

Half of BLM lands considered suitable for timbering were clearcut during the 20th century and transformed into overstocked plantations whose small trees can benefit from thinning. BLM plantations could offer more than 2 billion board feet of commercially valuable timber over the next two decades if actively thinned. Investment in Oregon mills that process logs smaller than 9 inches in diameter doubled from 1994 to 2003, making this proposition feasible.

PUBLIC FORESTS ARE NOT PIGGY BANKS



Between the 1940s and 1980s county governments earned timber sale receipts from logging public forests. By the 1980s, bloated county budgets caused by rampant old growth logging left fish and wildlife populations headed toward extinction. There are many in county government that are short-sightedly looking to the ramp-up of old-growth logging from WOPR to solve current county budget crises.

However, an economic bust is easily foreseeable under the

Bush plan as fish, wildlife and the old growth forests that they rely on dwindle. Instead, we should make policy decisions now to reform county finances and build infrastructure capable of processing and utilizing small trees to supply local demand for wood products and help to sustain essential public services.

Bush's proposal to turn back the clock and ramp up clearcut logging in old forests is extremely irresponsible. It fits a pattern of environmental abuse from a corrupt administration bent on appeasing a handful of well-connected political donors without regard to science or public opinion.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. – Margaret Mead

WHAT YOU CAN DO — SPEAK UP — TAKE ACTION TODAY

While the WOPR certainly sounds depressing, there are many great examples of citizens organizing to stop equally outrageous proposals put forth by the federal government. Consider a proposal in the early 1960s to dam and flood the Grand Canyon. It sounds unbelievable now, but it had the backing of Congress. It was massive citizen outcry that saved the Grand Canyon and future generations are thanking those people for their foresight. Here are a few things that you can do to safeguard Oregon's Heritage Forests:

1. **Send a letter to the BLM before November 9, 2007 and send copies of your letter to your Congressional delegation.**
2. **Visit www.oregonheritageforests.org to learn more, read talking points, sample letters and get addresses.**
3. **Host a house party to help others learn about WOPR (contact 541-488-5789).**
4. **Submit a Letter to the Editor to your local or regional newspaper (visit website in #2 for addresses and word limits).**
5. **Ask your friends, family and neighbors to do the same.**

The Cascadia Wildlands Project • 541-434-1463 • www.cascwild.org

www.oregonheritageforests.org

NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW



Under the Bush Administration, a new interpretation of the antiquated 1937 Oregon and California Lands Act is promoted, placing logging above all else on BLM forests. The Bush Administration ignores environmental protections in the O&C Act, as well as the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act and other laws put in place to protect these forests and streams. The WOPR puts creating more tree plantations ahead of protecting clean water, wildlife habitat, recreation or producing a reliable small diameter wood supply.

A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO THE WESTERN OREGON PLAN REVISIONS

Stunning green landscapes, ancient forests, wild salmon and beautiful free-flowing streams make Oregon an extraordinarily special place.

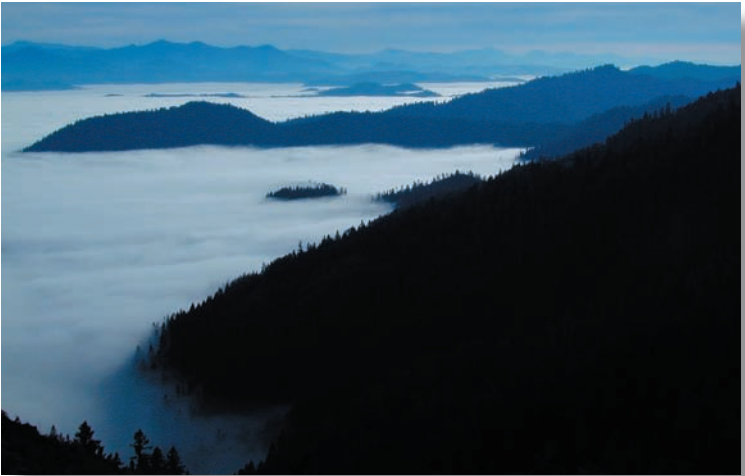
Americans near and far cherish Oregon's public forests and rivers for their numerous values and services. Federal lands in Oregon contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to local economies every year through tourism and recreation, and they provide countless dollars in ecosystem services such as water filtration, air purification and climate regulation. Our public lands make Oregon a great place to live, work, visit and raise a family.

