

Mr Chair and Board members,

My name is Donald Fontenot, I am a long time member of the Tillamook Committee of the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club.

I am a Nurse, a Veteran, a husband and father of two who has spent a considerable amount of time in the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forest fishing, hiking, but mostly ground-truthing timber sales.

I have come before the Board of Forestry many many times over what now has been almost 20 years.

I recently had the chance to re-engage in the state forest conversation, particularly 2020 AOPs.

I was alarmed by what I found.

When I first testified before the Board when the plan was put forward in 2001, 50% of the forest was designated to become complex forests. Forestry sold the plan as a new way to manage a forest by mostly thinning younger stands and creating older forest structure. We were concerned at the time that many rare stands with older forest were still open to harvest. We argued against cutting complex stands when the state forest was so far from the goal for complex forest. ODF reassured us by advertising their commitment to 50% complex structure.

Fast forward to today, 2019, and only 30% of most of the districts are headed for complex forest. And despite that much lower goal, only a little more than 10% of the total forest is in complex structure.

And now the promise of older forest looks like a bait and switch.

Despite these low levels of complex forest, lat year ODF opened more of these older forests to clearcutting in order to pad their budget.

I recently visited several sales in the Astoria District in the Buster Basin area. I was shocked to see that even with the low target of 30%, ODF is targeting complex forests for clearcutting, when only a year ago that were protected from clearcutting! ODF apparently played a shell game with some of the valuable complex stands -- opening old ones to harvest while moving the complex designation to little slivers that are already protected or that have low value for older forests.

This is not acceptable.

In this time when Trump is setting flames to government credibility, it is discouraging to see our own Department of Forestry engaging in a shell game that has no science review and serves primarily to increase their reserve account.

I urge the Board to look into these changes, and invite any of you out in the forest to see some of the new "protected" areas as well as the areas now open to harvest. These are some of the most carbon-rich stands of trees in the forest. These older forests deserve conservation for future generations.

This is the responsibly of the Board, even if some of these decisions are made by the state forester. Part of your role is to give direction and provide oversight to the DOF. Please live up to that duty.

Thank you for your service.

Donald Fontenot

Tillamook Committee Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club