

## BOARD OF FORESTRY TESTIMONY – NOVEMBER 8, 2018

Good Morning. My name is Ron Byers. I live on the Trask River outside Tillamook. My property abuts the Tillamook State Forest, and I spend a lot of time in the Trask watershed.

I'm here to add my voice to the movement calling for a meaningful and enduring Habitat Conservation Plan (Plan). I can see some progress, but I continue to be troubled by the focus on financial analysis as the primary measurement of value. Some people ask if a Plan makes good business sense, especially if the value of our state forests is measured in board feet and revenue. We see money coming in. We "prove" value in this manner. But we know in our hearts that our State forests are more than money. In fact, our public forests are so valuable their worth can't even be measured in dollars, especially by future generations.

For a Plan to be meaningful, it must balance a sustainable timber harvest with long term protection of species and needed habitat. It must also reduce clear cutting, especially on steep watersheds. Clear cutting is about maximizing profit; a conservation Plan is more about sustainability and habitat protection. We need to do a much better job of blending and balancing these objectives; they don't have to be mutually exclusive.

A Plan must reduce and then eliminate the use of herbicides on recovering tracts of land after harvest. We are poisoning our public lands habitat when we spray, and in some cases, our citizens as well. We can be better stewards of forest habitat than this, and we can treat those that live in and near our forests in a healthier manner. Or is this too expensive? How do you assess the value of effective stewardship? Of being a good neighbor? Of not making people sick? A meaningful conservation Plan could address this issue in a more constructive context.

Another important aspect of a conservation Plan is to diversify funding for ODF. An analysis has already shown that a Plan is financially viable. Asset diversification is a sound strategy. We need to get beyond timber revenues to fund our State forests. It's another part of the balancing that needs to occur.

Finally, we should adopt and implement a conservation Plan because we want to, for reasons beyond money. Not because we have to keep timber revenue at record highs, but because it makes our State a better place to live and raise families, because right action has value beyond money, and because it's time. It's a start anyway. Thank you for taking this on.