



February 23, 2007

To: Kevin Birch  
Governor's Federal Forest Advisory Panel

From: Tom Partin

Re: Federal Forest Land "Most Pressing Problems"

Kevin and Members of the Panel:

The American Forest Resource Council is pleased to be able to submit our list of the "Most Pressing Problems" on our federal forests. AFRC represents about 100 forest products companies that depend on sustainable management of our federal forests. These companies in many instances are located in rural communities and provide family wage jobs which help support those communities. Sustainable forests mean sustainable communities in rural Oregon, and because 57% of Oregon's forest lands are federally owned these forests must have a long-term balanced and sustained management commitment. Our problems described below are not listed in any priority, and most are related to the other in some form. We appreciate being an active partner in this process and hope that the Committee views these comments as constructive.

**Problem #1---Lack of Active Management**

Our federal forests in Oregon are some of the most productive in the world. We also have the best regulations for insuring long-term management on those forests. Unfortunately the federal agencies are only treating a fraction of the land base each year, and we are building up huge fiber and biomass concentrations over the entire landscape of our federal forests. As your data points out---we are growing 4.5 billion board feet on our Oregon federal forests, and harvesting less than 500 million board feet. We are losing far more than that each year to mortality. This continued heavy buildup of biomass is creating conditions perfect for catastrophic wildfires and their destruction.

**Problem#2---Potential Loss of Infrastructure**

Oregon has lost over one-hundred sawmills, plywood plants, paper mills and secondary wood manufacturing plants during the past decade and a half. We have also lost over 35,000 forest products jobs during that time. Without a consistent timber sale program on our federal forests there is a high risk that we will lose more. The Analysis of the

Current Situation that was discussed at the last meeting showed that private lands in Eastern Oregon are being over harvested by 18%. Further, sawmills in western Oregon are being supported by sawlogs being imported from Washington State and that DNR program. These situations cannot be sustained and obviously the infrastructure will suffer. Again this will cause the loss of family wage jobs in rural Oregon while our federal forests continue to deteriorate with fire, disease and insect attacks.

**Problem #3----The Federal Social Contract with Rural Oregon Has Been Broken**

Our federal government entered into a contract with rural Oregon counties and communities by committing to provide sustainable management on adjacent national forests. This commitment provided jobs and the infrastructure to ensure these communities survived while managing the forests in a sustainable manner. It also provided revenue in the form of timber receipts and returned them back to county roads and schools. The forests still need managed, but our federal government has broken its contract with rural Oregon, has broken its promises to the forest products companies of Oregon by not following Forest Plans which promise a consistent flow of raw material, and broken its promises to the citizens of these communities where unemployment rates are now high, school opportunities are less, and a way of life has been taken away.

In lieu of this Contract With Rural Oregon our government now provides gifts to the counties in the form of cash payments which is little more than a welfare program. The family wage timber products wages are gone along with the medical and social benefits that these jobs provided. The children in these rural schools are leaving with their families further shrinking the school districts which get reimbursed from the state based on enrollment. It is a real lose/lose scenario.

**Problem #4---Region-6 Needs to be Fully Funded**

Perhaps one of the biggest impacts the Governor of Oregon and this Panel could have is to insist that Region 6 gets the funds it needs to fully implement the Northwest Forest Plan in Western Oregon, and to control the severe forest health issues currently raging out of control on the East side. I am including a graph that shows the funding trend for Region 6 compared to other Regions. Region 6 has been treated like the illegitimate stepchild of the Forest Service. Not only is this Region the most productive, but the value of stumpage sold returns the most dollars to the treasury.

**Problem #5----Use All Management Tools in the Toolbox**

This panel needs to implore federal land managers in Oregon to use all of the tools that they have been given to do needed forest treatments in a variety of venues. The Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 provided expedited procedures for treating areas of unusually high concentrations of fuels, and for treating lands around the Wildland Urban Interface. This Act allows for expedited planning, appeals, and settlement procedures. Still very few HFRA projects are being completed in Oregon.

Unlimited Stewardship authority has been granted for both the Forest Service and BLM. These Stewardship Projects can be of unlimited size and could provide the perfect vehicle

for doing forest health treatments and removing traditional and nontraditional products from our federal forests.

Utilize Categorical Exclusions which have several applications. CE's can be used in conjunction with Forest Health operations, insect and disease, fuels reduction and other applications.

