



The 2015 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Draft Resource Management Plan for Western Oregon: *A Conservation-based Summary*

The BLM is proposing big increases in clearcut logging, while decreasing protections for streams and wildlife habitat. Your input is important to help guide the BLM's decision for how your public land is managed!

Why do we have this draft plan?

The US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is responsible for managing about 2.6 million acres of public land in western Oregon. Historic logging has severely degraded much of this land, but hundreds of thousands of acres of ecologically-valuable forests remain. These public forests are in our backyard in western Oregon, providing recreation, clean water, and numerous other public values. They are currently managed under the Northwest Forest Plan, the same plan that guides management of National Forests in western Oregon, which emphasizes protecting and restoring old-growth forests, wildlife habitat, and healthy streams.

Under the Bush administration, logging interests and the BLM worked together to put these heritage forests on the chopping block. The Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR for short) would have more than doubled logging across the landscape and clear-cut some of our last old-growth forests, degraded habitat for fish and wildlife and threatened the quality of our drinking water. Fortunately, thanks to years of public involvement and opposition, and legal action by Oregon Wild and other groups, WOPR was withdrawn.

Now, the BLM is in the process of revising their management plans *again*. Their “purpose and need” for doing so is to better meet the 1937 O&C Act, interpreted to mean more logging, even though the court has recently tossed out a timber industry lawsuit that proponents use to justify more logging. The draft plan is out for comment, with a final plan expected to be decided on in 2016.

What does the new plan say?

In addition to the “No Action Alternative” – meaning continued management under the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) – there are 4 management Alternatives (plus 2 sub-Alternatives) analyzed in the draft plan. The plan divides BLM land into different “land use allocations”, including old-growth reserves, riparian reserves, harvest land base, recreation management areas, and other special designations. Each Alternative is different from others in ways that make them hard to compare, but in general the action Alternatives would have the following impacts:



- **Eliminate key provisions of the Northwest Forest Plan** – The Survey & Manage protocol, the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, and strong standards for restoration of forests and watersheds would not be maintained.
- **Reduce wildlife habitat and protections** – The draft plan will increase logging of forests that are home to threatened Marbled Murrelets and northern spotted owls, as well as eliminate surveys for rare plants and animals and removing protections for red tree voles in many areas.
- **Drastically reduce stream protections** – Hundreds of miles of streams running through BLM lands already violate water quality standards, but all the Alternatives eliminate the strong water quality and habitat provisions of the Northwest Forest Plan, reducing streamside no-logging buffers by half or more. This puts at risk recovering salmon and steelhead populations, drinking water quality, and wildlife that live near streams. The “outer zone” of the reduced Riparian Reserves is available for logging.

	Riparian Reserve width	No-cut inner zone	Management in outer zone	Total acres
NWFP	2 SPTH* on fish-bearing streams, 1 SPTH on non-fish streams	not specified		927,721
Alt. A	1 SPTH on all streams	120’ on fish & perennial, 50’ on non-fish intermittent streams	Thinning allowed, but no commercial removal in moist forests. Px fire & commercial thinning in dry forests. Must retain 30% cover or 60 trees per acre.	676,917
Alt. B	1 SPTH on perennial & fish-bearing, 100’ on debris-flow-prone non-fish intermittent streams, 50’ other non-fish intermittent	60’ on fish & perennial, 50’ on non-fish intermittent streams	Thinning allowed, must retain 50% cover or 80 trees per acre. Openings up to ½ acre allowed.	382,805
Alt. C	150’ on fish-bearing, 50’ on non-fish streams	60’ on fish & perennial, 50’ on non-fish intermittent	Thinning allowed, must retain 50% cover or 80 trees per acre. Openings up to ½ acre allowed.	372,739
Alt. D	1 SPTH on all streams	120’ on all streams	Thinning allowed, must rRetain 30% cover or 60 trees per acre.	714,629

*SPTH = Site-potential tree height, roughly 140-240 feet, on either side of stream

- **Increase impacts from roads** – Though there are already 15,000 miles of roads on western Oregon BLM lands, with a maintenance backlog of \$300 million, hundreds of miles of new roads could be built under the plan, exacerbating problems for water quality, habitat fragmentation, and spreading invasive weeds.

