



# Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.

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Concerns for Oregon Federal Forestlands—Disruption of Processes

Public Comment by Rex Storm, Certified Forester, Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.

before the May 15, 2007 meeting of  
Federal Forestland Advisory Committee, held in 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. The vitality of the state's forest contracting industry, and the forest sector at-large, relies upon all Oregon commercial forests—including the 57% comprising the federal ownership.

My remarks today respond to the committee's current work to identify important factors contributing to disruption of natural processes and loss of landscape resiliency on federal forestlands in Oregon. Improved federal forest management is of the utmost importance to the vitality of Oregon's forest sector. The health and economic future of Oregon's private forests are imminently threatened by chronic federal policy failures, which have plagued *all* Oregon forests—and the state's forest sector—for nearly two decades.

The following concerns are those AOL members see as warranting attention by the committee.

## **Important factors contributing to disruption of natural processes and loss of landscape resiliency in Oregon federal forestlands**

- The US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have foundered by failing to responsibly manage Oregon's federal forest & rangelands in two very important aspects:
  1. Failure to plan and allocate lands in order to manage a full range of multiple uses
  2. Failure to maintain healthy forest & range ecosystems that don't threaten neighboring property
  3. Failure to reduce overcrowded stands prone to losses from pest, disease, wildfire, invasives, and weather
  4. Failure to plan and administer sufficient road & trail access to accomplish forest health goals
  5. Failure to plan and promote responsible recreation use of forestlands

## **Recommended solutions for FFAC consideration**

- Oregon's federal forestlands must be responsibly managed to sustain predictable & quantifiable resource outputs, in a manner that maintains forest & rangeland health, road access and a variety of citizen uses. In the accomplishment of this goal, many other positive outcomes can result, including:
  1. Sufficient road access to manage multiple uses; professional discretion/authority to build/manage roads; support rights-of-ways/easements/special uses
  2. Manage "perimeter forests" to respect adjacent non-federal neighbor values
  3. Rapid restoration after damages to recover value, reforest, pay for restoration, restore habitat

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4. Embrace modern mechanical treatments, to accomplish desired management goals
5. Reliable & predictable outputs of multiple-uses: timber, forage, water, minerals, energy, recreation, habitat, special uses, and rights-of-ways
6. Professional discretion/authority to harvest any tree—large, dead, dying, small, green, etc. (for example; eliminate administrative prohibitions such as “diameter limits”)
7. Urgency to restore overcrowded-unhealthy-dangerous forests to sustainable thrifty condition
8. Aggressive firefighting and deterrence of pest/disease attacks
9. Promotion of manufacturing infrastructure for an expanded forest products industry
10. Contribution to rural communities, encouraging their prosperous economies
11. Transition to future workforce; plan to build needed skills now (current workforce exodus)
12. Effective use of taxpayer dollars: waste is “norm” (wasted funds, timber, habitat...)
13. Favor action over “no action”, instead of infeasible situations; complete risk aversion
14. Address ‘balance of harms’-- avoid needless prohibition against taking short-term risk even though greater long-term gains would be achieved
15. Analysis paralysis—excessive funds and time spent on administrative procedures that yield virtually no benefit to on-the-ground management of forest & rangeland resources
16. Define explicit direction surrounding habitat & species—consensus unrealistic; map & follow a plan
17. Address the current workforce crisis; plan to transition a future workforce; address the workforce exodus
18. Reform the dysfunctional personnel performance system; eliminate non-merit reward based on inaction; discriminatory practices; and the “veto power” of “specialist employees (“ologists”)
19. Make timely management decisions, that address detrimental forest ailments
20. Intensively manage a portion of the forest; while significant acreage dedicated to “Wilderness and other “no management” regimes
21. Maintain existing agency infrastructure: roads, recreation facilities; fire/pest protection forces; workforce skills

Please consider our suggestions as you deliberate federal forest policy recommendations. Thank you for this opportunity to speak concerning federal forest policies to sustainably manage Oregon forests. I lend our support and assistance to your proceedings in the coming months.