Finally, better project can be planned by increasing the project size, more aggressively treat the forest, and manage all diameter size of trees---not just remove a certain diameter size.

#### **Problems #6---Lack of Management Is Hurting Wildlife Populations**

Lack of forest management is not only impacting forest health in a negative way, but we are also finding that without land management and timber harvest, several species that depend on Seral stages of our forests are sharply declining. Recent population trends of Blacktail deer and Roosevelt elk show sharp declines because of lack of forage.

The recent status review for the Northern Spotted Owl pointed out that the biggest risk factor to owls is the loss of habitat due to catastrophic wildfire and the invasion of the Barred Owl which is able to out compete the Northern Spotted Owl especially in older forest types. We are setting our forests aside and protecting our wildlife populations to death! If our federal forests are truly for multiple-use then let's start thinking of what we are doing to some of the other resources.

#### **Problem #7---Need to Change Spending Priorities**

Each year the Forest Service and BLM budget more for wildfire preparedness and suppression. Just a short five years ago that part of the budget was only 20%, but now it is nearly 50%. These agencies must begin investing more of their budgets into management of the forest before it catches on fire. These agencies are currently in a vicious cycle; by not managing the lands they are creating more fuel and hazards for wildfires which are occurring more frequently and becoming larger than in the past. Without active management in the green forests, we are setting ourselves up for more black forests. Let's make positive investments in the future of our "Green" forests.

#### **Problem #8---Get Away From the Discussions of What We Are Removing**

For too long our society has argued about the type and size of material that it will allow to be taken from our federal forests. Unfortunately this cut and paste style of management has forced the agencies to create artificial diameter size limits for harvesting, defer management of certain species or forest types, dictated the need to stay out of certain areas like riparian strips, and forced the set-aside other large areas of land for special interests only.

A new vision of forest management needs to take place and this vision should focus on what we want the forest to look like when we are done with operations, rather than to prohibit what we can do to get it to the desired condition. In short focus on what we leave behind rather than on what we take out.

**Problem #9---We Have Not Been Analyzing the Balance of Harms**

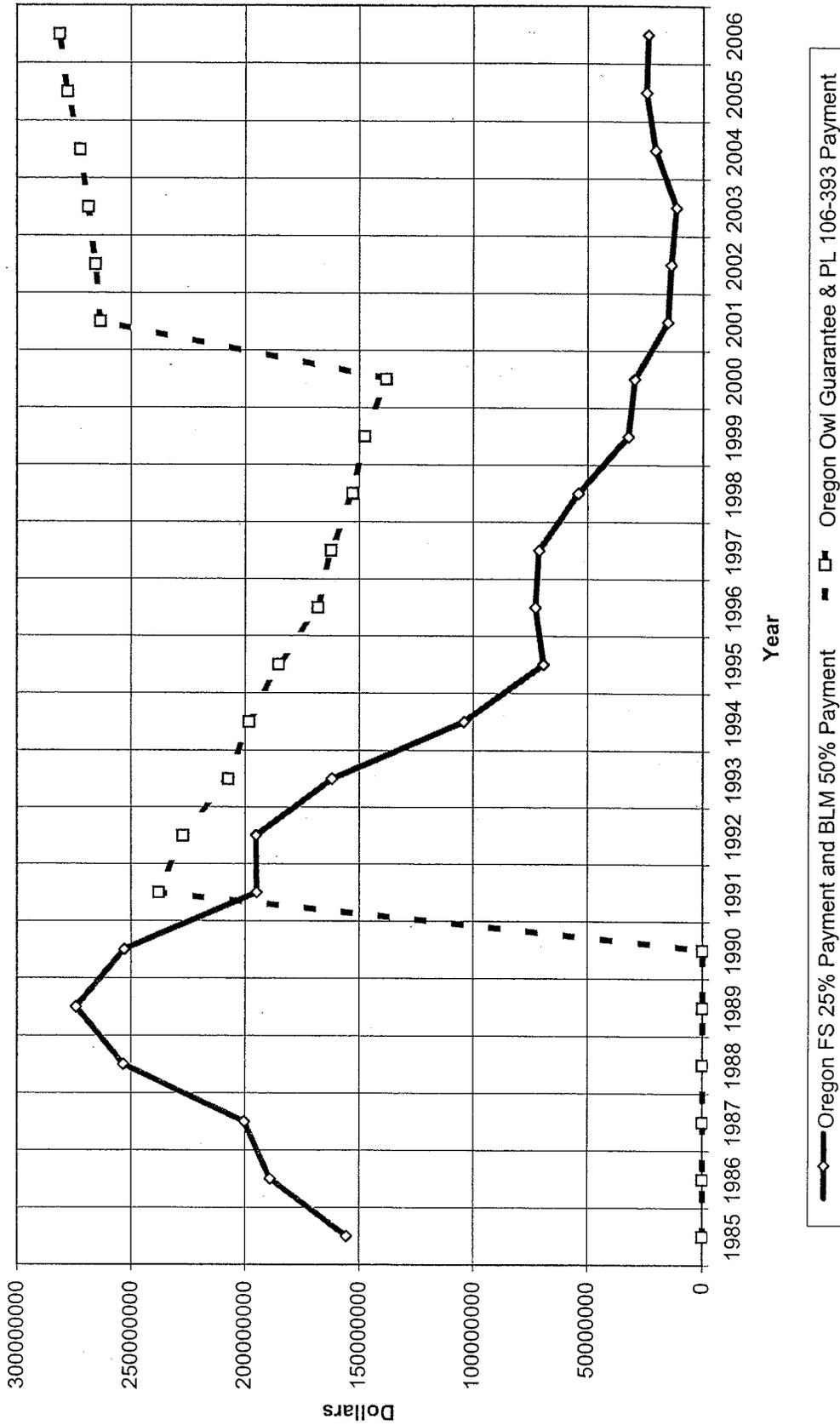
In the future projects should not only be analyzed for the impacts of an action on the land, but should also be analyzed for what will happen if an operation is not conducted.

