

Forest Trust Land Advisory Committee

Local Government Center
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March 6, 2019

Chair Imeson & Members of the Board of Forestry,

For the record, I am Coos County Commissioner John Sweet, Vice-Chair of the Forest Trust Land Advisory Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today about the Forest Management Plan (FMP) update being proposed by ODF as explained to FTLAC at our February 15 meeting.

Let me start by complementing ODF for some fresh, new thinking, especially in regard to admitting to problems with the current FMP and calling out the necessity for restoration, balancing age classes via departure and looking at a more regional approach to our forests. While we applaud these new approaches, as was discussed in our meeting, the devil is in the details and at this point we have no detail or specificity to consider. Trust Counties will be in a better position to evaluate the proposed FMP once ODF's strategies and metrics are developed.

We agree that the Structure Based Management plan has not met expectations as we have testified to many times in the past. We are pleased to see ODF's recognition of this problem though we remain disappointed in the lack of detail. We believe a more quantitative approach would make the case much stronger. Revenues have been far below those that could have been produced under an alternative forest management approach.

We are encouraged that ODF intends to consider a departure harvest schedule to re-balance age class distributions. Again, as we have testified several times to the BOF, departure is an effective tool for maintaining the ability to successfully manage State Forest Trust Lands. Once more, detailed development of strategies and metrics will determine our ability to support this important issue.

We are also encouraged to find attention on restoring forests with long-standing problems – namely stands infected by Swiss Needle Cast and alder stands. While these problems were identified over 20 years ago, we are confident this new commitment will result in long term

financial viability for ODF and the Trust Counties. While these forest restoration efforts must proceed, this must be in addition to, not instead of, intensive management of healthy stands. FTLAC stands ready to help provide expertise on this part of the plan and we hope ODF will invite our participation.

We are also pleased to see a more regional approach when setting habitat objectives. In areas surrounded by federal lands, that should free up Trust Lands for more harvest as federal lands are producing older habitat more effectively and at a greater scale than are the state forests. We have concerns, however, that in other areas, ODF might propose that Trust Lands be managed for older habitat types to make up for the lack of those types on neighboring lands. Regardless what the ESA may or may not require from State land managers, the State Forest Trust Lands must not be managed to make up for habitat deficits on neighboring lands.

Revenue that is generated from harvest on the Forest Trust Lands supports important services at the county level: Sheriff patrol, jail beds, criminal prosecution services, road maintenance, parks and recreation are some examples. Taxing districts that also share in harvest revenue include our schools, libraries, ports, and fire districts. These are important services that help our communities' stability and sustainability.

For Oregon's counties, the strength of our economies and our social fabric are linked to the vibrancy of our natural resource employment base. Jobs in the timber industry are some of our best jobs. They combine high wages with full benefits. It is important for economic and social stability in our counties to protect these valuable jobs. You can see from the chart below that jobs in forestry and logging, wood products manufacturing, and truck transportation pay close to the state average wage. These jobs pay substantially above the average wage in our counties. For comparison, jobs in leisure and hospitality (the tourism industry), pay about half the annual wage of forest products jobs, and rank substantially below the county's average wage.

Annual Average Wage 2017

Sector	Ownership	Lincoln	Tillamook	Clatsop	Columbia	Oregon
Total all ownerships (Public & Private)	All	\$36,730	\$38,444	\$36,799	\$38,808	\$51,117
Total private sector	Private	\$33,756	\$36,737	\$35,757	\$37,332	\$50,483
Forestry and logging	Private	\$50,080	\$50,680	\$52,951	\$52,343	\$48,124
Wood products manufacturing	Private	\$51,740	\$52,918	\$60,817	\$44,004	\$49,340
Truck transportation	Private	\$44,270	\$43,572	\$47,233	\$58,989	\$50,890
Leisure and hospitality	Private	\$21,674	\$20,445	\$21,691	\$16,659	\$21,379
Source: Oregon Employment Department						

Because of the current lack of specificity from ODF concerning the FMP update process, we are unable to either support or object to the current status. We do, however, find hopeful indications of possible areas of agreement should we be able to concur on an overall strategy with appropriate specificity and forecasts of harvest volume and revenue. This is essential and would allow Trust Counties and special districts to better forecast revenue and plan their futures. As your partners in this endeavor, the Forest Trust Land Counties look forward to the development of an FMP that achieves our common interests in this partnership.

Respectfully,

John Sweet
Coos County Commissioner
Vice-Chair, FTLAC

