

Comments to the Oregon Board of Forestry
March 4, 2009
Salem, Oregon

By Bob Van Dyk, Wild Salmon Center

My name is Bob Van Dyk, and I live in Forest Grove, Oregon. I am here today to speak on behalf of the Wild Salmon Center. Thank you for the opportunity to address you.

Joining me is one of the Wild Salmon Center staff, Jay Nicholas, who I am very pleased to say will be working with us on state forest issues, and who will have more to say in a moment.

Almost two years ago I came before the Board of Forestry on behalf of a dozen conservation groups and expressed a willingness to work with the Board and Department to improve the Forest Management Plan (FMP). I said that we wanted to work with the Department and other stakeholders to explore plan improvements that would strategically enhance the values provided by the plan, from fish habitat and recreation to timber harvest.

Today, the Wild Salmon Center remains committed to collaborative and science-based efforts to improve the FMP.

Regarding the specific choices you face today in your work plan, several things stand out.

1) Performance Measures: The performance measures are simply not ready to serve as a guide for management, and they will need a great deal of work before they can serve in that role. As you know, most of the performance measures have yet to be quantified, and others simply don't measure key values. For example, salmon could be extirpated from state land, but the performance measures wouldn't show it. Moreover, it is clear that even some of the measures for which we have the best data are of low validity. Just four months ago, for example, we learned that predictions for sustainable harvest levels should be decreased by as much as 30% due to new findings on forest productivity and steep slopes.

The performance measures process is a good one. It allows the Board and the public to track measurable outcomes from the state lands over time. But the project is in its infancy. Until the basic data underlying the indicators is sound, and until the specific indicators are improved, using the performance measures to drive forest policy is a recipe for confusion and error.

2) Best Available Science: Going forward, whatever decisions you make should be based on the best science available. When the FMP was approved in 2001, it was only after an intensive external review by respected and impartial scientists. We

believe a similar external review is essential before any major change in the FMP is approved.

3) Salmon Anchor Habitats: We believe that the BOF should pursue a long-range anchor strategy for salmon on state lands. While the current Salmon Anchor Habitat strategy expires in 2011-2013, we ask that you direct ODF staff to develop and assess the tradeoffs associated with extending a salmon anchor strategy into the future. Wild Salmon Center staff would be pleased to work with ODF on the details of such a proposal.

