

Oregon Outdoor Council Testimony
Oregon Department of Forestry
Northwest State Forest Management Plan

April 8, 2015

Chair Imeson, subcommittee members, State Forester Decker, thank you for the opportunity to comment today. For the record my name is Stan Steele and I am Chairman of the Board of the Oregon Outdoor Council.

A few years ago, a small group of hunters, anglers, trappers and recreational shooters realized that their interests and needs were underrepresented in Oregon's public policy arena. The Oregon Outdoor Council was formed and has grown into the most politically active in-state grass roots organization totally dedicated to protecting and promoting the rights of sportsmen and sportswomen in Oregon. We are the political voice of and for thousands of Oregon hunters, anglers, trappers, recreational shooters and our associated business partners.

I have had spent a lifetime in Oregon's outdoors as a hunter, trapper, angler, game warden, fishing and rafting guide and now as a full time advocate for our wildlife and our heritage sports

I am here today to express my support for active management of our states forests. Both from an economic and an ecological standpoint, a managed forests is a healthy forest.

Every community is intertwined in so many ways; our rural communities may be even more so. The jobs created through a healthy management of our state forests are so important. The families that own the local sporting goods stores, bait shops or corner cafes depend on the economic contributions derived from the nearly 800,000 Oregonians that fish and hunt across Oregon's diverse landscape.

Fishing - Hunting and Forest Management go hand in glove, they are intertwined. We all know that our recreational successes are extremely dependent on how we design and apply forest management activities that support the habitat requirements of our species of choice.

Managed forests offer the best habitat for some of our most important wildlife from a fish and game standpoint. To that end, in our careers we have all seen the shift from active management to neglect of our federal forests. As a wildlife advocate, I have seen a parallel shift as hunters and fisherman have increasingly abandoned the neglected grounds of the federally managed forests in favor of the lush abundance of state and private forests; they have simply followed the wildlife. This is a point I want to emphasize for you; Managed Forests are full of fish and wildlife. The diversity of habitats, the openings in canopy cover, and the mosaic created through active management results in a greater number of fish and game.

As I travel and speak with my members, I listen to their concerns. Repeatedly I hear that our State forests are heading towards a federal model; more land locked up, with little to no management to speak of. This is not a healthy model from a fish and wildlife standpoint. Make no mistake, the folks I represent are not in favor of this. We support your efforts to increase harvest levels. Conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats is not incompatible with a healthy and productive forest. These species thrive in managed forests. We have seen this born out over countless landscapes across

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Oregon. Please do not fall prey to the notion that neglected landscapes create the best habitats, it has simply not proven to be true. Rather, healthy populations of many wildlife species are repeatedly found in managed forests. Conservation as a notion does not exclude management.

In conclusion, as you debate these issues in the coming months; please know that the sportsmen and sportswomen and our business associates that I represent will be eagerly watching, anticipating your adoption of a plan that seeks to balance increased harvest levels with a healthy population of fish and game. These notions are compatible, and should not result in even more lands being abandoned or locked from management.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Keep Oregon Hunting, fishing, trapping and recreationally shooting,

Stan Steele, Chairman of the Board
Oregon Outdoor Council



How important are hunters for Oregon's economy?

Hunting specifically supports thousands of jobs, both rural and urban, across the state of Oregon, and our goal is to provide a unified voice for all of these stakeholders. Hunting Works For Oregon will monitor public policy decisions and weigh in on hunting-related issues that impact Oregon jobs.

\$248 million spent annually.

196,000 people hunt in Oregon each year.

Of those hunters, 15,000 are from out of state.

Oregon hunters spend \$83 million on trip-related expenditures.

Hunters in Oregon spend \$134 million on hunting equipment.

Each hunter spends an average of \$1,200 a year in Oregon.

Hunter spending translates to \$132 million in salaries and wages.

Hunting in Oregon supports 3,700 Oregon jobs.

Hunters pay \$27 million in state and local taxes.

\$421 million ripple effect.