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Older Growth in Oregon's Federal Forests

Public Comment by Rex Storm, Certified Forester, Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.
before the February 1, 2008 meeting of
Federal Forestland Advisory Committee
Salem, Oregon

Chairman Hobbs and Committee members, my name is Rex Storm, Forest Policy Manager for Associated Oregon Loggers (AOL), located in Salem. I make these comments on behalf of more than 1,000 member companies of AOL, representing logging and allied forest management operators working across Oregon to manage the productive forests that make Oregon a great place to live & work. My proud 15-year tenure as a forester and Certified Silviculturist with the US Forest Service in Oregon and Idaho lends to my perspectives shared with you about national forest management.

Today, I am also speaking as a Certified Forester, and 30-year member of the Society of American Foresters (SAF). As an SAF member, I am bound by a strict Code of Ethics of the profession of forestry. I have attached four SAF documents, which are relevant to your agenda today:

- Position Statement – Managing Mature & Old Growth Forests
- Position Statement – Commercial Timber Harvest on Public Lands in Oregon
- Forestry Professionals; A key stakeholder group in forest issues...
- Forestry: An Objectives-oriented Profession

The public comment question for today inquires about my suggestions regarding older forests in Oregon's federal forestlands. My message is simply this: Federal forest managers must have the authority and discretion to manage older forests *and* older trees—without the current maize of unworkable red-tape and bureaucratic obstacles.

You ponder whether—and how to define—old growth. I would recommend that it is the forest management professional that should be making such determinations through their forest plans and project silvicultural prescriptions. The abject failure of the US Forest Service and BLM to retain this professional authority at the forest-level has directly contributed to the breakdown of forest management by the agencies. Definitions, and prescriptive limits, made into policy are not productive for professional forest management.

Lacking the necessary authority to act, local managers are literally hand-cuffed and shackled in their attempts to deal with current priorities. The urgent need for improved federal forest management is of the utmost importance to redress the rapidly deteriorating unhealthy condition of federal forests and their adverse impacts on neighboring lands—as well as these unhealthy forests impact on harming vitality of Oregon's rural forest sector and communities.

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Questions # 1 & 2. How and what process should be used to determine old growth?

Answer:

1. A “one-size-fits-all” management approach to every mature or old-growth forest will not address the range of unique and dynamic forest conditions. The current gridlock on federal forests is largely because the authority to manage has been simplified into cookie-cutter approaches, which are dictated at higher planning levels in the agencies.
2. Site-specific plans will be much more effective in achieving and maintaining old-growth characteristics. These plans should carefully consider local ecological conditions and objectives, social concerns, and policy constraints of the owners or managers.
3. Even where non-timber values are primary in mature & old-growth forests, to promote and/or sustain ecological values over time, it may be necessary to conduct active management—including everything from preservation to some level of prescribed burning, commercial harvest, thinning, sanitation harvest, salvaging, regeneration harvest, and/or reforestation.
4. Decisions about forest management and silvicultural treatments—including mature & old-growth forests—are best made by professional foresters and silviculturists at the local forest level. Forestry professionals are highly-qualified to carefully consider local ecological conditions and objectives, social concerns, and policy constraints of the owners or managers.

Questions # 3 & 4. What barriers & policies should be changed to deal with old growth?

Answer:

Refrain from Indirect “De Facto” Prohibitions—The federal agencies have a real & present danger—an enemy, if you will—the tendency to self-impose restrictions that indirectly tie the hands of professional foresters and managers—including **limitations surrounding mature & old growth forests**. A visible example is a policy dictating that as many as 10-20 snags per acre must be retained during post-fire harvest operations that treat only 2% of a wildfire area—when the remaining 98% of the burn area is awash with snags (sometimes 100’s of thousands of acres). Less obvious are examples are policies that make building a forest road nearly impossible. These sorts of codified edicts neuter the forestry professional. Excessive restrictions virtually assure that any management project will often not implemented, because it’s been rendered costly, wasteful, inefficient, ineffective, sometimes harmful, often infeasible, and almost always devoid of common sense.