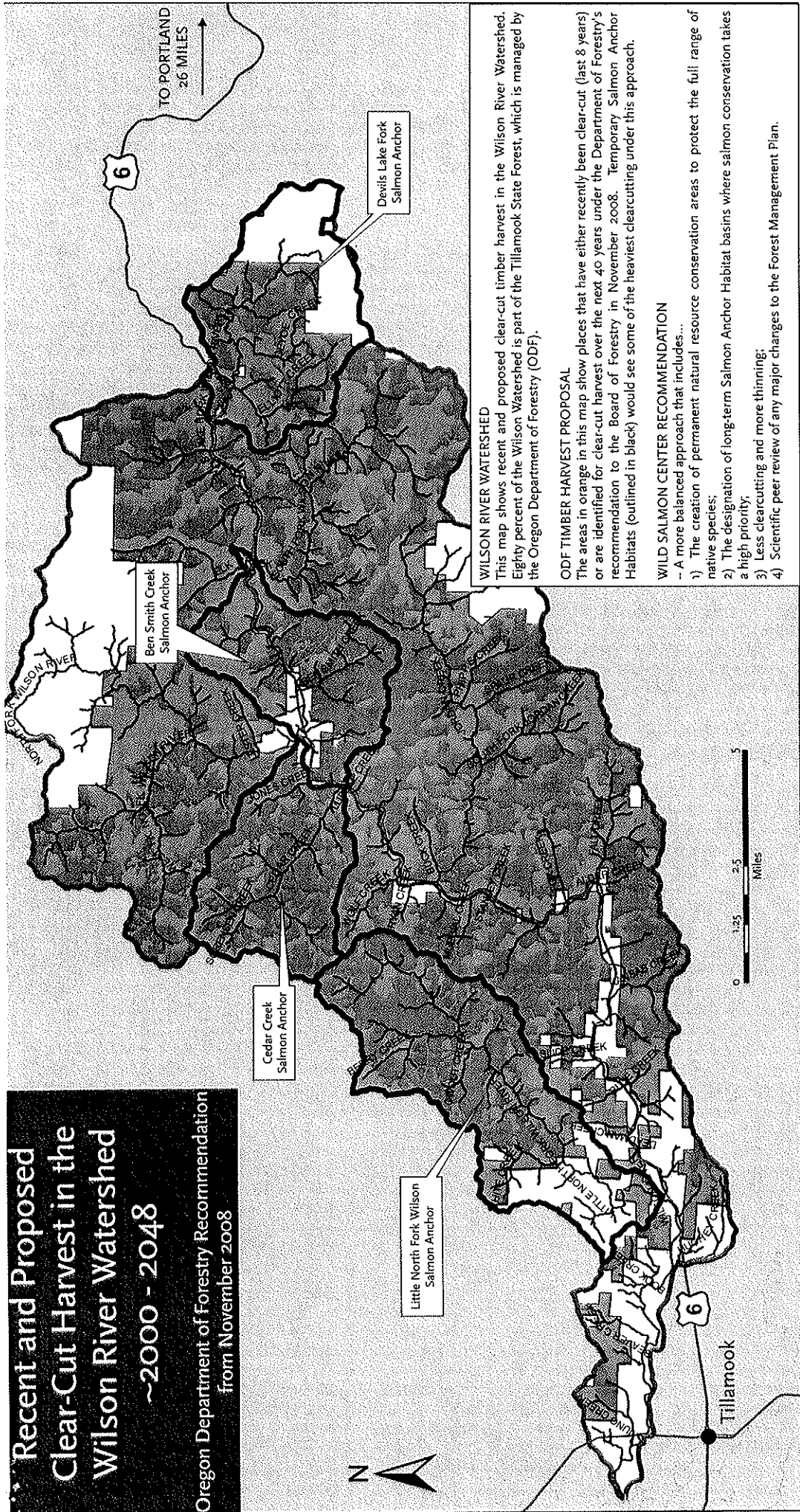
4) Protected Areas: We think that the right balance on the state forests will follow the Governor's 2004 recommendation to the Board, where he endorsed "permanently designating lands to protect important and unique habitats." Such designations are a vital part of the future economic and environmental productivity of the state forests, and we think most Oregonians would support such designations.

Finally, I have attached to these comments a map of clear-cuts either recently completed or likely to occur in the Wilson River Watershed under the performance measure approach that was recommended to the Board last November. This map underlines some of the concerns we have about the effect of the "performance measure run" on the state forests. The intensive clear-cutting projected for Salmon Anchor Habitat would likely create increased risks for salmon, and so I hope this map helps explain our desire for peer review of such an approach to state land as well as our desire for long-term Salmon Anchors.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

Recent and Proposed Clear-Cut Harvest in the Wilson River Watershed ~2000 - 2048

Oregon Department of Forestry Recommendation from November 2008



WILSON RIVER WATERSHED
 This map shows recent and proposed clear-cut timber harvest in the Wilson River Watershed. Eighty percent of the Wilson Watershed is part of the Tillamook State Forest, which is managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF).

ODF TIMBER HARVEST PROPOSAL
 The areas in orange in this map show places that have either recently been clear-cut (last 8 years) or are identified for clear-cut harvest over the next 40 years under the Department of Forestry's recommendation to the Board of Forestry in November 2008. Temporary Salmon Anchor Habitats (outlined in black) would see some of the heaviest clearcutting under this approach.

WILD SALMON CENTER RECOMMENDATION
 -- A more balanced approach that includes...
 1) The creation of permanent natural resource conservation areas to protect the full range of native species;
 2) The designation of long-term Salmon Anchor Habitat basins where salmon conservation takes a high priority;
 3) Less clearcutting and more thinning;
 4) Scientific peer review of any major changes to the Forest Management Plan.

Legend

- Recent and Proposed Clear-cuts 2000 - 2048
- Tillamook State Forest
- Salmon Anchor Habitats (expire 2011-2013)
- Highway

MAP DATA
 The data used to develop this map are derived from multiple sources: ODF statewide forest change data was used for clear-cuts from 2000 to 2004; landsat forest change data from September 2007, acquired and processed by Wild Salmon Center, was used for clear-cuts from 2005 - 2007; and planned clear-cuts for 2008 were derived from ODF forest planning GIS data. Proposed clear-cuts are from the ODF model of performance measure recommendation in November 2008.



To learn more about this map contact
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March 2009