

TO THE OREGON BOARD OF FORESTRY—July 24 meeting

I cannot attend this meeting but would like to offer the following testimony regarding The Forest Management Plan.

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 for ODF 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 has become clear by the increased clear cutting of our few remaining second growth, diverse, native forests such as the Homesteader and the Woody Wood Pecker tracts. The Homesteader was logged in spite of almost 2,000 local residents, recognizing the value of Oregon’s native forests, 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 clear cuts, mudslides, 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. Other avenues of income need to be explored beyond the cutting of our last forests. The stance that increased logging is our only option puts us in a box that is not only unsustainable over time, but also destroys what is most valuable—the heritage of living forests which should be our children’s heritage. Surely, we are more creative than this.

You have the power to help shape what this state becomes. Will it be known as the “clear cut state” or as a state that respects its natural heritage? 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 should indeed be “GROWING AND PROTECTING OREGON FORESTS FOR THE MANY BENEFITS THEY PROVIDE.”

Gwendolyn Endicott

42130 Anderson rd.

Nehalem, Oregon 97131