

TO THE OREGON BOARD OF FORESTRY—APRIL 25 MEETING

I cannot attend this meeting but would like to offer the following testimony regarding The Forest Management Plan, item 7 on the agenda.

My family has lived in Oregon for 6 generations. Presently, I live in Tillamook County on the North Oregon Coast. For the past 30 years I have been a forest land owner in the upper Nehalem River watershed. My land borders West Coal Creek, a tributary of the Nehalem River. My neighbor on the back side is Oregon Department of Forestry. My neighbor above me in the watershed is Weyerhaeuser Timber Company. I am offering this testimony because your decisions and actions directly affect the place where I live.

Over the years, I have seen firsthand the degradation of the streams with erosion and silt. Whereas I used to see runs of chum and coho salmon and schools of rainbow trout, now I rarely see a fish. The creek runs turbulent and fast from the clearcuts above me taking hunks of the bank with it and leaving huge piles of wood, trees, and silt. I live with mudslides and flooding. Neighbors in nearby towns, such as Rockaway, live with severely compromised water supplies. It is no secret among locals, who look around them at clearcut hills, that the Timber Industry, operating under the weakest Forest Practices Act on the West Coast and using methods of clear cut and aerial spray, is creating problems in the place where we live.

Eleven years ago, I worked closely with foresters from ODF when they logged the 100 year old, native second growth forest that borders my land. At that time, they chose to log selectively in order to preserve the valuable natural seedbed of a diverse forest ecosystem. For the past twenty years, ODF has attempted to maintain what has been called a “balanced” approach to forestry. That is, to take from the forest but not destroy its natural ability to regenerate; to recognize the right of wildlife—birds, animals, fish, amphibians—that inhabit the forest; to recognize the human right to enjoy the forests—and to keep the forest alive for future generations of Oregonians.

In fact, the purpose stated on the ODF website is still: “ GROWING AND PROTECTING OREGON FORESTS FOR THE MANY BENEFITS THEY PROVIDE.” Financial pressures in the last few years have led to a shift in this focus, and even

a law suit against the State for not providing enough timber revenue. An important factor here is that the Timber Industry no longer contributes taxes for state and county expenses. Yet, the counties. and ODF itself, need money for vital services. The solution, some say, is to log more, to move toward the industrial logging methods of the Timber Industry, to make as much immediate profit from the forests as possible--in fact, to see the predominate value of the forests as revenue. That this shift is already in evidence became clear a few years ago with the clearcutting of the 250 acre diverse, native forest along the Nehalem River, called the "Homesteader"—in spite of the almost 2,000 local residents who wrote in its behalf.

Oregon Department of Forestry should be setting an example of intelligent, sustainable forestry, not moving closer to an industrial model. The people you represent live here and their children and grandchildren will live here; they are not share holders who live in some remote place out of sight of clearcuts and contaminated water. The financial crisis that exists should be solved by eliminating the inequities that are causing it, not by creating more severe problems in the watershed.

As you think about your Forest Management Plan, I ask you not to abandon your commitment to the people and the place you represent. The purpose of Oregon Department of Forestry is indeed "GROWING AND PROTECTING OREGON FORESTS FOR THE MANY BENEFITS THEY PROVIDE."

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