Mother Nature is not static and conditions do change. There must be a discussion of the "Balance of Harms" for every proposed action of what might happen if this project doesn't take place. We must realize there is no such thing as a No-Action Alternative.

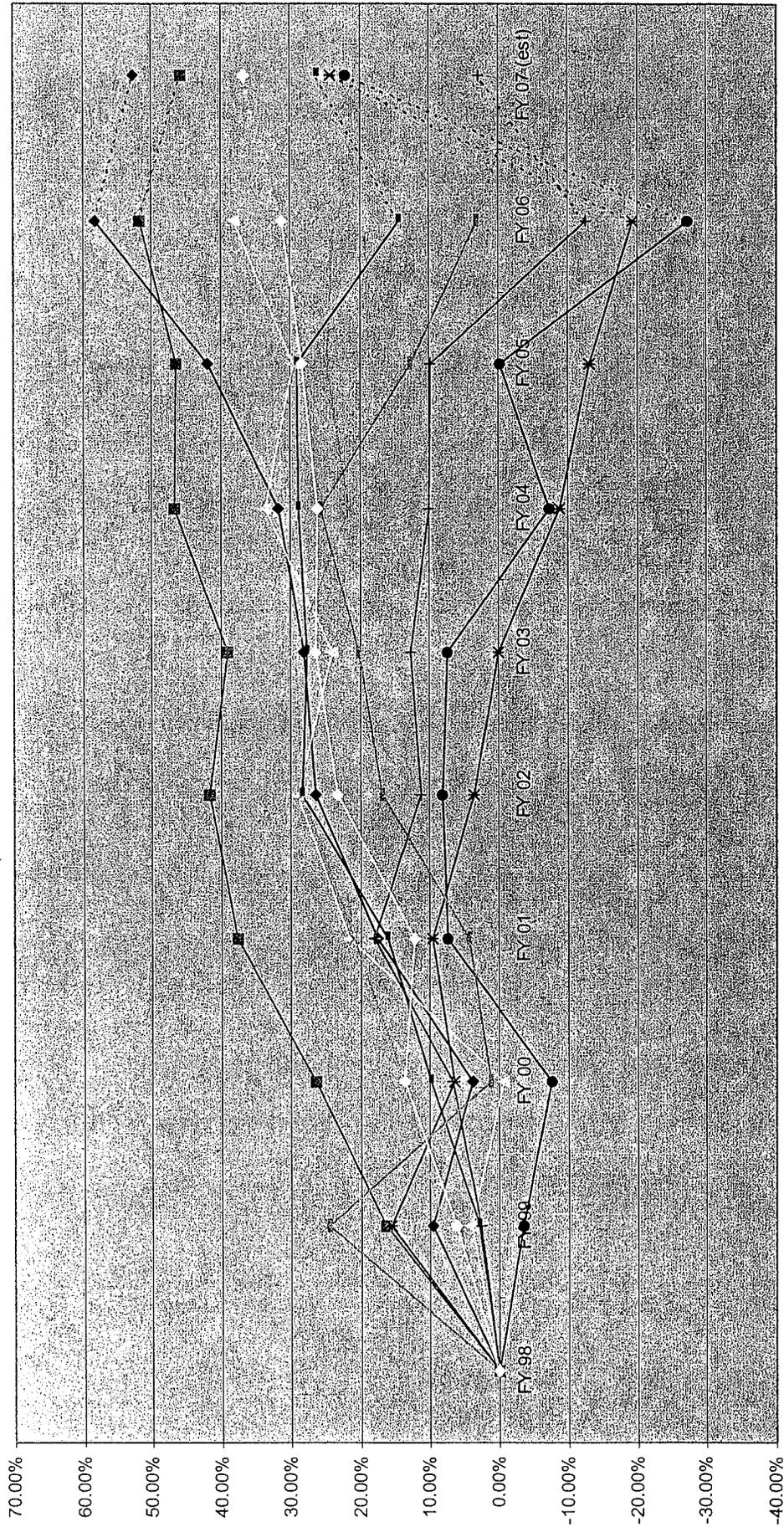
**Problem #10---We Are Not Putting the Pieces Together**

