

As a land owner on the North Oregon Coast who has lived in the upper watershed of the Nehalem River Valley for 30 years, I have witnessed the impact of severe logging practices on the forests and the waterways. I have seen forest land disappear into clear cut all around me; rich topsoil destroyed by toxic spray and the compression of heavy machinery; rivers and streams running brown with silt; whole towns, such as Rockaway, receiving notice of unsafe drinking water; and, of course, erosion, mudslides, and flooding. All of this is a reality to those who live on the Oregon Coast.

Many of us who live here have worked with Watershed Councils and Land Trusts over the years in an attempt to restore our watersheds from damage mostly created by current logging practices of the timber industry and supported by a very weak Forest Practices Act, which offers less protection for forests and streams than any of our neighbor states. Oregon used to be a leader in environmental protection, proud of its forests and rivers; now it is a state known to be controlled by the timber industry and offering expansive views of clearcut hillsides.

In addition to the proof of degradation we see and experience living here, last year, Oregon was the first state ever to be denied federal grant money for failure to meet EPA standards for clean water in our coastal streams. The negative impact of current logging practices on the watersheds was also verified by the recently released 2015 DEQ report, suppressed earlier by ODF and the timber industry.

The proof is everywhere around us. Oregon needs a Forest Practices Act that will ensure the health of forests and streams –and the people who live here. Please support this Bill which will, at least, address some of the major problems.

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