Comments to the Oregon Board of Forestry January 7, 2015

Regarding State Forest Management

Board Members and Forester Decker,

My name is Bob Van Dyk, and I work for the Wild Salmon Center. The Wild Salmon Center is part of the North Coast State Forest Coalition, which is working to protect the state forests of northwest Oregon.

As we have conveyed in earlier comments to the Board, we are supportive of exploring a change to the Forest Management Plan toward a so-called "zoned approach." The major attraction in such an approach is the potential to gain more confidence in durable conservation management of important places on the state forests. We believe the most obvious and clear way to attain such durability is by including maps of different zones in the Forest Management Plan.

Revisions to the Forest Management Plan are guided, in part, by the Planning Rule, which can be found at 629-035-0030.

It is not clear from the Planning Rule if and how different management zones and maps would fit into a Forest Management Plan. It may be the case that a modest change to the Planning Rule is in order to note that plans may contain maps that portray areas dedicated to long-range management strategies.

We therefore suggest that the Planning Rule be revisited and modified to be consistent with the principles of a zoned approach, which includes mapped zones dedicated to different types of management priorities.

We think it would be easy to make such a change, and encourage you to direct the Department to consider Planning Rule changes as part of the current FMP revision calendar.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

629-035-0030

Forest Management Planning

(1) In managing forest lands as provided in OAR 629-035-0020, the State Forester shall develop Forest Management Plans, based on the best available science, that establish the general management framework for the planning area of forest land. The Board may review, modify, or terminate a plan at any time; however the Board shall review the plans no less than every ten years. The State Forester shall develop implementation and operations plans for forest management plans that describe smaller-scale, more specific management activities within the planning area.

(2) Forest Management Plans must contain the following elements:

(a) Guiding principles, that include legal mandates and Board of Forestry policies. Taken together, these principles shall guide development of the management plan.

(b) Description and assessment of the resources on state forest lands within the planning area and consideration of the surrounding ownership in order to provide a landscape context. The description and assessment includes general statements of the current conditions of each of the resources, and the laws, policies, and programs that affect the resources and their management.

(c) Forest resource management goals, which are statements of what the State Forester intends to achieve for each forest resource within the planning area consistent with OAR 629-035-0020.

(d) Management strategies, which describe how the State Forester will manage the forest resources in the planning area to achieve the goals articulated in the plan. The strategies shall identify management techniques the State Forester may use to achieve the goals of the plan during the implementation phase of the plan.

(e) General guidelines for asset management, which provide overall direction on investments, marketing, and expenses.

(f) General guidelines for implementation, monitoring, research, and adaptive management. The guidelines shall describe:

(A) The process for implementing Forest Management Plans;

(B) The approach for determining whether the strategies are meeting the goals of the Forest Management Plans; and

(C) The process for determining the validity of the assumptions used in developing the strategies.

(3) The State Forester shall be guided by the following stewardship principles in developing and implementing Forest Management Plans:

(a) The plans shall include strategies that provide for actively managing forest land in the planning area.

(b) The plans shall include strategies that:

(A) Contribute to biological diversity of forest stand types and structures at the landscape level and over time:

(i) through application of silvicultural techniques that provide a variety of forest conditions and resources; and

(ii) through conserving and maintaining genetic diversity of forest tree species.

(B) Manage forest conditions to result in a high probability of maintaining and restoring properly functioning aquatic habitats for salmonids, and other native fish and aquatic life, and protecting, maintaining, and enhancing native wildlife habitats, recognizing that forests are dynamic and that the quantity and quality of habitats for species will change geographically and over time.

(C) Provide for healthy forests by:

(i) managing forest insects and diseases through an integrated pest management approach; and

(ii) utilizing appropriate genetic sources of forest tree seed and tree species in regeneration programs.

(D) Maintain or enhance long-term forest soil productivity.

(E) Comply with all applicable provisions of ORS 496.171 to 496.192 and 16 USC § 1531 to 1543 (1982 & supp 1997) concerning state and federally listed threatened and endangered species.

(c) The plans shall include strategies that maintain and enhance forest productivity by:

(A) Producing sustainable levels of timber consistent with protecting, maintaining, and enhancing other forest resources.

(B) Applying management practices to enhance timber yield and value, while contributing to the development of a diversity of habitats for maintaining salmonids and other native fish and wildlife species.

(d) The plans shall include strategies that utilize the best scientific information available to guide forest resource management actions and decisions by:

(A) Using monitoring and research to generate and utilize new information as it becomes available.

(B) Employing an adaptive management approach to ensure that the best available knowledge is acquired and used efficiently and effectively in forest resource management programs.

(4) The Board shall review and may revise the forest management plan developed by the State Forester to ensure that it is consistent with OAR 629-035-0020.

(5) The Board's approval of the plan represents its determination that activities carried out or allowed by the State Forester under subsection (6) of this section meet the obligation to secure the greatest permanent value to the state as defined in OAR 629-035-0020.

(6) Once the management plan is approved by the Board as provided in subsection (5) of this section:

(a) The Board shall adopt the plan as an administrative rule.

(b) The State Forester shall implement the plan through more specific, small scale or time limited plans that are consistent with the Forest Management Plan.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 526.016(4)
Stats. Implemented: ORS 530.010 - ORS 530.050
Hist.: DOF 2-1998; f. 1-15-98, cert. ef. 3-1-98