Unfortunately, a proposal recently announced by the Bush Administration places all this at risk. Known as the *Western Oregon Plan Revisions* (or WOPR – fittingly pronounced “Whopper”), these plans would dramatically increase clearcut logging in currently protected old-growth and streamside forests on federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Under a new interpretation of the law, **the BLM places timber production above all other uses, including clean water, wildlife habitat, fish and recreation.** Such myopic management of public forests threatens to dirty our waters, degrade important habitat, and negatively impact salmon and other fish species.

The following is a Citizen's Guide to the WOPR. While the WOPR proposal is outlined in a complex three volume, 1,650-page document, this guide is meant to give a general overview of proposed management direction, and to help those interested in Western Oregon's public forests voice concerns about these plans within their communities, to the Bush Administration and, when all else fails, straight to Members of Congress.



It is disappointing that at a time when public consensus for old-growth protection and second-growth thinning has never been stronger, the BLM is proposing to clearcut forests older than our nation and turn complex ecosystems into tree plantations most susceptible to severe wildfire.



All three proposed alternatives significantly increase logging levels by reducing or eliminating environmental protections.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Covering nearly 2.6 million acres of public land, the WOPR encompasses an area that stretches from the Willamette Valley in the north to the Rogue Valley in the south, and from the Cascades in the east to the Coast Range and the Siskiyou in the west. This acreage is equivalent to 4,000 square miles – larger than the states of Rhode Island and Delaware combined!

Through the WOPR process, six BLM districts would change how they manage federal forests. The districts are Salem, Eugene, Coos Bay, Roseburg, Medford and the Klamath Falls Resource Area of the Lakeview District. Some of these lands are in a checkerboard ownership pattern with rural residents or timber companies owning every other square mile (about 50,000 Oregonians live within a ½-mile of these forests). Other areas include large blocks of mountainous Oregon countryside you see while driving around our great state.



ANCIENT FOREST ECOSYSTEMS

Over the past 100 years, timber companies and the federal government have logged most of the Pacific Northwest’s ancient forests, an estimated 18% remain. The WOPR affects almost one million acres of the region’s remaining mature and old growth forests. The Bush Administration would nearly triple logging levels on Oregon BLM forests and effectively remove these lands from the scientific framework of the Northwest Forest Plan.

The proposed increase in logging would come from clearcutting currently protected old-growth and streamside forests and converting them to a 80-100 year logging rotation. The preferred alternative would reduce old-growth reserves by 47% and reduce riparian reserves by 57%. The WOPR would clearcut more than 110,000 acres of old forest (120+ years) in the first decade. That is enough clearcutting to cover nearly five cities the size of San Francisco. In contrast, the BLM proposes to thin half the acreage that it proposes to clearcut. Over the next ten years, the WOPR calls for building 1,000 miles of new roads, which will fragment unique public forests. Additionally, the preferred alternative increases fire hazard and severity while reducing the resiliency of forests to fire.



CLEAN WATER

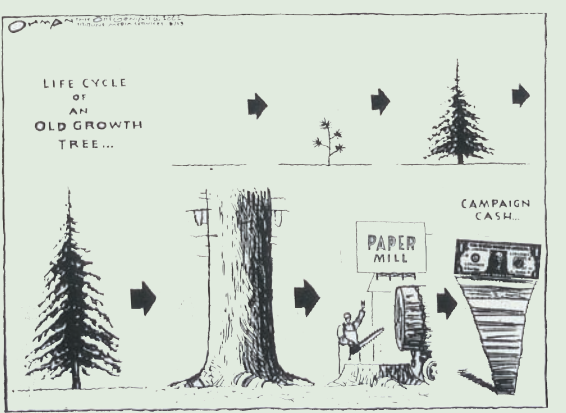
Western Oregon BLM lands host more than 20,000 miles of rivers and streams, and more than 218,000 acres of lakes, ponds and wetlands, providing clean water, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. The WOPR would reduce protections for Oregon’s creeks and log over 200,000 acres of currently protected streamside forests. Logging adjacent to streams is known to harm water quality, sensitive native fish and other aquatic life.

Current buffers around streams and wetlands protect water sources from some negative impacts of logging.