Rescind the ‘Interim Eastside Screens’ (diameter-limits)—The USFS Regional Forester ten-years ago issued these temporary obstacles to professional forestry discretion across all eastern Oregon national forests—then stating that they would be in effect for 18-months. The Regional Forester can readily replace these costly “diameter limits”, and other artificial restrictions, with improved guidance offering greater professional discretion to line managers. This single “diameter limit” prohibition makes many needed forest health treatments economically infeasible; and it furthermore has repeatedly been a legal magnet for obstructive litigation.



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Rapidly salvage dead & dying timber—As fuel loads, fire hazard and unhealthy federal forest conditions continue to mount, it makes sense that the USFS and BLM should create an imperative policy to expedite restoration treatments to remediate *a greater acreage of* forests damaged by catastrophic wildfire, pests, disease and storms—**including many mature & old growth forests**. The current failure to rapidly expedite commercial salvage removals has done nothing but build further fuels and forest health problems—and wasted federal taxpayer dollars.

FFAC Provide Written Comment on Blue Mountain Plan—The USFS is currently preparing a forest plan revision for the three Blue Mountains national forests in northeast Oregon. During late 2008 and 2009, there will be opportunity for public comment concerning the plan revision draft—**including many mature & old growth forests**. This would be a timely opportunity for the FFAC to influence a major policymaking spanning 5.5 million acres of eastern Oregon federal forestlands.

Due Diligence to Complete National Forest Plan Revisions—As has become institutionalized poor performance of the US Forest Service, Oregon's national forests are now functioning without current Forest Plans. The Forest Plans completed largely near 1990, were to remain applicable for 10-15 years. Not a single Plan revision is expected in the next year... or two. The Forest Service must create a means to complete all Oregon's forest plan revisions by 2011.

Redouble Workforce Investment—The Forest Service and BLM over the past 17-years have disinvested in their workforce, as downsizing and reorganizations created dysfunctional staffing and skill-sets of its workforce. The agencies currently are staffed with imbalances characterized by problems such as: depleted operational skills, waning moral, broken merit performance systems, shortage of entry-tier employees, a surplus of anticipated retirements, high administrative costs, excessive/unnecessary analysis & documentation, and a weak connection between budgets and performance accountability.

Please consider our concerns as you deliberate federal forest policy recommendations. The future forest sector vitality & sustainability of Oregon's forests, across all ownerships, are increasingly threatened by poorly managed federal forests—**including excessive barriers to managing mature & old growth forests**. As a result of anemic federal harvest, the forest sector in Eastern and Southwestern Oregon is threatened with ongoing mill closures and contractor elimination.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak concerning federal forest policies regarding older forests in Oregon's federal forestlands. Oregon's forest stakeholders need your leadership to help prosper improved directions for federal forest management. I lend our support and assistance to your proceedings in the coming months.

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Forestry Professionals

A key stakeholder group in forest issues, policies and management planning



The Issue

Public agencies and other decision-making groups often seek input and advice from stakeholders as they evaluate forest resource issues and develop related policies and management plans. Forestry professionals sometimes are among these participants due to their affiliation with more commonly identified stakeholder groups (e.g., forest industry, forest landowners). However, these individuals are rarely called upon to represent the professional forestry perspective independent of their employer or client interests. This independence is important because when they represent these interests, forestry professionals in both the public and private sector may be unable or unwilling to offer their full and candid views about important forest issues.

The result is missed opportunities to tap highly relevant expertise and experience, as well as a limited voice for a key group that must deal directly with policies and plans shaped by stakeholders who lack the unique, independent insights of the professional forestry community.

The Professional Response

Recognizing these missed opportunities and voices, the Oregon Chapter of the Society of American Foresters (OSAF) stands able and willing to represent the professional forestry perspective when stakeholder input is sought in Oregon. OSAF has about 1,000 members and includes field foresters, researchers, administrators and educators who work for federal, state or local governments; for universities; for small and large landowners; and for small businesses and large corporations.

