



For Immediate Release
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One year after WOPR withdrawal, Southwest Oregon clearly a sacrifice zone for Obama Administration.

Portland, Or---July 16 marks the one year anniversary of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and the Obama Administration's withdrawal of the Bureau of Land Management's Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR). The six plans, adopted December 30, 2008, provided a template for managing Oregon's 2.1 million acre O&C lands. If managed for responsible, sustained timber production as required by the O&C Act, the lands could return substantial revenues to 18 Oregon counties, reducing the need for federal payments under the Secure Rural Schools Act, which expires in 2011.

"It took the BLM five years to complete these plans using the most comprehensive forest planning effort ever undertaken. It took this Administration only six months to trash that effort. Now, after waiting for a year for a promised solution, it is clear this Administration lacks any strategy to meet the needs of local communities or contribute to forest health and resiliency," said Tom Partin, President of the American Forest Resource Council. "Communities throughout western Oregon are facing extreme economic dislocation that has been compounded by a lack of timber coming from the BLM forests--**southwest Oregon has become a sacrifice zone for this Administration.**"

Unemployment in Oregon's southwestern counties (Douglas, Lane, Curry, Coos, Jackson and Josephine) ranges from 12.4 to 16 percent. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the plans predicted an increase of 5,000 jobs. Standard multipliers indicate that the 502 million board feet of annual timber harvest authorized under the WOPR would support 9,036 jobs on an ongoing basis.

The WOPR was completed at the end of 2008 under a timeline dictated by a court order following legal challenges to the BLM's compliance with the O&C Act which requires that the lands be managed for a permanent, sustained supply of timber for local communities. "Not only did the plan set a timber harvest level that could have been maintained forever, but it also called for setting over half of the 2.1 million acres aside for the permanent protection of endangered wildlife species," noted Partin.

Partin expressed frustration that even a specially appointed Task Force, [announced](#) by Secretary Salazar on October 14, 2009, has failed to deliver a report or propose a solution. The special interdisciplinary team was supposed deliver a draft report and an outline for finding a long-term

strategy for forest management on these lands by April 1. To date, nothing has seen the light of day.

At the time the Task Force was announced, Salazar released a [package of 62 timber sales](#) cleared to go forward in Fiscal Year 2010 under the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP). “With great fanfare, the Department claimed that by focusing on ‘non-controversial’ young plantation thinning sales nearly 230 million board feet of timber would be available this fiscal year for local mills throughout western Oregon. Since then, it has become clear that the arbitrary decision to limit forest management activities to young plantation stands has failed to provide the volume needed to sustain local mills and communities, particularly those in southwest Oregon. With a little over two months remaining in the fiscal year, the 866,000 acre Medford district has sold less than 6 million board feet of timber, which is 9 percent of the annual volume predicted under the NWFP and less than 30 percent of the volume promised in the Salazar sale package. The other BLM districts are facing the same reality as they run out of ‘non-controversial’ young plantation forests to thin,” Partin stated.

“We hope Oregon’s Congressional Delegation will hold this Administration accountable for finding a solution that is sustainable long-term,” said Partin. “While it may sound appealing, limiting management activities to only thinning young plantations simply does not meet the needs of these forests or Oregon’s rural communities. In fact, the BLM analyzed this approach during their recent planning effort and found that it would only last five years or less. We hoped this Administration would look at these realities and outline a clear vision for managing and sustaining the health of these forests.”

“To say the least, we are very disappointed and angry over this Administration’s apparent lack of urgency to address the crisis facing Oregon’s struggling forest products industry and rural communities. It is simply too bad that this Administration isn’t as good at finding solutions for management on the O&C lands as they were at politicizing a very reasonable plan that sought to address the challenges facing Oregon’s forests and rural communities,” Partin concluded.

The American Forest Resource Council represents forest product manufacturers and landowners throughout the west and is based in Portland, Oregon.