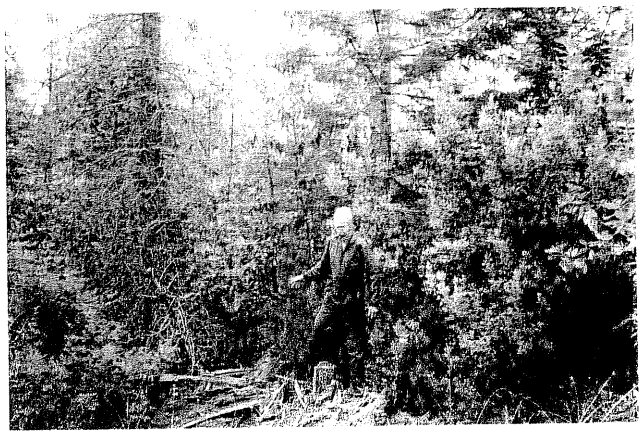
This solution will initiate costly law suits against the BLM that will need tax payer money to pay for legal defense. Publicity will compromise Oregon's economy because tourists will avoid the O&C corridor for fear of exposure to carcinogenic compounds (Note: It doesn't matter if the herbicides are carcinogenic or not. Word-of-mouth communication carries much more weight than reality. The real risk of using herbicides is that ALL of Oregon will be labeled as a carcinogen zone). Herbicides increase the risk of reducing property value and increase the difficulty of realtors and investors to sell property. The ability of Oregon to attract businesses may be compromised.

The BLM tries to solve the brush problem by removing brush, at tax payer expense, to give Douglas fir seedlings a growth advantage. It may take two decades of tax payer expenditures to get trees to the height seen to the left (brush recently removed and piled for burning). Two decades of expenditure with zero economic output.

But the problem is worse than it first appears. Note that ONE year after brush reduction seen in the image to the left, this brush has already reemerged with growth of 2-3 feet (below).



At this rate, the brush will regrow within a couple of years into a thicket that is impregnable to both human and wildlife.



If the brush isn't cleared, these industrial plantations become completely unusable to the tax payers for values that contribute to their community's quality of life, health, and business welfare. These are extremely dangerous fire landscapes.

CONCLUSION

The WOPR proposes decades of zero economic output at tax payers expense which ultimately results in conditions that are ripe for a catastrophic fire that will cost millions to control at tax payer expense all to create public land that is unusable to tax payers.

Comment on the WOPR *(The Bureau of Land Management's Western Oregon Plan Revision)*

An illustrated explanation of a tax payers nightmare

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I am extremely alarmed about the Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR) and the burden it will impose on tax payers. The following comments are based on fifteen years of observation combined with twenty years of providing public and school programs about forest ecology, geology, stream ecology, fire ecology, hydrology and similar topics. I am sharing these observations because most people don't realize the problems that forest management is causing on public lands. Of particular concern is the habit of excluding the needs of nontimber businesses and local residents from planning and the assumption that the public is going to pay to fix all the problems the WOPR will create.

The WOPR proposes to return to "stand replacement" (clear-cut) logging. This will cause a problem because when the forest canopy is removed, brush immediately emerges and takes over the landscape. The photo to the right was taken TWO years after the Biscuit Fire and illustrates the density and rapid growth rate of the emerging brush that covers almost the entire mountain slope only TWO years after the canopy of trees was removed. This is typical of every mountain slope of O&C lands in southwest Oregon.

This brush has an advantage over young Douglas fir trees that may be planted in these "stand replacement" landscapes. If not controlled, the brush becomes the dominant vegetation that shades the young Douglas fir trees and reduces their rate of growth. The photo above was taken of a hillside that burned in a wild fire about 25 years ago near Gold Hill, Oregon. Snags of the burned trees can be seen along the horizon while madrone trees cover the of the entire slope that was burned to a bare, treeless landscape by the fire.