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Greetings BOF members!

Congratulations to the newly appointed members of the board! The new configuration of the board is welcome change after years of the majority in the hands of those with direct ties to the timber industry. Perhaps now some real progress is possible instead of the half measures that we have seen in recent years.. Given the rampage of forest fires as the direct result of rapid onset climate change, rethinking the way the forests are managed in Oregon is a matter of urgency.

Many of us here in Clatsop County are concerned about our forests and the future of our water, air, fish and wildlife. So we are pleased that the BOF is considering the HCP. Our concern is that the HCP doesn't go far enough and is not part of a comprehensive plan to create a new paradigm for forestry in Oregon. In addition to the species listed for protection by the ODF, the survival of many other species is at stake as well. It has been estimated that over 100 species are hurt if not eliminated by clear cutting. Very significant on that list are the pollinators who are damaged by clear cutting and by aerial spraying. Though its anecdotal, here in Astoria, and elsewhere on the North Coast, deer, elk and even cougars are moving into residential areas because their habitat has been destroyed by clear cutting and aerial spraying.

When considering habitat in a broader sense, the human species is demonstrably threatened by current forestry practices in Oregon; ask the citizens of Rockaway Beach who have had nearly 90% of their watershed (Jetty Creek) clearcut in the past two decades resulting in numerous water emergencies and the necessity of spending over a million dollars in tax payer money to build a new filtration plant. As if that weren't enough, Greenwood Resources, which owns the remaining trees along Jetty Creek is planning on "harvesting" them in 2019. Other municipalities up and down the coast are seeing silt and reduced flow out of their watersheds as the result of clear cutting. Several years ago the federal Government denied Oregon 1.2 million dollars in grants because the EPA found that timber companies, in spite of years of warnings from the EPA, had not done enough to cleanup coastal streams. Clean, abundant water should be the right of every citizen. Water is life.

Pesticides are of major concern both in the consideration of the effect on wildlife and the potential for harm to humans. Currently 2,4-D is one of the herbicides being used by helicopter companies that do aerial spraying. The ODF, which supervises spray activities, says that they're used only according to the instructions on the label. In researching 2,4-D for an article I wrote I discovered that in the fine print of the label it says "do not spray over standing water, harmful to fish". Under current Oregon Forest Practices, timber companies are allowed to cut and spray right over non fish bearing streams. Those tributary streams eventually flow into fish bearing streams. 2,4-D has a half life of two weeks above ground, and one year in ground water, allowing plenty of time for the chemicals to reach fish. According to wildlife conservation groups that have studied coastal streams, herbicide are probably a contributor to extreme salmon smolt die offs. Another causative factor in fish loss is the increase in the temperature of streams as the result of clear cutting that exposes small tributaries.

Glysohate, the main ingredient in Round Up, which is regularly used with other herbicides in aerial spraying after clear cutting, has been studied closely since the U.N.'s World Health Organization declared it a "probable carcinogen". Studies have shown that glysohate has been found in almost every stream in America and is showing up in trace amounts in products such as Cherrios. Glysohate has been linked in studies to obesity, autism, non Hodgkin lymphoma and other cancers.

Western Helicopter, a major contractor for aerial spraying, is now proudly advocating the use of E Z Fire before replanting after clear cuts. E Z Fire is Napalm rebranded. It kills all plant and animal life above ground in a particularly gruesome manner. It is essentially a scorched earth approach.

I could go on, but end here with the request that your board considers a much broader forest policy that ends clear cutting on state land in favor of selective logging combined with more pro actively restoring of state forests which are a significant part of one of the world's greatest sequesters of carbon. This approach has to be coupled with reform of the tax structure that ends the sweetheart tax deal that the timber companies help craft, in favor of returning to the 1993 Harvest Tax that would provide adequately for rural counties without reducing conservation areas and degrading the landscape with more clear cuts. New taxes on shipping timber out and milling overseas could provide the additional revenue for the ODF to become the ODFR, the Oregon Department of Forest Restoration. (I would be happy to provide a more complete and detailed version of this paradigm shift.)

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