Although we come from "all walks of forestry," we pledge that our professional views and other input will be consistent with the SAF mission to:

- advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry;
- enhance the competency of its members; establish professional excellence;
- use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.

Please contact OSAF when stakeholder input is sought, at:

www.forestry.org or 503-224-8046



Managing Mature and Old-Growth Forests

A Position of the Oregon Society of American Foresters

The Oregon Society of American Foresters recognizes the unique characteristics and values that mature and old-growth forests provide. Although there are many definitions for old-growth and none are exact, we describe old-growth as forests having: large snags and downed logs; some patchiness (openings, sometimes brushy and caused partly by loss of large, dead and dying trees); one or more canopy layers; and trees of various size and ages, with some relatively large, old trees. Not all forestlands had or will ever achieve this kind of condition. Exact amounts, tree sizes, and ages for development of each of these forest attributes vary depending on forest type, and some are naturally more uniform or younger (e.g., lodgepole pine and aspen forests) due to frequent natural disturbances such as fire and wind. Mature forests, the stage of stand development preceding old-growth forests, contain some attributes of old-growth forests (e.g., some large diameter trees) but lack other key old-growth characteristics. However, not all mature forests will become old-growth because of natural disturbance (e.g., fire).

A common perception is that actively managing old-growth is inappropriate or incompatible with other values, resulting in proposals to set aside mature and old-growth forests and prohibiting any form of management. ***However, even where non-timber values are primary, active management of mature and old-growth forests may be necessary to promote and/or sustain ecological values over time.*** This is especially true of forests in dry fire-prone landscapes. Old-growth management may include everything from preservation to some level of prescribed burning, thinning trees of various sizes (to reduce competition and preserve big trees from the effects of drought and climate change, insects or disease), salvaging, and planting. Such treatments would not be needed every year; in fact, there may be many decades of inactivity between periods when management actions are most effective.

Therefore, a "one-size-fits-all" management approach to every mature or old-growth forest will not address the range of unique and dynamic forest conditions that occur. ***Rather, site-specific plans will be much more effective in achieving and maintaining old-growth characteristics. These plans should carefully consider local ecological conditions and objectives, social concerns, and policy constraints of the owners or managers.***

Issues

Concerns about mature and old-growth forests raise many management issues and challenges, which highlight important differences in perceptions, values and philosophies. A common issue is the invocation of a single, simple solution for a diverse and complex situation. This complexity is shown by the range of questions that must be addressed to effectively manage mature and old-growth forests on a site-specific basis, including: 1) the definition of an old-growth forest; 2) the potential uses and values of mature and old-growth forests; and 3) the detailed objectives and policy constraints for management. Similarly, disagreements have stemmed from widely varying public perceptions and preferences, including: 1) the idea that nearly all pre-European settlement forests in Oregon were old-growth; 2) the perception that mature and old-growth forests are permanent and unchanging over both time and space; and 3) contrasting views about the preferred approach or philosophy for managing mature and old-growth forests, e.g., from preservation to active management.

Current examples of old-growth management issues include policy directives or advocacy for specific tree diameter (e.g., 21 inches) and age limits (e.g., 80 years), at or above which no trees can be harvested. This approach greatly simplifies the definition of old-growth to a set of relatively arbitrary diameter or age criteria, and does not address the complexity and dynamics of old-growth forests, their development, or compatible management objectives.

Background

The definition of an old-growth forest is not exact (Helms 2004). A few large individual trees of old age do not constitute an old-growth forest. Old-growth forests often have a patchy appearance, trees of various sizes and some of very large size, and large snags and downed wood. However, no one single attribute, be it appearance, tree age, tree size, canopy structure (foliage layers), or species composition, can consistently define old-growth. The area or size of an old-growth forest is also important in this discussion. Old-growth stands of small acreage may not be effective habitat for old-growth dependent wildlife species, but may serve as "aesthetic" old-growth for the public and for educational purposes and provide important microsites that increase the ecological diversity of a forest.