The WOPR would shrink these buffers to 25 feet in many instances, or get rid of them all together. These stream widths are well below scientifically recognized buffers for minimizing problems with aquatic resources, landslides and floods.

Watersheds that include BLM lands produce drinking water for tens of thousands of residents in 76 communities in Oregon. Shockingly, the BLM claims minimal or no effect on fish, floods and sediment despite a massive increase in clearcut logging.

REASON FOR THE WOPR



The WOPR resulted from an out-of-court settlement agreement between the Bush Administration and the timber industry via a shady tactic known as “sue and settle.” The timber industry sued over the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, claiming that the BLM forests should not be included in this landmark agreement. Rather than defend itself in court, the Bush Administration chose to settle in 2003 and went along with the terms of the timber industry.

Many legal scholars claim that the settlement was a convenient yet inappropriate method to change federal forest policy. They point to the fact that at the time of settlement the timber industry case was on appeal, having been dismissed by a D.C. District Court with little to no chance of the timber industry prevailing. Thus, it is commonly referred to as the “sweetheart settlement.”

The WOPR now proposes the elimination of reserves on BLM land established under the Northwest Forest Plan in a likely violation of the Endangered Species and Clean Water Acts.

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The Bush Administration has received millions of dollars from timber companies in Oregon. The WOPR is one way to pay back big timber donors who contributed extensively to Bush’s election campaigns. Other paybacks include political appointees, such as former timber industry lobbyist Mark Rey, who now oversees the U.S. Forest Service, and Julie MacDonald, who oversaw endangered species listings until resigning recently amidst claims that she violated federal rules by giving government documents to industry lobbyists. Our American treasures deserve to be protected, not squandered for political gain.

QUIET RECREATION TAKES A BACK SEAT TO OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES

While numerous quiet and non-motorized recreational activities on public land become more popular every year (a projected 27% annual increase), motorized recreation (only a projected 2.3% annual increase) takes priority in the WOPR. “Quiet-type” recreation includes hiking, hunting, fishing, camping and wildlife viewing.

Some landscapes can tolerate a modest level of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use. Landscapes near residences, sensitive habitats, streams and wet meadows are places where OHV use is not appropriate, as it can cause erosion, impair water quality and disturb wildlife. OHVs create an incredible amount of noise and pollution, and the damage caused by irresponsible riders can be alarming.

The WOPR’s preferred alternative would designate 11 new “OHV Emphasis Areas.” Over 100,000 additional acres of these proposed OHV areas include many places immediately adjacent to private homes, near streams and rivers and in sensitive plant and wildlife habitat. One area is Johns Peak/Timber Mountain, where over 1,600 affected residents have petitioned the BLM not to designate the area for OHV use.



Off-Road Vehicle use can cause erosion, damage water quality and degrade “quiet-type” and non-motorized recreation opportunities.



SPECIAL AREAS

Where can you find world-class salmon fishing, one quarter of a million acres of roadless lands, and unique habitats that occur nowhere else on the planet? You can find them on the public lands administered by the BLM. Unfortunately, these are the lands that the Bush Administration wants to clearcut.

Citizens petitioned the Bush Administration to protect some of the wildest areas on BLM land. While acknowledging that some areas have Wilderness characteristics, the BLM would only apply special management to maintain these qualities on a tiny fraction of these areas. In the fine print however, the BLM states that maintaining wilderness characteristics even in those few areas would not apply where there is suitable timber for logging. The same applies for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern: timber takes precedence over myriad other values.

Shockingly, the WOPR ignores the role that old-growth forests play in regulating the climate.

THERE IS A BETTER WAY

In the early stages of WOPR, an overwhelming majority of the nearly 3,000 comments submitted asked the Bush Administration to protect mature and old growth forests, embrace second growth thinning and safeguard communities from wildfire.

Many federal land managers are already moving beyond the conflicts of the past. By focusing on previously logged and fire-suppressed forests, which are often in need of thinning, they are providing wood to mills, improving habitat and keeping saws out of old-growth forests.

Collaborative groups like the one on the Siuslaw National Forest bring together loggers, local governments and conservationists to design projects with broad community support. The Siuslaw is consistently among the largest timber producers of any National Forest in Oregon. In contrast, rather than focus on forest management that highlights common ground, the BLM is prioritizing controversial old-growth clearcuts above thinning projects that would provide jobs and help restore our bruised public forests.

