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**Forest Products Industry Responds to Draft Resource Management Plans for
Western Oregon's BLM O&C Lands**

Statement of Tom Partin, President, American Forest Resource Council

Today, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released [draft Resource Management Plans](#) for six districts in Western Oregon encompassing over 2.5 million acres of BLM-managed forestland, including the Oregon & California (O&C) Grant Lands, for public review and comment. Once finalized, these plans will replace Northwest Forest Plan-era plans and guide the future management of these lands, including outlining sustained-yield timber harvest levels as required by federal law.

The American Forest Resource Council (AFRC), which represents the forest products companies that purchase, harvest and process BLM timber to the benefit of rural economies and communities released the following statement in response to the BLM's announcement:

“Our industry will be reviewing the draft plans closely to determine whether they comply with the requirements of the O&C Act that these lands are dedicated to timber production to benefit our rural communities,” said Tom Partin, AFRC President. “Upon initial review it appears that the various alternatives all fall short of outlining sufficient harvest levels and certainty to provide adequate jobs, self-sufficiency to our rural communities, and shared timber receipt revenues to the 18 O&C counties.”

The over 2 million acres of O&C forest lands are of critical importance to the health of communities across 18 Western Oregon counties. Since 1937, the O&C Act has required that these lands be managed primarily for sustained-yield timber production to generate jobs, economic activity, and revenue for local governments. These lands are capable of sustainably producing over 1.2 billion board feet of timber, every year, forever. In recent years, less than a quarter of what the forest grows each year has been harvested, resulting in economic turmoil across many O&C communities and declining forest health as fuel loading continues to increase.

“The BLM's preferred alternative outlines a harvest level of only 234 million board feet (mmbf), which is less than 20 percent of the annual growth of these lands and far short of the level needed to maintain the health and resiliency of these forests or address the economic plight of our rural communities,” continued Partin. “The harvest levels identified under all the alternatives, including the 486 mmbf outlined in the highest alternative, are also highly uncertain since the BLM has no protection from never-ending environmental litigation and has received no

assurances on how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will respond to the plans or individual timber sales under the Endangered Species Act.”

“Two decades of gridlock and anemic harvest levels on Western Oregon’s BLM O&C lands have plunged many rural communities into economic turmoil, which is borne out by many measurements of economic health that put Oregon near the bottom of national rankings,” said Partin. “In our initial review of the draft RMPs it appears that the BLM has a tin ear to the economic plight facing our communities and the BLM’s role in contributing to the conditions that exist today.”

“On numerous occasions Federal courts in Washington, D.C. and on the West Coast have affirmed the clear mandates of the O&C Act for timber production and our industry will continue its legal efforts to ensure that any Resource Management Plans for the O&C lands comply the law,” concluded Partin. “We look forward to working with the BLM to improve these draft RMPs and will also continue working with Congress to address the never-ending appeals, litigation, and analysis paralysis that have stymied efforts to restore balance to the management of our federal forests.”