The term "late-successional"¹ is sometimes used as an ecologically based descriptor of old-growth forests. Ecological definitions have value in that they are based on forest processes (e.g., succession and disturbance) and resulting forest structure. However, old-growth is often perceived by many as a qualitative forest condition; a condition that can invoke awe, wonder, inspiration or even veneration. Evidence of the range of popular definitions is shown in the simple descriptors placed on old-growth forests, such as cathedral, heritage, or ancient. These labels also carry preconceived or value-based notions of the attributes of an old-growth forest, although some old-growth forests may not be consistently viewed as "cathedrals" and some may not be "ancient" yet contain old-growth attributes. Lodgepole pine and aspen trees, for example, are not long-lived species and thus these forests may contain "old-growth" attributes that are unique to them and far different from old-growth species with longer life spans (Spies 2004). A forest type and site-specific understanding of a particular forest and its associated values is more useful than an inexact label.

Historically, old-growth forests had great commercial value when harvested for timber products, and they supported the development of many Oregon communities. Although still valuable and prized for certain uses, large trees from old-growth forests currently are used less for timber because changes in log supply have forced most mills to retool to manufacture forest products from younger and smaller trees. Old-growth forests now are recognized for much broader values, including wildlife habitat, recreation, genetic reservoirs, watershed functions, carbon storage, scientific research, sites that preserve our North American heritage, and simply their awe-inspiring character.

Forests with older trees can be found in different ownerships, each managed under unique objectives and legal requirements including, in the case of federal lands in Oregon, specific mandates for old-growth management. Not all of these older forests contain all of the features of a fully developed old-growth forest, but many of them contain old-growth elements such as large live and dead trees. Private landowners have greater leeway in setting their own management objectives and related actions. Although little fully developed old-growth remains in private ownership, forest landowners in Oregon must leave some level of snags and downed logs in harvest areas. In general, as long as applicable regulations concerning fish and wildlife habitat protection are met, private landowners in Oregon may harvest trees in these older forests, some of which may meet an ecological definition of old growth.

Old-growth forests have important and diverse values that may not conflict as much as often believed. It is notable that large areas of state lands in Oregon with mandated timber production goals now are being actively managed with longer harvest rotations to create valuable old-growth-like habitat features for fish and wildlife, while also generating economic benefits for local communities. This approach has not satisfied all interests and significant pressure to produce forests with mature and old-growth features persists. For example, recent attempts have been made to further restrict management practices on private and state lands through regulatory changes and ballot initiatives to maintain or promote mature or old-growth forests for non-timber

¹ Succession is the natural, gradual supplanting of one plant community type over another, with a "late-successional" community often considered as part of a final, long-term stage before a catastrophic event (e.g., wildfire) repeats the process, initiating "secondary" succession.

values. However, it is the mix of forests ownerships managed for a range of forest conditions (young to old) that together produce a forest landscape with very high overall ecological and socioeconomic value.

As a collection of living, dying and dead organisms with many natural influences, old-growth forests are constantly changing and some have a finite "lifespan." This would be true even in the absence of human influences. The common perception is that before pre-European settlement, nearly all forests in Oregon were old-growth. Although direct evidence is limited, studies have concluded that the amount of old-growth before European settlement varied over the centuries from about 30 to 70 percent across forested landscapes in northwest Oregon (Teensma et al. 1991, Wimberly et al. 2000, Wells and Anzinger 2001, USDA Forest Service 2003). Today, approximately 6.5 million acres of mature and old-growth forests exist in western Oregon and Washington (USDA Forest Service 2003). All forests, including old-growth forests, will eventually succumb to natural, destructive disturbances (e.g., wildfires, windstorms, insect infestations) and then regenerate over time. Although we may be able to protect old-growth forests from some disturbances, it is not possible to protect them from all disturbances, and values for which old-growth is desired may not be adequately maintained without planning for growing old-growth forests of the future.