Our country is building nearly 2 million new homes every year, and we have an insatiable appetite for paper products. This will not change. However, our society has a "not in our back yard" attitude regarding where we get the raw materials to satisfy our appetites for these products. We are currently importing over 30 % of our lumber needs from Canada and other countries. We are doing the same with pulp and paper products. That means we are exporting environmental impacts and damage to other countries which simply don't have the prudent resource management rules and regulations that we have in this country. Therefore other countries are managing in an unsustainable manner to satisfy our appetite for wood products in this country. We need to satisfy our own needs by sustainably managing our own federal forests and be willing to realize the consequences to our global environment if we don't use this approach.

Oregon Actual Forest Service 25% Payments and BLM O&C 50% Payments 1985 - 2006  
 Compared to P.L. 106-393 Payments 1991 - 2006

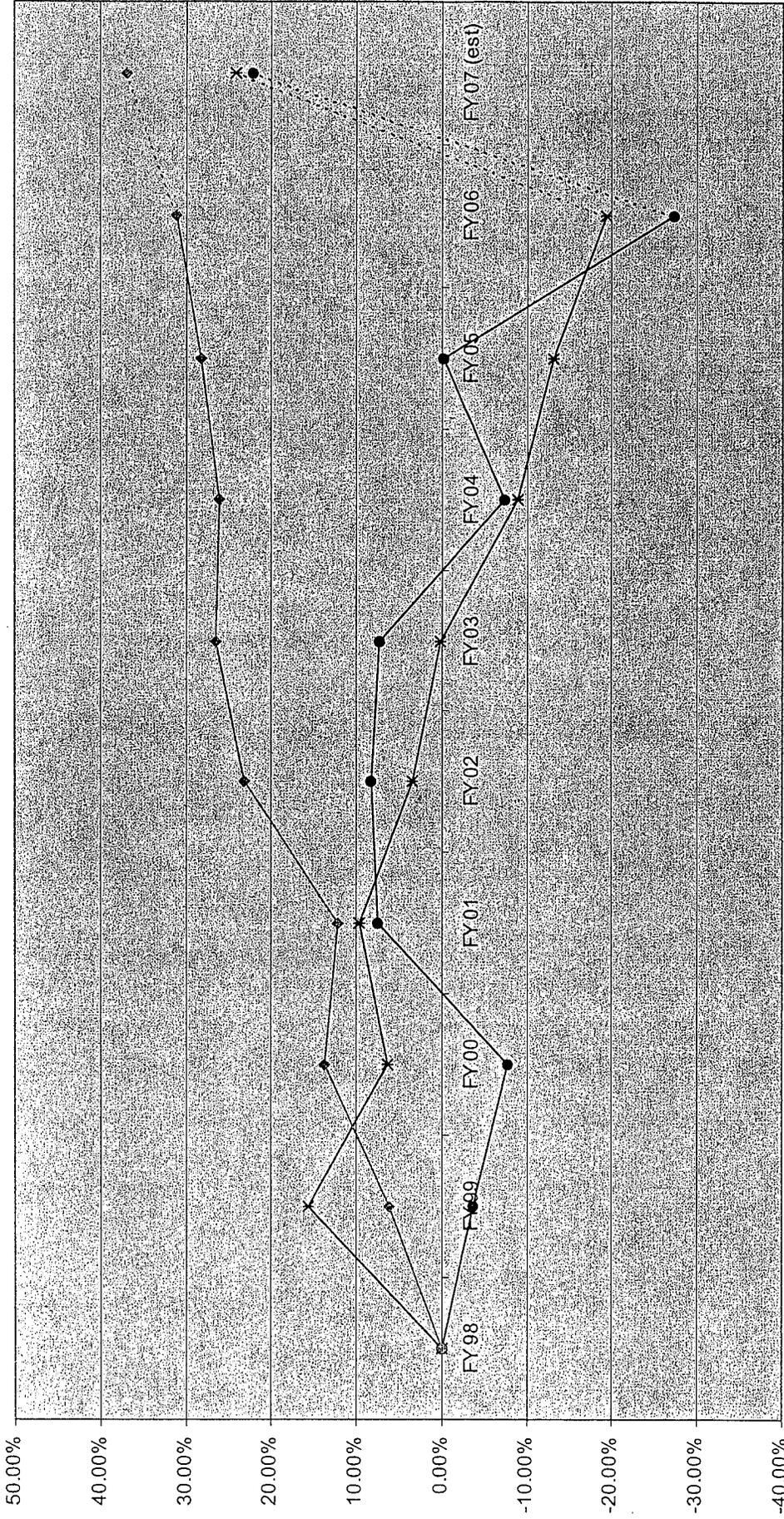


Percent Change in NFTM Funding



R-1 (diamond) R-2 (square) R-3 (asterisk) R-4 (asterisk) R-5 (circle) R-6 (circle) R-8 (plus) R-9 (square) R-10 (square) National NFTM

Percent Change in NFTM Funding



\* R-5    ● R-6    ◆ National NFTM

## Northwest Forest Plan - *Clinton/Gore Broken Promises*

- **Background**
  - Campaign promise to Carpenters Union
  - Forest Conference – April 2, 1993
  - Range of the Northern Spotted Owl, overlap with marbled murrelet
  - Potential salmon & steelhead listings
  - FEIS – April 1994 – Followed by litigation
