

## **Eastern Oregon Old Growth Protection and Restoration Q&A**

Q: How does this bill change current forest management?

A:

The bill doesn't change current specific forest management practices drastically. For example, it legislates existing protections for trees larger than 21" in diameter, and uses current aquatic and riparian restrictions as a basis for managing watershed health. What it does, though, is set new management goals for eastside forest management. Instead of managing for timber production in some areas and old-growth forest protection in other areas, it makes conservation and restoration of forest and watershed health the guiding principle for management.

Q: Why do we need legislation to protect old-growth? Didn't we stop cutting that down years ago?

A:

Management direction put in place in 1994 has generally prevented the logging of large trees in eastern Oregon, but there are exceptions (such as for salvage logging) that allow logging of some of our last remaining old-growth trees and forests. The rule that protected most large trees on the eastside could be changed at any time. The new legislation take a big-picture view of eastside forests, and sets new, lasting, direction to protect and restore old-growth trees and forests based on sound science.

Q: Does this bill guarantee a supply of federal timber to eastern Oregon mills?

A:

One of the goals of the bill is to sustain eastside mills so that necessary forest and watershed restoration can be accomplished in the long term. In the short-term, the bill guarantees that a minimum number of acres are planned for treatments that will supply saw-timber as a by-product of the conservation and restoration goals of this bill.

Q: Why are the environmentalists agreeing to this compromise? What do they gain and what do they give up?

A:

The legislation rings in a new paradigm for forest management that is based on scientifically-sound ecological restoration. Early public involvement and collaboration will be encouraged. The Forest Service will be required to take a landscape-level look at how to conserve and restore forest and watershed health, not a piecemeal approach. Steps will be taken to ensure the overbuilt road system is reduced and will not cause further environmental harm. Current protections for large trees, streams, and riparian areas will be continued and solidified.

Conservation groups will see some changes to the administrative appeals process that may be uncomfortable for some. During an interim period as the legislation is phased in, appeals to projects will not be allowed. Once the legislation is fully in place, a new administrative process shortens timelines for comment and implementation.

Q: How is this bill good for the timber industry?

A:

The timber industry in eastern Oregon is struggling to survive after decades of over-harvest, conflict with environmental groups, and now an economic downturn. This bill will benefit the industry by giving clear management direction that focuses on ecological restoration all stakeholders can agree on. This will lead to less conflict, and smoother and larger-scale planning for timber sales and other work. In the long-term, this approach will mean a guarantee of wood products as a byproduct of restoration and other associated work.

Q: Will this legislation stop timber sale lawsuits?

A:

Lawsuits will still be allowed under this legislation. It is our hope that they will be less necessary because new management goals, increased collaboration, and the use of sound science will result in ecological restoration projects that both provide timber and result in improvements to forest and watershed health that everyone can agree on.

Q: How much money will this bill cost to implement?

A:

The bill authorizes a total appropriation of \$50 million for implementation. In order to meet the intended forest and watershed health goals, the Forest Service needs adequate funding to complete all the phases of this legislation.

Q: Does this legislation affect western Oregon forests?

A:

The bill only applies to National Forest lands outside the area covered by the Northwest Forest Plan. However, it is our hope that successful implementation of this legislation can serve as a model for a new management paradigm in western Oregon.

Q: Does this legislation affect private forest owners?

A:

The legislation does not apply to private forest owners, only National Forest lands. Some of the ecological restoration projects authorized by the bill will help implement Community Wildfire Protection Plans and reduce the risk of uncharacteristic fire on public lands – which can benefit private land owners.

Q: What is the timeline for passing this bill? What stands in the way of it becoming law?

A:

Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) intends to hold hearings on the bill in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee (which he chairs) and to pass the legislation before the end of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. Action by the House of Representatives is not predictable at this time: there is currently no companion legislation.