

## Association of O&C Counties

### Press Release

August 21, 2015

The Association of O&C Counties has publicly revealed the depth and breadth of its concerns regarding the BLM's draft plans for future management of Oregon's unique O&C lands. The Association, which represents 17 Counties in western and south-central Oregon, filed 75-pages of comments and suggestions regarding the BLM's Draft Resource Management Plan and EIS for 2.1 million acres of special purpose O&C Lands and about 500,000 acres of public domain lands. A copy of the Association's comments accompanies this press release.

"The Federal Government is planning to leave the O&C Counties high and dry once again, and it is just not acceptable" said Tony Hyde, Commissioner from Columbia County and President of the Association. "The law says the O&C lands are to be managed for sustained yield timber production to produce revenue for the Counties and support jobs in our rural communities. The BLM's plans mostly ignore these legal requirements," said Commissioner Hyde. "Much more is possible to simultaneously produce economic and environmental benefits, but the BLM did not even analyze or consider these more balanced options." The Association's comments provide positive suggestions and ask the BLM to formulate new alternatives that address the Association's concerns, which the BLM would then analyze and publish in a supplemental draft EIS. Among the many concerns expressed in the Association's comments filed with the BLM Thursday are:

- The BLM failed to recognize the legal mandate to manage the O&C forest under principles of sustained yield to generate revenue for the Counties.
- The BLM failed to prioritize forest resiliency treatments to address fire risk in SW Oregon. Emphasizing fire treatments would protect the resources while maintaining infrastructure in SW Oregon and improving the regional distribution of jobs.
- All alternatives considered by the BLM would designate excessively large reserves, precluding sustained yield management on 68 to 86% of the O&C forest as upfront decisions without demonstrated need.
- Sustained yield management can take many forms from high yield timber production to long rotations that maintain high levels of late-successional forest at the landscape level. The BLM failed to analyze using long rotations across a broader landscape as a way to simultaneously produce high quality wildlife habitat and adequate economic benefits.
- The DEIS did not disclose many important facts on the land use allocations and harvest that are important to understand what is being proposed and the likelihood that projected harvests will actually be achieved.
- The BLM will not resolve the overlap and doubling up of constraints between the BLM's plans and spotted owl regulatory policies. This a major concern for certainty in implementation and casts doubt on the BLM's forecast of payment levels to Counties.
- BLM's preferred alternative is forecast to initially provide \$36 million dollars for Counties, which is just 27% of historic payment levels. The forecasted payment levels would then decline to even lower levels in future years.

For further information, contact: Commissioner Tony Hyde, President of the Association, at (503)397-4322 or by email sent to [hydet@co.columbia.or.us](mailto:hydet@co.columbia.or.us), or Rocky McVay, Executive Director of the Association at (541)412-1624 or by email sent to [rocky@blupac.com](mailto:rocky@blupac.com).