- **Land Base - 24.5 million acres in California, Oregon & Washington**
  - 19 National Forests – 19.4 million acres
  - 7 BLM Districts – 2.7 million acres
  - 6 National Parks – 2.2 million acres
  - National Wildlife Refuges & Dept of Defense lands – 0.2 million acres
- **Land Allocations - 24.5 mm acres**
  - Congressionally Reserved – 7.3 mm acres
  - Administratively Withdrawn – 1.5 mm acres
  - Late-Successional Reserves – 7.5 mm acres
  - Adaptive Managed Areas – 1.5 mm acres
  - Riparian Reserves – 2.7 mm acres
  - *Matrix Lands – 4.0 mm acres, with only 3.0 mm acres truly available.*
- **Timber Sale Program**
  - Historic – 4.5 billion board feet per year (bbf)
  - Promise – 1.1 bbf/year – 75% reduction
  - Actual – <0.3 bbf/year – 95% reduction
  - Adjusted program – 0.805 bbf/year
  - 10-year Shortfall – 6.7 bbf
- **Timber Sale Program – Actual Volume Harvested**
  - **Clinton Administration**
    - FY-1995 – 0.024 bbf
    - FY-1996 – 0.214 bbf
    - FY-1997 – 0.414 bbf
    - FY-1998 – 0.433 bbf
    - FY-1999 – 0.409 bbf
    - FY-2000 – 0.306 bbf
    - FY-2001 – 0.132 bbf
  - **Bush Administration**
    - FY-2002 – 0.144 bbf
    - FY-2003 – 0.210 bbf
    - FY-2004 – 0.312 bbf
    - FY-2005 – 0.7 bbf
    - FY-2006 – 0.7 bbf
- **NWFP Implementation Strategy**
  - Spotted Owl status review, critical habitat and recovery plan
  - Marbled Murrelet status review and delisting
  - O&C Forest Plan Revisions
  - Secure adequate funding for timber sales & plan revisions
- **Other impediments:**
  - NEPA litigation
  - ESA litigation
  - S&M and ACS litigation
  - Funding and personnel