



Providing Opportunity to Family Forestland Owners

Testimony of Jim James to Board of Forestry
January 8, 2014

My name is Jim James, Executive Director of Oregon Small Woodland Association. I wish to comment on the rule making process the Board approved at the November Board of Forestry meeting. I would first like to state that OSWA does not see the urgency to develop new rules for small and medium fish bearing streams. OSWA believes that all landowners have an obligation to protect public resources such as water on their property, but question whether a very small temporary temperature increase, some of the time, that has little or no impact on the beneficial use of water in forest streams warrants a rule change.

One should not assume the results of the RipStream study suggests the same results throughout Western Oregon. Over 40% of private forests in Oregon belong to family forest owners. A common practice on family forests in Oregon is to not enter the riparian area during harvest operations. For a variety of reasons wider than required buffers are very common. Had family forests, as commonly managed, been included in the RipStream study, the results would be even more irrelevant. That does not mean family forest owner are indifferent about stream rule changes. Although family forest owners may choose to leave trees in riparian areas, we strongly believe the value of trees in the riparian area should not be taken away without a real defined benefit to beneficial uses. It is hard to believe such a small increase in temperature is that big a deal to warrant a change.

At a future Board meeting, if the Board decides stream rule changes are necessary, please consider voluntary measures. Forest landowners in Oregon have a history of doing the right thing. With science as the guide, and knowledge of what is needed, I believe all forest owners can and will achieve the desired results, voluntarily. Giving forest owners the flexibility to achieve the desired conditions, using common sense, based on each unique situation and using a variety of tools, will minimize the financial loss landowners will experience with stricter rules.

OSWA intends to provide additional information to the Board on this subject, our estimate of the value loss to family forest owners should new rules be adopted, and a copy of the 1996 Forest Incentives Group report which promotes the benefits of voluntary actions verses inflexible regulations.

Thank you for the opportunity to share OSWA's concerns.