



25 October 2016

Oregon Board of Forestry
c/o: Board Support Office
2600 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97310

Re: Upcoming rule-making for riparian protection improvements to the Oregon Forest Practices Act

Board members:

The Rogue River Watershed Council is a community-based nonprofit that works with landowner volunteers and others on projects intended to maintain or improve conditions for native salmon and trout within the mid-to upper Rogue River watershed. As you are aware, the degree to which we and other watershed councils in southwestern Oregon can be effective at maintaining or improving conditions for fish through voluntary efforts is dependent on the base level of resource stewardship required in our watersheds, including on timberlands whose owners operate under rules established by the Board of Forestry (BOF).

We are writing to ask the BOF to reconsider its stated intent to exclude private timberlands in the Rogue Basin from riparian protection rule improvements that will soon apply to private forestlands elsewhere in western Oregon. The justification provided for this exclusion, essentially that the ecology of our area differs from that of western Oregon watersheds farther north, is unconvincing to us. If anything, we think that stream temperatures in our area are at least as sensitive to riparian timber harvest as are those in watersheds farther north. This would mean that the proposed exclusion of streams in our area from riparian rule improvements will leave them less protected against water temperature violations than those in other western Oregon watersheds.

We request that the BOF extend its upcoming riparian rule improvements to all of western Oregon rather than excluding southwestern Oregon as currently proposed. Our watershed contains some of the most valuable stream resources in the state, and should not experience a lower level of forest stewardship.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ray Tharp' with a stylized arrow pointing to the right at the end of the signature.

Ray Tharp
for the Board of Directors
Rogue River Watershed Council

Rogue River Watershed Council
89 Alder Street, Central Point, OR 97520
541.664.1070 ext. 6
www.rogueriverwc.org