- **Quiet recreation takes a back seat** - The plan designates more Recreation Management Areas that include many of the places Oregonians hike, picnic, boat, fish, and camp – great news! But in many of these places, logging plans and off-road motorized use take precedence and could diminish the types of recreation the vast majority of Oregonians enjoy.
- **More clearcuts across the landscape** - The proposal would see logging levels go up, on average, 60% from current levels. This logging would be focused more on clearcuts - so in the first 10 years of the plan we'd see about 40,000 acres of clearcutting, or more than 6 square miles per year. Logging (though not clearcutting) would also be allowed in old-growth reserves and in the outer zones of stream buffers – generating additional volume while degrading habitat.

	Projected annual logging (million board feet annually)	Projected logging in reserves (million board feet annually)	Total volume	Acres clearcut per decade
NWFP	277	123	400	37,000
Alt. A	234	15	249	23,124-55,496
Alt. B	234	98	332	21,148-42,046
Alt. sub B	120	98	218	12,176-25,720
Alt. C	486	69	555	44,309-103,416
Alt. sub C	332	67	399	33,213-72,776
Alt. D	176	4	180	12,846-28,614

- **Leave many mature and old-growth forests unprotected** – Protection of old-growth (or “structurally-complex” in the plan’s language) forests varies in each Alternative. Old forests are generally protected within reserves, but outside of reserves, hundreds of thousands of mature and old-growth forests are available for logging.

	Structurally-complex forest (SCF) definition	SCF acres (no logging)	Over 80 years old available for logging outside of reserves
NWFP			444,000
Alt. A	120+ years old	655,125	104,000
Alt. B	“stands identified by existing, district-specific information”	463,910	294,000
Alt. sub B	Same as B	463,910	173,000
Alt. C	160+ years old	428,522	331,000
Alt. sub C	Adds all stands over 80 years old	1,036,218	0
Alt. D	High productivity = over 120 years old; Moderate prod.= over 140; Low prod.= over 160	482,920	271,000

- **Increase negative climate impacts** – Logging transfers carbon from the forest to the atmosphere and destabilizes our climate. The BLM analysis shows that climate risks from proposed increased logging outweigh benefits 2 to 1, but other analyses show that this picture is incomplete and climate-related costs of logging could be up to 30X higher than conservation.
- **Protection of many Special Places** – Many special and wild places are set aside as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWCs) or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), where logging takes a back seat to ecological values. Unfortunately, ACECs tend to be small, and some Alternatives leave many of these special places off the list, or keep them open to logging, off-road vehicle use, grazing, and mining.



This century-old forest could be clearcut under the BLM's draft plan.

What's the best Alternative?

There is no Alternative in the draft plan that includes all the conservation measures we'd like to see. The BLM plans to create a final plan out of a mixture of the draft Alternatives, so conservation interests are encouraging them to adopt elements of different Alternatives that include:

- Protecting forests over 80 years old from logging.
- Eliminating the focus on clearcutting – such as in the “high intensity” or “medium intensity” harvest areas – and emphasize thinning in young stands instead.
- Maintaining strong stream protections and restoration standards under the current Northwest Forest Plan.
- Protecting all proposed Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, ACECs, and Wild & Scenic Rivers.
- More emphasis on non-motorized and quiet recreation.
- Maintaining the Survey & Manage program to protect rare plants and animals.
- Focusing on restoring watersheds, dense young plantations, and fire-adapted ecosystems.
- Reducing, not increasing, road impacts.

What can you do?

Comment before July 23, 2015

BLM needs to hear the voices of everyone who values these lands and wants to see them managed for far more than timber production. Submit your comments to let the BLM know that the draft plan falls short on protecting public values, and goes in the wrong direction with its proposal to increase clearcut logging and reduce stream protections. Learn more at www.oregonwild.org/blm-plan-revisions and <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/rmpswesternoregon>.