

FTLAC comments to BOF meeting 3/5/08

The 15 Forest Trust Land Counties have supported the Forest Management Plan. These counties did not consider the Forest Management Plan perfect, but thought it was a good place to begin. In that beginning it was thought the harvest would be substantially greater than it has proven to be to date. Keeping this in mind the Forest Trust Land Counties have worked within the frame work of the plan to bring the harvest closer to original projected levels while at the same time understanding the importance of harvesting at a sustainable level. We have supported Department Of Forestry effort to establish performance measures that will help The Board evaluate data and come to sound conclusions. Now in response to specific requests from a new member of the Board Of Forestry, the Oregon Department Of Forestry has established a "checklist of critical issues" it will track as it develops management strategies to achieve the targets set by the Board Of Forestry.

We note that some of the "critical issues" raised appear to call into question decisions made at the Board Of Forestry November 2007 meeting (especially #6). Other "critical issues" appear to question some of the fundamental planning decisions (especially #5).

In its legislative role as advisors to Board Of Forestry, The Forest Trust Land Advisory Committee will prepare for the Board its view on some of the 14 "critical issues" listed. As elected representatives of the beneficiaries of the management of State Forest Trust Lands, FTLAC fully supports the boards November 2007 direction to develop strategies to increase the return on the very valuable state forestland asset and will also propose additional issues for consideration of the Board Of Forestry.

We think it important to support The Board Of Forestry's requests to ensure that it has all the information needed to make fully informed decisions in November 2008, we are concerned about any efforts to re-evaluate fundamental planning decisions. In our view, the current decisions were based on sound data, and while all parties are not entirely happy with The Forest Management Plan there appears to be a consensus that we are zeroing in on the right course of action, especially after The Board Of Forestry's November 2007 direction. Having said this, FTLAC would not shy away from a broader reconsideration of some of the fundamental planning decisions. As you know, the Trust Counties believe the plan could and should provide a much better asset value return on State Forest Trust Lands.

We think the Forest Management Plan provides greater emphasis to habitat ("maintain biological diversity across the landscape") than is called for by the Greatest Permanent Value Rule ("provide habitat for native wildlife species"). While we agreed to a reasonable implementation of Structure Based Management as a way to provide for both high levels of timber revenue and wildlife habitat, we are willing to reconsider that decision if there are proposals that keep the state from meeting its fiduciary responsibility to the Trust Counties.

Respectfully

Sam Patrick, Vice-Chair FTLAC