From: Rodney Whisenhunt
To: ODF_DL_Board of Forestry
Subject: Advance Durable Protections for State Forests
Date: Sunday, September 27, 2020 8:51:34 AM

Dear Oregon Board of Forestry,

Dear Members of the Oregon Board of Forestry,

I'm writing to urge moving ahead with the State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan (SFHCP) for Western Oregon. The plan is a compromise that seeks a balance between different interests. I ask that you vote yes and continue with the planning process.

As you're aware, state forests are managed for a broad goal of “greatest permanent value” to the state.

Now, because of climate change and the continued loss of already endangered species, it is critical that you support a balanced plan that conserves our natural resources for the future while also providing a mix of benefits for today.

The SFHCP is a compromise that balances timber harvest with fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, clean water, and critical climate mitigation. Global warming with it's degradation of our normal climatic conditions has enhanced the frequency and duration of devastating wildfires and is the greatest long-term threat we face.

The SFHCP provides significant conservation in important salmon and steelhead strongholds: the Wilson, Salmonberry, Nehalem, Miami, Trask, and Kilchis rivers. Lands adjacent to the 17-mile Nehalem State Scenic Waterway corridor will get increased protections under this plan. These are positive measures.

The HCP will also reduce the state’s liability to endangered species lawsuits, and the plan will also save the state money in the long term. As you know, ODF currently spends $2.5 million annually just to survey and avoid endangered species habitat. This plan frees up these resources for the state, conservationists, and timber operators to focus on management, instead of on conflicts over endangered species.

We know there is more information and analysis coming in the NEPA process. But there has been a transparent two-year planning process to date. There is enough information to move forward.

I ask you to continue this process by advancing this important plan.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,
Rodney Whisenhunt
715 W Rainbow St
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