

## Oregon allows more logging in Clatsop, Tillamook forests

by Matthew Preusch, The Oregonian

Wednesday June 03, 2009, 8:14 PM

SALEM -- Oregon officials decided Wednesday to boost logging on the Tillamook and Clatsop state forests by reducing in size those areas dedicated to preserving older forests while stepping up clear-cutting.

The decision affects roughly a half-million acres of state-managed mountainous terrain between Portland and the coast.

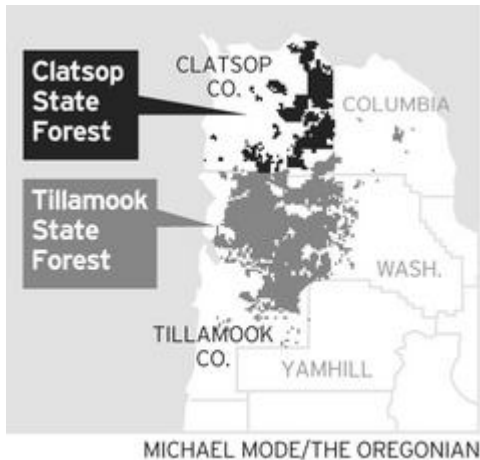
The Oregon Board of Forestry's 4-2 vote followed hours of testimony from fishermen and foresters and triggered protests from conservationists concerned with imperiled species that rely on the forest. Significantly, the board's action throws in the towel on a much-maligned 2001 strategy to balance economic, social and environmental interests in the forests.

"I think we have a forest management plan that is broken, and time has proven that it's broken," said John Blackwell, the board chairman.

The board also asked the Department of Forestry to look into changing the legal definition of the purpose of the public forests, their "greatest permanent value."

That would serve as the starting point for crafting a totally new management plan for the forests, which counties deeded to the state to manage after a series of fires last century known as the Tillamook Burn.

In the meantime, the newly amended version of the 2001 plan will hold sway, meaning about 20 percent more of the forests would be subject to clearcutting.



"We're extremely disappointed in the decision, and from our perspectives it represents a significant reduction in protection for endangered species" like the northern spotted owl and coho salmon, said Noah Greenwald of the Center for Biological Diversity. Greenwald said his group would likely sue the state under federal Endangered Species Act rules.

Also not pleased are timber interests and local counties, who along with schools and fire districts receive the majority of revenues from timber sales on the forests. They argue that the forests can sustainably supply far more saw logs.

"This forest management plan is costing the state about \$41 million a year in foregone revenue, and the counties' share of that is about \$26 million," said Dave Ivanoff, vice president of Hampton Lumber, which has mills in Tillamook and Willamina that rely heavily on logs from the

forests.

"This is not an either-or discussion. Higher timber output levels are not going to compromise fish or habitat," Ivanoff said.

Board members Peter Hayes and Jennifer Phillippi were the dissenting votes, but for different reasons. Hayes wanted the changes subjected to peer review by scientists. Phillippi disagreed with the strategy for keeping the forest plan in line with federal endangered species rules.

This was only the second time in roughly two decades the board had not decided a major issue unanimously, an indication of the pressure its members feel from legislators and the governor's office to strike a satisfying balance for the state's forestland.

Matthew Preusch; [mattpreusch@news.oregonian.com](mailto:mattpreusch@news.oregonian.com)