

## Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR) Implementation

The Western Oregon Plan Revisions will guide the management of about 2.6 million acres of public forest land in southern and western Oregon managed by the Bureau of Land Management. This plan, adopted January 30, 2008, took over 5 years to complete.

Active management of these lands under the WOPR will increase the amount of mature timber available for spotted owl and marbled murrelet habitat, provide fish and wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, clean air and water and result in increased carbon sequestration. The risk of catastrophic wildfires will be reduced. The WOPR defers harvest for the life of the plan of substantially all of the old growth forests pending more information about threats to the northern spotted owl and sets aside over half of the acres covered from timber management.

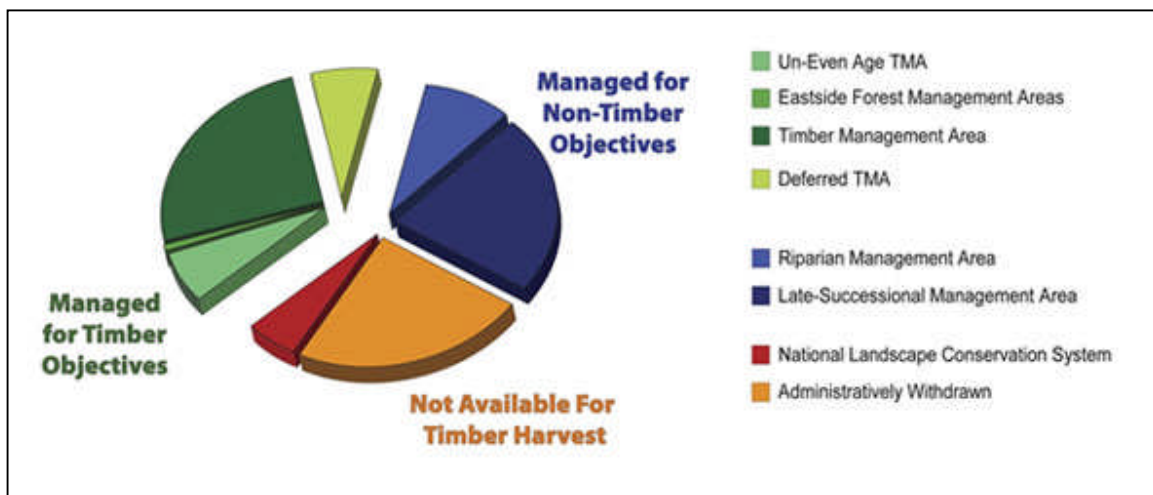
This land is capable of producing over 1 billion board feet of timber annually on a sustainable basis. The WOPR preferred alternative would allow for harvesting 502 million board feet each year.

Revenues from timber sales on these lands are shared 50/50 with the 18 O&C Counties. The 50% of total receipts shared with the counties are discretionary dollars and form an essential part of county budgets, helping to pay for health and social services, law enforcement, corrections programs and many other public services. In addition, both primary and secondary jobs created by full implementation of the WOPR provide tax revenues to both local and state government.

According to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the plan, implementation of the WOPR will increase timber-related jobs by 1,200, as compared to the 3,800 jobs that will be lost if current management continues. Our communities and our businesses need these jobs, which are often the only year-round living wage jobs in our rural areas.

### Recommendation:

Full implementation of the WOPR will contribute substantially to Oregon's economic recovery in these unprecedented, difficult times.



## **Frequently Asked Questions about the WOPR:**

### **Q: Isn't the WOPR a last minute Bush Administration gift to the timber industry?**

A: No. The Plan was started in 2003 and took 5 years to complete. Five federal agencies and 10 state agencies were formally involved in the process. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was issued in January, 2008. 29,500 comments were received. The BLM's Preferred Alternative was substantially revised before the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was published in October, 2008. The Governor was given 60 days, until December 8, 2008, to identify any inconsistencies between the plan and local and state plans and programs. The BLM was required by the terms of a court-enforceable Settlement Agreement to complete the plan by December 31, 2008. The Records of Decision (RODs) for the Plan were signed December 30, 2008. On January 2, 2009, a trade association that represents purchasers of BLM timber sued claiming the plan does not authorize sufficient timber harvesting to meet the requirements of the O&C Act.

### **Q: Will the WOPR significantly decrease streamside buffers provided in the Northwest Forest Plan?**

A: The Northwest Forest Plan was adopted in 1994. Since that time, there have been significant advances in forest science and modeling techniques to determine how best to protect riparian dependent resources and water quality. The NWFP specified a two site potential tree height buffer width on all streams. The WOPR specifies a buffer width equal to one site potential tree height for fish bearing and perennial streams and half that width for intermittent and non-fish bearing streams. The WOPR's requirement exceeds Oregon State Forest Practices Rules requirements for similar private and state lands and requirements approved by the federal Environmental Protection Agency for Washington State Department of Natural Resources lands. Both regulatory systems are more recent than the requirements of the NWFP.

### **Q: Will this reduction harm water quality and fish?**

A: The data gathering done for the WOPR was considerably more intensive than for the NWFP. Models used to analyze the data are more advanced and accurate. The BLM was able to target more precisely the areas where additional measures need to be taken to protect stream temperature and prevent sedimentation. Protections for water quality and fish will be at least as good with fewer resources dedicated to these needs.

### **Q: Could a future administration use the WOPR to reduce protections on the BLM lands?**

A: Like the Northwest Forest Plan, the WOPR is a land use management plan that has been adopted under procedures required by the federal Administrative Procedures Act (APA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and a number of other federal statutes. Revising it would require the same procedures as adopting it did: Publication of a Notice of Intent, a scoping process, coming up with alternatives, arraying the alternatives in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or, if they are likely to have a significant effect on the quality of the environment, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), an opportunity for public comment and agency review and the signing of a new Record of Decision (ROD) which would be subject to legal challenge in the Courts.

*The American Forest Resource Association (AFRC), headquartered in Portland, Oregon, represents nearly 80 forest products businesses and forest landowners in twelve states, primarily in Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho and Montana. Its mission is to create a favorable operating environment for the forest products industry, ensure a reliable timber supply from public and private lands, and promote sustainable management of forests by improving federal laws, regulations, policies and decisions that determine or influence the management of all lands. For information, call 503-222-9505.*

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