

Comments to the Oregon Board of Forestry Regarding State Forest Management

June 3, 2009

Salem, Oregon

Delivered by Bob Van Dyk on behalf of the Wild Salmon Center

The Wild Salmon Center maintains the position we have held for the last two years on the issue of state forest management.

We are deeply committed to balanced and sustainable management of the state forests – management that produces a wide range of public values for today while enhancing the forests for future generations.

The approach that we have taken the last two years has been founded on several key values.

First, we are committed to having the best available science in major policy decisions. Major changes to the forest management plan should undergo a scientific peer review to assess the strengths, weaknesses, and likely effects of proposed changes. Without a robust scientific analysis, it is unlikely that we will act with the understanding essential to good public policy.

Second, we support the extension of the current Salmon Anchor Habitat strategy beyond 2011-2013. The salmon runs of the north coast forests are an irreplaceable gift that we must pass on to the future. The Salmon Anchor Habitat strategy will help ensure the longevity and resilience of these runs. We are open to discussing modifications to the current strategy with the latest science in mind.

Third, we support changes in the plan that lead to incremental improvements across all values. In particular, we are willing to explore options that lead to more permanent protections on some areas and more harvest than now allowed on others – with the goal of enhancing both conservation and timber production.

Unfortunately, the recommendation before you today does not comport with our key values, so we must oppose it.

The recommendation calls for a major change in the plan without a scientific peer review. We appreciate the analysis done by ODF and ODFW regarding species of concern, but it is not a replacement for a peer review.

The recommendation extends an Aquatic Anchor strategy, but it is far less protective than the current strategy, and there has been no analysis or explanation for not continuing the whole strategy. The attached document outlines the differences between the two strategies.

Lastly, this is not an incremental improvement that improves across all measures. Rather, as the Species of Concern analysis makes clear, the recommendation would result in “a low probability of maintaining or enhancing watershed function.”

We therefore oppose the recommendation and ask that the Board move forward with proposals that are superior for both conservation and timber production, and that do not weaken the plan’s commitment to maintaining and enhancing these forests.