

To: Younger, Cally[cyounger@blm.gov]
From: Moody, Aaron
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O&C Briefing Paper for Acting Director 06152017 ver2 (3).docx

see attached- although as we discussed before this may not be the "final" version of this paper (this is the last version I have).

Aaron G. Moody
Assistant Solicitor, Branch of Public Lands
Division of Land Resources
Office of the Solicitor
U.S. Department of the Interior
202-208-3495

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**INFORMATION/BRIEFING MEMORANDUM
FOR THE ACTING DIRECTOR – BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

DATE: June 15, 2017

FROM: Jamie E. Connell, State Director, Oregon/Washington

SUBJECT: Options for Increasing Timber Production in Western Oregon

The purpose of this memo is to provide a set of possible options for increasing the annual production of timber volume from the Oregon and California Grant Lands (O&C) administered by the BLM in Western Oregon.

KEY FACTS

Jobs: BLM timber sales provide direct employment for the Oregon timber industry. For every million board feet of timber harvested on BLM lands in Western Oregon, 13 local jobs are created or maintained, and around \$647,000 is introduced into local economies. The BLM's 2016 Resource Management Plans (RMPs) declare at least 205 million-board feet (mmbf) of volume to be offered annually.

Stakeholder Positions: Timber industry groups and the Association of O&C counties argue that the 2016 RMPs do not provide enough timber harvest and receipts to counties. Certain environmental groups oppose portions of the RMPs because they allege the new plans reduce some protections of the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP). Three separate lawsuits have been filed by industry, the O&C counties, and a coalition of environment groups challenging the 2016 RMPs.

Public Lands Affected: The 2016 RMPs provide management direction for 2.5 million acres. These lands are predominately O&C lands subject to the O&C Act of 1937, but include a small proportion of intermingled Coos Bay Wagon Road lands and public domain lands.

BACKGROUND

In 2016, the BLM signed two Records of Decision to implement RMPs on BLM-administered lands in western Oregon. In part, the plans were designed to produce a sustained yield of timber while meeting the conservation needs of the northern spotted owl (NSO) and other species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) were involved in the RMP process and issued "no jeopardy" Biological Opinions under the ESA for the RMPs. In 2012, approximately 50 percent of the O&C lands were designated as NSO critical habitat. The two RMPs completely replace the NWFP for management of BLM-administered lands in western Oregon.

DISCUSSION

The following options evaluate increased timber volume, other efficiencies and potential challenges.

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Currently, the BLM is prioritizing work to increase volume outputs. A “corporate” approach is being implemented to find new efficiencies by working across district boundaries. Continuing this strategy will require maintaining a no net loss of staff associated with timber sale workload.

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The support of the FWS and NMFS for the 2016 RMPs was essential for BLM to receive no-jeopardy biological opinions. (b)(5) DPP [REDACTED]

NEXT STEPS

The BLM is proceeding with implementation of the 2016 RMPs while litigation proceeds. The litigation may provide more clarity on how the O&C Act and ESA apply in managing the O&C lands. The BLM will continue to build off the momentum behind implementation of the 2016 plans to increase volume further. A new plan amendment would likely take a couple of years to complete NEPA and ESA process and draw new litigation.