



Providing Opportunity to Family Forestland Owners

April 18, 2013

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Subject: Oregon Department of Forestry Budget

My name is Mike Barsotti. I am a forest landowner from the Lyons area and President of the Linn County chapter of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association (OSWA). I am also a board member and past-chair of the Oregon Tree Farm System, Inc. (OTFS). I support SB 5521, Oregon Department of Forestry's (ODF) 2013-15 budget.

ODF is a leader and a strong partner of OSWA and OTFS, Oregon's major family forestland organizations. Its fire prevention and suppression program; forest protection through the Forest Practices Act (FPA) administration and Insect & Disease monitoring programs; and its landowner assistance and education programs, all continue to effectively work for Oregon .

In my volunteering, I've attended many national meetings and have found that Oregon is the envy of landowner associations and agencies across the country. Oregon's natural resource agencies and organizations partner like in no other state. A management plan guidelines document and an education program are two current examples of collaborative efforts that are more helpful for us landowners than any one agency or organization could have accomplished on its own. ODF staff is there providing both leadership and knowledge.

Another example of ODF partnership efforts is at the county level where Jamie Knight, a Northeast Oregon District Stewardship Forester was recognized last week by the American Tree Farm System as its 2013 Western Region Inspector of the Year. ODF's field foresters' in carrying out their duties and responsibilities strongly support OSWA and OTFS goals and efforts.

While Forest Practices and landowner assistance are the areas where I most interact with ODF, its other programs are equally important to family forest landowners and all Oregonians. Our family forestlands are the ones Oregonians see most often, and are in most need of support from ODF and others. We landowners have many reasons for owning forests are reasons are varied, as is our knowledge of what it takes to meet our individual goals and to have healthy forests. I see education and active management as the keys to having these four plus million acres of forests support what Oregonians expect from its forests, and the FPA enforcement is there as a backup and to assure everyone that we are doing the right thing.

The recession forced cuts to ODF was a real threat to having a credible FPA, providing technical assistance to landowners, and maintaining a strong fire suppression program. I very much appreciate the last Legislature's efforts to build back ODF's capabilities and ask that you maintain your support by supporting its 2013-15 budget request.

Sincerely,

Mike Barsotti, President
Linn County Small Woodland Association



Oregon Tree Farm System

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My name is Joe Holmberg. I am State Chair of the Oregon Tree Farm System, Inc. (OTFS). OTFS supports the budget request of the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)

The American Tree Farm System, the nation's first forest certification system, was established in 1942 in Portland with a Weyerhaeuser tree farm in southwest Washington its first certified forest. Tree Farm chapters in states across the nation depend on partnerships in their efforts to get more good forestry on more acres and keep it there.

ODF is an important partner here in Oregon. Its robust private forestry field staff is vital in providing assistance and advice to family forestland owners across the State. Our families want to do the right thing with their land and need ODF Stewardship Foresters to provide support as they work their land. Private forests are often in gateways to urban areas and provide the forested habitats and environmental amenities valued by many Oregon urbanites.

OTFS recognizes the sustainable management of its family forestland owners through its certification program. Over 750 families, from almost every Oregon County, have been recognized for managing their forestland to the Sustainability Standards of the American Forest Foundation. They are working to keep their forests vibrant and healthy.

I'm sorry I'm not available to appear in person today as I'm assisting ODF and OSU Forestry Extension provide landowner Management Planning training in Albany. Again, the support provided by the Private Forests Division is essential to OTFS as its work towards their goals.

Sincerely,

Joe Holmberg, State Chair
Oregon Tree Farm System, Inc.