



March 1, 2017

TO: Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Representative Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means

**RE: Full funding for Oregon Department of Forestry's Federal Forest Restoration Program**

Blue Mountains Forest Partners (BMFP) supports fully funding the Oregon Department of Forestry's Federal Forest Restoration Program (FFRP) at \$4.4 million for the 2017-2019 biennium.

BMFP formed in 2006 to address stalemate on the Malheur National Forest (MNF) in Grant County, Oregon. BMFP is committed to improving the resilience and well-being of forests and communities in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon. It includes a diverse group of stakeholders who utilize best available science and work collaboratively with the MNF to accomplish this mission and increase the pace, scale and quality of restoration on the MNF.

Over the last two biennia, FFRP funds supported BMFP efforts that resulted in (among other things) the MNF receiving an additional \$4 million annually in 2015, through 2020, to help fund implementation costs for restoration work across a project area covering over 850,000 acres. This funding substantially increased the Forest Service's ability to treat federal lands in Grant County at a pace and scale that matters ecologically speaking.

These efforts also resulted in a 3-fold increase in timber harvest and the continued operation of the county's last working sawmill; a substantial increase in the suite of restoration actions occurring across the MNF—with an associated increase in work and wages for many area contractors and employees; over 48 (new) permanent employees hired by the MNF, and scores of seasonal staff, to ensure it meets its project planning, development and administrative obligations; significantly reduced unemployment numbers, and markedly increased house sales, in Grant County; and a halt to the nearly 15-year decline in enrollment for Grant School District #3.

In brief, over the last two biennia, Oregon Department of Forestry's FFRP funding helped strengthen local involvement in, and partnership with, the federal government's public land management responsibilities in Grant County; helped ensure ecologically appropriate treatments on public lands were implemented at a pace and scale that matters for the landscape; and helped bring about incredibly important socioeconomic benefits for area communities.

BMFP appreciates the FFRP funding it received in the past, and supports fully funding the Oregon Department of Forestry's Federal Forest Restoration Program for the 2017-2019 biennium, so that good collaborative work on federal lands—with the associated benefits for area communities—might continue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark R. Webb".

Mark R. Webb  
Executive Director  
Blue Mountains Forest Partners  
541-620-2546  
[bmfp06@gmail.com](mailto:bmfp06@gmail.com)