The management strategy used for old-growth values depends on the mix of ecological goals and the environment in which the forest occurs. Where biodiversity is the primary goal, conservation of old-growth is based on a range of management strategies ranging from passive to active management. In many cases mature and old-growth forests and associated values can benefit from active management as a substitute for natural disturbances (e.g., wildfire) and processes that have been reduced or altered by human needs or activities. In some situations it can be effective to mimic natural processes like fire and insect outbreaks with silvicultural techniques (e.g., thinning and prescribed fire). This is particularly true in fire prone forest types or in uniform plantations once intended primarily for timber production. These actions may reduce or avoid the undesirable impacts of catastrophic natural events to both the site being managed and the surrounding area. There can even be instances where substantial tree harvesting may serve as an effective surrogate for natural disturbances that promote desirable old-growth characteristics, particularly if some dead wood and large trees are left on site. With a blend of ecological, social and economic objectives, landowners can use active management strategies to produce some key old-growth features in stands managed also for timber production, including long rotations and the retention of large live and dead trees.

Importantly, reduction of old-growth stand density by thinning understory trees has been shown to improve tree health and vigor (Stone et al. 1999, Latham and Tappeiner 2002, McDowell et al. 2003), in turn improving their resistance to bark beetles while also reducing the risk of stand-replacing wildfire; this is particularly important in dry forest ecosystems. Such actions can be especially valuable for extending the life of existing old-growth trees and forests while other younger forests develop into an old-growth condition. Thinning in mature forests may hasten the development of old-growth structural characteristics (Bailey and Tappeiner 1997; Acker et al. 1998). Similarly, Newton and Cole (1987) reported substantial successes in achieving large trees and old-growth character in westside Douglas-fir after extended periods after heavy thinning, and that long rotations with such management could combine old-growth features on large parts of the landscape while producing some high quality timber. Where stand-replacement fire has destroyed existing old-growth forests, active restoration can effectively re-establish conifers to help ensure the potential and timely progression towards future old-growth conditions. Without reforestation and vegetation management, re-establishment of conifer forests in some areas may take centuries, particularly on sites that burned uncharacteristically hot and face severe competition from plants that limit conifer establishment.

Conclusions

Oregon's forest owners and managers have different goals that lead to a range of management approaches that promote diverse old and young forests with high ecological and social values. The overall pattern and distribution of forests is an important consideration in sustaining a broad range of values from our forests, and in providing for old-growth features and functions as forests change over time.

Misunderstandings and disagreements about the management of old-growth can be reduced by addressing key questions and considerations raised in this discussion, including careful attention to local conditions and concerns. Like the management of other forests, success of old-growth forest management will be greatly enhanced by current knowledge and experience-tempered, site-specific plans prepared by professional foresters and other specialists; that is, plans that carefully account for site-specific conditions, detailed management objectives, and applicable legal mandates and social concerns.

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Position adopted by the Oregon SAF Executive Committee October 31, 2005 and supported with 96% approval in member referendum December 2005. This statement will expire October 31, 2010, unless after thorough review it is renewed by the Committee.



Commercial Timber Harvest on Public Lands in Oregon

A position of the Oregon Society of American Foresters

The Oregon Society of American Foresters supports commercial timber harvest as an appropriate objective and primary tool for healthy, sustainable forests on public lands in Oregon. Most of these lands are affected by laws that allow or mandate sustainable commercial harvest with resource management planning. Where fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, or recreation is a priority, commercial harvest can be compatible and even promote these values when carefully planned and supervised by professional foresters and other resource specialists. Commercial timber harvest provides important economic and social benefits that help sustain local communities, especially in rural areas. These benefits often extend more broadly than government payments in lieu of shared harvest revenues. Management and use of renewable, recyclable, biodegradable, and energy conserving forest products from public lands are imperative given increasing human needs and environmental sustainability concerns. The expanding scope and cost of addressing Oregon's forest health, wildfire and safety hazards add further urgency to the need for active management and restoration of public lands, including commercial harvest.

