



LANE COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

AN OREGON CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 5086 • EUGENE, OREGON 97405

Oregon Board of Forestry
Oregon Department of Forestry
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310

9/7/09

Dear Board Members,

I am submitting comments on behalf of the Lane County Audubon Society. Our members value Oregon forests for the recreational opportunities that they provide, as habitat for fish and wildlife, and for the important role that they play in providing clean air and water. We are submitting comments on two issues before the Board at the 9/9/09 meeting.

I. Managing state forests

We support the previous policy which calls for state forests to be managed for "healthy, productive, and sustainable forest ecosystems that over time and across the landscape provide a full range of social, economic, and environmental benefits to the people of Oregon." We believe that currently a balance exists between managing the forests for timber production and for environmental benefits. The proposed changes in the management plan would throw this multiple-purpose management severely out of balance.

Economic considerations

Although increasing logging on state forests would provide some temporary economic relief to a small segment of Oregonians, we believe that this would be short term and given current timber prices, of limited value. Economically, managing forests for timber value fails to take into account the value of clean water, salmon runs, habitat, and carbon sequestration for all Oregonians. Additionally, outdoor recreation is a multi-billion dollar pursuit that contributes to a myriad of jobs in the businesses that support it. According to the 2006 National Survey of fishing, hunting, and wildlife-associated recreation, 2.0 billion dollars was spent in Oregon on wildlife recreation in Oregon. This is a growing segment of the economy and provides the opportunity to bring more money into the state.

Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

Environmental Considerations

The proposed policy changes to increase logging on state forests would dramatically increase the amount of clear-cuts and loss of habitat in our forests. Federally listed species such as the Northern Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet would be put in further jeopardy. The dramatic change in management of our state forests would pollute and increase sediment flow to rivers and streams that support salmon and steelhead, reversing years of progress in fish recovery through the Oregon Plan for Salmon. It would lead to increased road building and risk of landslides during winter storms. It would increase the amount of toxic herbicide applied to already stressed habitat. It would replace healthy, diverse environments that support fish, wildlife, and recreation with flammable tree plantations. Trees can be replanted but the complex ecosystems and the benefits provided are neither easily nor quickly restored. Generations to come would be paying for abandoning the current balanced strategy.

Global warming

Recent studies have shown the importance of forests in the role of carbon sequestration as way to mitigate greenhouse gases. Two recent (2009) studies confirm the potential of forests of the Pacific Northwest to increase carbon storage. According to Beverly Law, a professor of forest science at OSU, "Increasing carbon storage in this region might be one contribution to what clearly is a much larger global issue, something that policy makers could consider."

Source: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/07/090702132825.htm>

II. Pesticide Use

We are concerned with the widespread use of herbicides in the forestry program and the potential impact of these poisons on environmental health and human health, water quality, fish and wildlife. Scientific documentation confirms that these chemicals have an adverse health effect on many animals, including humans. According to a recent literature review, "A plethora of papers have been published that address the affects of chemicals on wildlife vertebrates... In *birds*, there is ample evidence for EDC effects on the reproductive system. In some bird species, effects can be linked to population declines... Evidence shows that selected species from all vertebrate classes were negatively affected by certain anthropogenic chemicals." We believe that sound management decisions are based on scientific evidence and request that a search of the scientific literature be undertaken to better inform Board policy on the use of pesticides.

Source: The Impact of Environmental Chemicals on Wildlife Vertebrates, 2008, Julia Bernanke and Heinz-R. Köhler, Reviews of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology Volume 198

We ask that the Board seek reduction in the use of pesticide/herbicide application and encourage the use of non-chemical pest and weed control. We ask that large buffer zones be established around human residences, schools and work places and around waterways and other sensitive habitat areas. In addition, we request that aerial spraying of chemicals be eliminated. A large percentage of aerially sprayed toxins do not fall on the target area and affect non-target organisms.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Debbie Schlenoff, Ph.D.
Conservation Coordinator
Lane County Audubon Society