

Submitter: Steve Beyerlin

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and
Water

Measure: HB2248

Oregon has had its share of Wildfires over the last 2 decades. With some fires burning vast areas of National Forests and private holdings. These fires are in watersheds that support Fish and Wildlife as well as Oregon's communities. I will give a local example: The Chetco Bar Fire which burned 90% of the Chetco River Drainage and most of the Winchuck River drainage in Curry County. This is just an example repeated in other areas Like the Wild and Scenic Umpqua River in Douglas County, where the drainage suffered devastating loss of timber, wildlife habitat and water resources. How are these and other important watersheds being recovered or are they? This Bill HB 2248 helps to address a better understanding and level of commitment by Federal Forest Managers and the State. Having scientific information on Wildfire damage and the recovery process can only help Water Quality and Fish and Wildlife managers understand and allow action to recover devastated watersheds. Now it is hard to understand steps taken by State and Federal agencies, if steps were taken or unaddressed or possibly put on back shelf.

US Forest Service

"America's richly, diverse forests provide vital products and amenities to our society including quality habitat for wildlife, biodiversity of plant and animal communities, clean water, aesthetic benefits, and recreational opportunities. Timely reforestation following harvest or a major catastrophic event to restore forest cover on denuded lands is often important to maintaining forest ecosystems and deriving associated ecological, social, and economic benefits".

"Reforestation is an element of a land stewardship ethic that includes growing, nurturing, and harvesting trees to meet specified resource objectives while conserving soil, air, and water quality in harmony with other resource management concerns. Reforestation following harvest or revegetating areas denuded by catastrophic fire or other natural disaster is often important to ensuring forest sustainability; it is a top priority for national forest management".

From USFS website dated Aug 14, 2017

<https://www.fs.fed.us/postfirevegcondition/process.shtml>

“Following large wildfires, a rapid initial assessment of post-fire conditions is important to support management decisions on National Forest System lands. This is particularly important in areas where vegetation management activities are allowed:

outside of congressionally designated wilderness areas, Wild and Scenic River corridors, or research natural areas (RNA) where under certain conditions, vegetation manipulation may take place to meet specific resource objectives.”

<https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/reforestation/overview.shtml>

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Restoring Forest Ecosystems After Large Scale Disturbance

"Some recent catastrophic wildfires, severe wind and rain events, and other natural disturbance events have resulted in significant losses to critical wildlife habitat, imperiled fisheries, watersheds, and municipal water sources. These events also threaten the long-term productivity of forest soils, through erosion and changes in soil properties, as well as many other resource's".