Issue Some groups and individuals have called for greater restrictions or a total ban on commercial timber harvest on public lands in Oregon, such as federal, state or municipal forests. Supporting arguments focus on environmental risks and the view that commercial activity on public forests is inappropriate, costly, and simply benefits large corporations. Some opinion polls and policy decisions to limit harvest on public lands are cited as evidence of support for such restrictions. However, most arguments to prohibit commercial harvest on public lands are based on inaccurate and outdated generalizations about environmental impacts and an unwarranted vilification of economic enterprises. Moreover, increasing forest health, wildfire and safety problems in many public forests where harvesting has been greatly reduced suggest that further restrictions in Oregon could simply exacerbate forest resource and socioeconomic concerns in affected areas. Demands for most forest products also continue to increase, and the negative environmental impacts from the use of alternative materials or timber sources outside Oregon can be significant and far-reaching.

Background

Oregon's public forest lands are very extensive and productive

Oregon has 16.6 million acres of public forest lands, an area about equal to all of western Oregon north of Grants Pass. Most (13.2 million acres) of these public forests are productive and thus they represent about 60 percent of the land in Oregon that can grow commercial timber; included are some of the most productive forests in the world. About 12.3 million acres of these productive forest lands are in federal ownership, and 0.9 million acres are state, county and municipal lands. Nearly one-third (3.8 million acres) of these productive lands are withdrawn specifically from commercial use as wilderness areas, parks and other major reserves. Given the scope and productivity of Oregon's public forests and their diverse uses and values, policies that significantly restrict commercial harvest have both local and global effects.

Sustainable commercial harvest is allowed or required

The 9.4 million acres of unreserved, productive public forest lands in Oregon are established and managed under laws that allow or mandate sustainable commercial harvests. For example, federal forest managers are directed to "furnish a continuous supply of timber for the...citizens of the U.S." (Organic Act of 1897) and provide "a permanent source of raw materials for the support of dependent communities and local industries of the region" (O&C Act of 1937). Such laws also direct a significant portion of the income from such timber harvests to local governments, recognizing that extensive areas of public lands can significantly reduce property tax revenues. Oregon law, for example, requires most state forest lands be managed with about two-thirds of the timber revenues shared with the local counties, schools and taxing districts where the forests are located. In addition, laws requiring prompt reforestation and maintenance of forest land productivity directly promote the sustainability of forest benefits.

Evolving policies and practices protect other values

Timber harvest planning and practices have improved greatly in recent years and continue to respond to both evolving knowledge and public concerns and laws for protecting diverse resource values. Forest road practices also have seen wide improvements, and advanced harvest systems reduce the need for new roads. On federal lands, the

Northwest Forest Plan focuses on conservation of important fish and wildlife habitat. On State Forests (e.g., the Tillamook), in addition to the strict requirements of Oregon's Forest Practices Act, updated management plans include steps to improve mature forest habitat for key species. Such directives restrict harvest in sensitive areas and add to the costs of operations on public lands in Oregon. However, economical harvest usually is possible where planned well and not subjected to extensive delays from intentionally obstructive legal appeals or unlawful protests.

Commercial harvest is a key management tool

Oregon's forests are constantly changing. Trees and other vegetation grow and add biomass, shed branches and foliage, and die from crowding or insect or disease infestations. This dynamic nature of our forests makes timber harvest an important management tool for forest products, restoration and other values. On both federal and state lands, teams of professional foresters, biologists, other resource specialists, and engineers carefully plan and supervise harvests to protect or enhance diverse resource values. Important work such as improvements to fish habitat and roads are enhanced by the income, equipment and skilled personnel made available by local commercial harvest operations. Resource professionals recognize that harvest plans must vary widely among diverse management areas and objectives. No single, simple strategy fits all.

