

BOARD OF FORESTRY TESTIMONY APRIL 25, 2018

My name is Ron Byers. I live on the Trask River outside Tillamook. I own 15 acres there that border the Tillamook State Forest. This location has allowed me to spend a lot of time in the Trask watershed. It's an incredibly special area, unique and inspiring in many ways, as are many areas of our State forests.

I'm here to ask for a State forestry plan that more accurately reflects the public nature and uses of our State forests. There simply needs to be more balance between timber harvesting, and other public requirements such as clean water, wildlife habitat and natural recreation. We must adopt policies and harvest practices that are more compatible with these public needs, and that promote broader usage of our public forests.

This can be done with more emphasis on habitat conservation. The time has come to establish long term, protected forest areas. We need to be on record that

this is a clear priority for our management of these public assets. Why not do more to encourage old growth reserves? A byproduct of doing so could be to address climate change, especially through carbon storage. In a nutshell, we have an opportunity today to use our forests in a grander scheme for the future.

As for harvesting practices, we need a broader view. For example, there needs to be a greater emphasis on selective thinning rather than just clear cutting that devastate large tracts of public forest. We need to move away from reliance on the spraying that leaves harvested areas devoid of components that make for a healthy, diverse forest. We should eliminate culverts that prevent returning fish from entering ideal spawning waters. We need to replace existing culverts with small bridges so that fish can reclaim spawning areas that once produced incredible numbers of fish.

We must find better ways for State agencies such as Forestry and Fish and Wildlife to share broader goals and achievements. They should not work at cross purposes. When we clear-cut watersheds, we create mud and silt

that kill fish eggs, making it more difficult for Fish and Wildlife to meet its goals, especially when it comes to native fish. State agencies do the public's work, and should have more common goals, and should be accountable in a broader way.

Certainly, we need forest revenue, timber products, and jobs. We can move ahead with these needs, however, and still create a more balanced, sustainable approach to public forest management. But we need change and a bolder, broader vision. We are at a crossroads. There are hundreds, no thousands of people, especially our youth, who would be motivated to work on a more meaningful, long term approach if we adopt the appropriate policies and framework.

We must do this for my grandchildren and yours. Thank you for your consideration and service.