



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pacific
Northwest
Region

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File Code: 1560

Date: October 13, 2011

Mr. Richard Whitman
Natural Resource Policy Director
Governor's Natural Resources Office
State Capitol Building
900 Court Street NE, Suite 160
Salem, OR 97301-1290

Dear Mr. Whitman:

Oregon's forests provide tremendous resources to the state, including timber and wood products that support local communities, valuable habitat for fish and wildlife, and treasured recreational opportunities. More than ever, though these forested landscapes, especially in our forests east of the Cascades and in southwest Oregon are at risk due to the increasing potential for large, uncharacteristic wildfires. The USDA Forest Service is working diligently to restore national forests for wildlife watershed values by reducing the risk of severe wildfires while also providing timber and jobs to local communities. But it is difficult to get this vital work done in many places, where years of distrust have led to gridlock on our national forests.

The governor's Federal Forest Advisory Committee's (FFAC) recommendation to augment collaborative forestry groups in Oregon was a great step in the right direction. The Forest Service is an active participant on the committee, and on the Implementation Working Group, (IWG) working with other partners to follow through on the committee's recommendations. Members include The Nature Conservancy, Sustainable Northwest, Oregon Association of Counties, Oregon Business Council, American Forest Resources Council, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Energy, Oregon Forest Resources Institute, and National Forest Foundation. This is an important State-level collaborative that needs to continue its work.

Oregon Solutions' plays an important role in the FFAC IWG, providing facilitation, staff support, scheduling, and guidance for meetings. Oregon Solution's work is crucial to the success of the working group, and in particular, Oregon Solutions has the expertise and systems needed to help build and support community-based, collaborative groups find consensus-based solutions around the state.

The Nature Conservancy's leadership and scientific expertise is equally critical to the statewide goals endorsed by the FFAC IWG. In the community sponsored collaborative, the Conservancy provides sound, updated science and landscape assessments driven by strong GIS technology making it possible to understand and prioritize where and how best to implement restoration in these forest landscapes. The Conservancy's role has been particularly valuable in efforts on the Rogue-Siskiyou, Fremont-Winema and Deschutes National Forests, where they have provided



both leadership and technical support to these groups, helping achieve consensus on complex decisions about where to act and what to do on our national forests.

Sustainable Northwest (SNW) also plays an important leadership role with supporting collaboratives by increasing their capacity throughout the Dry Forest Investment Zone (DFIZ). They encourage communities to cooperate and help find opportunities to attract new business and add value to existing business interests. SNW's role throughout the DFIZ has led to good progress by a number of collaboratives and the associated National Forests. SNW's role has been particularly valuable in to efforts on the Malheur and Wallowa Whitman National Forests, where they have provided both leadership and technical support to these groups, helping achieve consensus on complex decisions about where to act and what to do on our national forests.

We appreciate the work by the members of the Federal Forest Advisory Council's Implementation Work Group, and hope you will fully consider efforts to help support this important work, such as those led by Oregon Solutions, The Nature Conservancy and Sustainable Northwest.

Sincerely,

/s/ David Sumner (for):

KENT P. CONNAUGHTON
Regional Forester

cc: Jeff P Walter, Tracy B Beck, Margaret Petersen, Nora Rasure