Economic benefits are large and broad

Commercial timber harvests provide significant economic benefits, including helping to pay for management for diverse values. As the nation's leading lumber producer, Oregon's wood products industry brings substantial income to the state and employs about 52,000 workers, a level comparable to the high-tech manufacturing sector. Wood products employment is especially important in rural communities where other high-wage jobs are few, and it also remains significant even in Oregon's urban areas. Basic industries like forest products also generate significant wealth both directly and far beyond the industry itself through a strong "economic multiplier." Government payments to counties in lieu of timber harvest often do not achieve comparably broad and enduring benefits. Given their location, productivity and size, public forest lands have a key role in commercial timber production and employment throughout the state, even where other values are emphasized. Commercial timber harvest is widely recognized as an essential component of sustainable forestry and local communities near forests. Harvests from state forest lands, for example, generated \$58 million for Oregon counties and nearly \$10 million for Oregon schools in 2006.

Forest products are a vital renewable and sustainable resource

Overall, the U.S. is now a net importer of both energy and wood. And because domestic demand for most forest products continues to rise, major harvest restrictions on public land in Oregon result in an increase in harvesting in other ownerships, regions and countries, including many that have far less stringent environmental standards or are much less productive (i.e., more acres must be harvested for similar yields). The rising cost of forest products, partly due to local restrictions that add to production costs and reduce market supplies, also increases the use of alternatives such as steel, plastic and concrete. These materials pale in comparison to forest products in terms of fundamental sustainability, i.e., none is produced from an active air pollution cleanser (trees) with very little energy while also being exceptionally renewable, recyclable, and biodegradable. Forest biomass also can provide an alternative energy source to fossil fuels. The substantial environmental impacts that arise indirectly from broad harvest restrictions are rarely considered in opinion polls and politically motivated policy decisions.

Active management is widely needed

Where major concerns for other values are identified by site-specific assessments and collaborative planning, timber harvest can be locally restricted on public lands. In contrast, broad prohibitions provide no flexibility and do nothing to address such serious concerns as Oregon's rapidly expanding forest health and wildfire hazards. Ironically, such prohibitions would trade manageable risks for the largely uncontrollable and violent forces of nature, with potentially far greater environmental damage to the values that are the focus of "protection." Former Governor Kitzhaber, his fellow western governors, and the General Accounting Office (a major federal agency that conducts nonpartisan analyses) are among the notable leaders that have studied and stressed the need for very extensive active management to reduce these widespread forest health and wildfire problems. Reducing public safety hazards from roadside danger trees also is a growing need in areas impacted by wildfire and other disturbances. The large scope of active management and restoration needed makes commercial timber harvest a vital tool and revenue source for management. It also can provide high levels of environmentally friendly products and economic benefits to Oregon communities, as well as the healthy, safe and fire-resistant forests that attract both visitors and businesses.

*Adopted by the Executive Committee of the Oregon Society of American Foresters (OSAF), February 1, 2007.
This statement will expire on February 1, 2012, unless after thorough review it is renewed by the Committee.*



Forestry: An Objectives-oriented Profession

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) represents much of the forestry profession at the national, state, and local levels. People outside the profession may wonder who belongs to the SAF and what specific perspective(s) they offer, particularly regarding important forest resource issues. The following notes provide some insights about SAF and its members. Of course, core principles like SAF's Mission Statement and its Code of Ethics (see back of this sheet) play a key role in defining the organization and its members, and are reflected here to some degree.

Most professional members of SAF have earned university degrees from SAF accredited forestry programs. In such programs, forestry professionals are trained to be objectives-oriented. This is similar to other professions (e.g., engineering) that use appropriate expertise and experience to address societal needs and related employer-defined, problem-solving tasks.

Thus, forestry professionals view and manage forests for a full range of uses and values – it's the objectives of the owners and related policies for the forest land that drive what SAF members are oriented toward. This is reflected in the technical "Working Groups" within SAF that members can choose to affiliate with, including such diverse interests as Recreation, Wilderness Management, and Wildlife and Fish Ecology.

