



Woodland Owners Who Love Their Land

Chair Imeson, State Forester Daugherty, and members of the Board of Forestry. My name is Jim James. I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association. I would like to add support to the concept of recognizing the ecological values protected in Oregon's forests with forest practices laws.

I believe landowners embrace protecting these values when there is scientific justification for the protection measures needed. The greatest contribution to protecting ecological values is maintaining forests as forests. Oregon's land use laws alone do just that and forest values will be protected. Keeping forests as working forests is essential for landowners to be motivated to keep their forests as forests. Overly regulated forests, particularly if the regulations lack scientific justification, is a menu for forest conversion to some other more economically valuable land use. The easiest conversion is to agriculture, but such conversions are not common in Oregon, because Oregon's Forest Practice laws are based on science and generally have landowner support.

I believe most people are aware the ecological values protected by Oregon's forest practice laws and regulations are basically free to the public. Landowners bear all the cost of protecting these values, but seldom receive any recognition or gratitude for these contributions to the public.

Landowners gladly pay their fair share in the costs of forest regulations and fire protection, but it is ironic that many think the forest community should pay more, when we are already contributing to the cost of ecological values through forest regulations. One way for the public to pay their fair share for these ecological values would be for the general fund to pay more for the costs for fire protection and forest regulations not less as many legislators are proposing. There seems to be a disconnect to reality.

I hope the Board of Forestry recognizes forest owner contributions to these important ecological values if and when you evaluate possible rule changes and you consistently follow real credible science when evaluating regulation changes.