

For Immediate Release  
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OSWA Position Statement

## **The President's Healthy Forests Initiative**

Our mission is to strive to be an influential and proactive organization united in our efforts to represent the diverse objectives of family forestland owners who practice and promote good forest stewardship.

1. OSWA does not support the status quo of management paralysis within our western federal forests. It is a social, economic, and in many cases an ecological disaster.
2. OSWA believes the President's plan is a step in the right direction. It refocuses the direction of forest management away from a do nothing policy to a more active guidance. One that, hopefully, ensures a reduction of the catastrophic losses from fire, insects and disease that have become the norm over the past decade.
3. OSWA understands that the President is not proposing a return to old growth, high grade logging, with little regard for environmental safeguards. OSWA believes that with a carefully managed and controlled harvest, one that reflects the concerns of all interested parties, the forests will benefit. Active, careful management will also yield other benefits of a more social and economic nature as well. While there are some concerns of increased harvests depressing log prices, there are equal concerns that the current lack of logs has driven many mills out of business. It is hoped that some semblance of balance will be achieved as a result of the Healthy Forests Initiative.
4. OSWA believes that products produced by implementing the Healthy Forests Initiative may be critical to survival of private family forest management and communities in much of the interior West. Federal forests in Eastern Oregon (and many other western US states) so dominate the landscape that their withdrawal from the timber pipeline has brought about the recent closure of many mills crucial to private landowners in the same area. We recommend that, with proper planning over a long time frame, based upon returning forests to a diverse ecologically healthy structure, a sustainable supply of locally harvested wood from federally managed, publicly owned land could provide incentives for investment in secondary manufacturing facilities.

OSWA, with local partners, is already moving forward on this issue. On April 24, 2003 OSWA President John Poppino, Dennis Brock, Northwest Wood Products Association and Hal Salwasser, Dean of Forestry of OSU signed a memorandum of understanding to work on developing a joint education and marketing coop for Oregon forests and forest products.

Aimed at improving forest stewardship via incentives and bringing high-end value products to markets, the co op will encourage supply for federal, tribal and state lands to ensure a steady stream of products that in turn encourages investment in milling and manufacturing. This would have the added benefit of providing jobs and a market demand for family forestland products in those regions. This in turn gives landowners an incentive to own and manage forestland for a number of non-market based objectives.

Without the milling and secondary manufacturing facilities there is little economic incentive for owning family forestland in Oregon. With out the economic incentives there is a trend to convert family forestlands to the uses with the ensuing loss of non-market benefits associated with forest cover. We must better balance economic, social and ecological projects on federal lands so we can maintain healthy forestland cover in all types of ownership.

In conclusion

OSWA is ready to move forward and develop the on the ground projects that provide such a balance. We must ensure a long term economic, social and ecological balanced solution to the management and utilization of our publicly owned forests so they can have a positive impact on surrounding communities and landowners. We believe that with the science available we can protect high conservation value habitats while activity managing the forests to a more healthy state. We may never know how many terrestrial species live on our planet let alone how they interact and or respond to human activities. But we do know that we are losing forestland cover due to the unbalanced situation at present. We would ask that all other stakeholders work rapidly together to find a solution within the next 3 months that allows fuels reduction and forest health projects to begin so we can better spend the \$150 million dollars we received in fire suppression costs in Oregon in 2001. The time to become proactive and not reactive has arrived. For all of these reasons, the Oregon Small Woodlands Association would like to go on record as supporting the President's Healthy Forests Initiative.

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