Another important and related characteristic of SAF and its members is their focus on active management of forest lands. This focus stems from:

- 1) Substantial knowledge (research and education) and experience with what works and what doesn't (all are vital given the site-specific, extended lives of forests)
- 2) A service-to-society Mission, which compels actions that are most effective and efficient for providing for society's desires and needs/demands

It's useful to note that some groups involved with forest resource issues have a different focus and world view than SAF. For example, some follow a philosophy in which natural environments (including forests) with little or no human influence are considered superior. Such distinctions are important to recognize and highlight, particularly with forest issues that are often debated as science/technical matters when instead they are largely values or philosophy based.

The employment affiliation of SAF members can provide some indication of the perspective(s) they offer. But recent data for the approximately 1000 members in Oregon (March 2007) suggest that no particular employment-based perspective is dominant: 27% public employment, 24% private industry/business, 26% retired, 11% consultants, and 12% students or other employment.

Thus, SAF members come from "all walks of forestry" and for a professional society such diversity clearly is an asset, particularly when SAF leaders and members offer their individual and collective views on important forestry issues. And with their unique training, experience, and interaction with many other specialists, SAF members play a central role in helping ensure the fundamental benefits of environmental, economic and social sustainability from our forest lands and resources.

Notes by Paul W. Adams, Chair of the Oregon SAF Policy and Legislation Committee, and a Professor and Extension Specialist in the Forest Engineering Department at Oregon State University. Paul has been an SAF member for over 30 years. August 2007.

Who We Are

Since 1900, the Society of American Foresters has provided access to information and networking opportunities to prepare members for the challenges and the changes that face natural resource professionals.



SAF Core Values are:

1. Forests are a fundamental source of global health and human welfare,
2. Forests must be sustained through simultaneously meeting environmental, economic, and community aspirations and needs,
3. Foresters are dedicated to sound forest management and conservation, and
4. Foresters serve landowners and society by providing sound knowledge and professional management skills

Mission Statement

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is the national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States. Founded in 1900 by Gifford Pinchot, it is the largest professional society for foresters in the world. **The mission of the Society of American Foresters is to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish professional excellence; and, to use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.** SAF is a nonprofit organization meeting the requirements of 501 (c) (3). SAF members include natural resource professionals in public and private settings, researchers, CEOs, administrators, educators, and students.

SAF Code of Ethics

On joining the Society of American Foresters, members assume a special responsibility to the profession and to society by promising to uphold and abide by the following:

Principles and Pledges

1. Foresters have a responsibility to manage land for both current and future generations. We pledge to practice and advocate management that will maintain the long-term capacity of the land to provide the variety of materials, uses, and values desired by landowners and society.
2. Society must respect forest landowners' rights and correspondingly, landowners have a land stewardship responsibility to society. We pledge to practice and advocate forest management in accordance with landowner objectives and professional standards, and to advise landowners of the consequences of deviating from such standards.
3. Sound science is the foundation of the forestry profession. We pledge to strive for continuous improvement of our methods and our personal knowledge and skills; to perform only those services for which we are qualified; and in the biological, physical, and social sciences to use the most appropriate data, methods, and technology.
4. Public policy related to forests must be based on both scientific principles and societal values. We pledge to use our knowledge and skills to help formulate sound forest policies and laws; to challenge and correct untrue statements about forestry; and to foster dialogue among foresters, other professionals, landowners, and the public regarding forest policies.
5. Honest and open communication, coupled with respect for information given in confidence, is essential to good service. We pledge to always present, to the best of our ability, accurate and complete information; to indicate on whose behalf any public statements are made; to fully disclose and resolve any existing or potential conflicts of interest; and to keep proprietary information confidential unless the appropriate person authorizes its disclosure.
6. Professional and civic behavior must be based on honesty, fairness, good will, and respect for the law. We pledge to conduct ourselves in a civil and dignified manner; to respect the needs, contributions, and viewpoints of others; and to give due credit to others for their methods, ideas, or assistance.