



# Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.

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## Most Important Goal & Pressing Concern for Oregon Federal Forestlands

Public Comment by Rex Storm, Certified Forester, Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.  
before the June 4, 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.

Although today's question for public comment deals with *the* most important goal and most pressing concern for Oregon federal forestlands, in actuality there are many imperative goals, and numerous problems that confound accomplishment of these goals. 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—and we urge the committee's due diligence in completing its report without further delay.

### Most Important Goal for Oregon Federal Forests

- The Committee's economic goal (#11) is the most important of those considered in the FFAC Goal draft (5/25/07). *"Federal forestlands provide a predictable, sustainable supply of the full suite of forest products now and into the future. Federal forest policy contributes to the creation of stable jobs and economic well-being for communities across the State. Local counties are able to share the revenues from economic outputs over the long-term."*
- Oregon's federal forestlands have largely failed to accomplish this goal since 1990. The result of this failure has been wholesale collapse of the economic, environmental, and social attributes formerly derived from active management of those forests. The annual loss of 4 billion board feet of federal timber harvest from Oregon has cost an estimated 60,000 Oregon jobs—by conservative calculations. Environmental and social benefits have also collapsed.
- If Oregon's federal forestlands were responsibly managed to sustain predictable forest products, then a smorgasbord of benefits would be accomplished, including:
  1. Forest & rangeland health
  2. Hazardous fuel reduction
  3. Improved protection against losses to wildfire, pests, disease and weather
  4. Road access for a variety of uses for citizens, commercial and administrative purposes
  5. Reliable & predictable outputs of multiple-uses: timber, forage, water, minerals, energy, recreation, habitat, special uses
  6. Enhanced sustainability of future resource benefits & outputs
  7. Economic prosperity to communities, counties, local business, state economy
  8. Sustain viable infrastructure in professional forestry, operators, and manufacturing
  9. Environmental protection and resources improvements, funded by active management

**Most Pressing Issue Concerning Oregon Federal Forests**

- The Committee’s economic goal (#5) is the most pressing concern of those considered in the FFAC Most Pressing Problems draft (5/25/07). *“The economic and social benefits produced by federal forests are below their potential. Critical family wage jobs have been lost and some rural communities in Oregon are suffering. Private forestlands are being converted to non-forest uses.”*
- The US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have failed to address this problem since 1990. As stated above, the result of these failures has been the collapse of economic, environmental, and social attributes formerly derived from active management of those forests. Today, Oregon’s federal forests are in a complete state of disrepair—as the lands suffer simply from process prohibitions that deprive these valued forestlands from modern forest science & technology, which would sustain a greater basket of benefits for society.
- This pressing problem is the most important because the abject loss of an economic focus for the land—and its management—has rendered the following undesirable consequences:
  1. Shrinking & unreliable timber harvest continues to eliminate business infrastructure needed for sustainable management; and stifles future investment in forest business
  2. High percentage of acreage in unhealthy forest & rangeland condition
  3. Hazardous fuel conditions
  4. Dangerously explosive fire potential in the wildland-urban interface
  5. Resource damage from un-maintained facilities
  6. Reduction in recreation, special uses, and public access of forests
  7. Failure to maintain agency infrastructure: roads & access, recreation facilities; fire/pest protection forces; workforce skills; administrative facilities & capacity
  8. Scant economic contributions to communities, counties, local business, state economy
  9. Ravaged the infrastructure in professional forestry, operators, and manufacturing
  10. Environmental protection and resources improvements, funded by active management
  11. Harm to species and their habitats through accelerating catastrophic damages
  12. Water quality problems from accelerating catastrophic damages
  13. Waste of resources due to accelerating catastrophic damages
  14. Outlandish increases in agency budgets (>45%) dedicated to wildfire suppression alone
  15. Untimely management decisions that fail to address detrimental forest ailments
  16. Wasteful squandering of taxpayer dollars spent on administrative process that yield virtually no benefit to on-the-ground management of forest & rangeland resources
  17. And many others...

The future forest sector vitality & sustainability of Oregon’s forests, across all ownerships, are increasingly threatened by poorly managed federal forests. Thank you for this opportunity to speak concerning federal forest policies to sustainably manage Oregon forests. I lend our support and assistance to complete your proceedings at the earliest opportunity.