

## **Principles for an O&C Solution**

### *A Roadmap for Federal Legislation to Navigate Both the House and Senate*

**1. STABLE FUNDING FOR COUNTIES:** Oregon's rural counties must be assured a stable level of funding from the Federal government due to the large extent of public lands they contain. Those funds can come through public lands receipts or through another mechanism created by this, or other, legislation. In the current fiscal climate that funding will not be able to replace historic levels of receipts, nor will timber receipts be able to fully provide for all county funding needs. Recognizing that Oregon's rural communities are suffering with high unemployment and unique economic challenges, they also need to do their part in reducing disparities in tax rates and developing a reasonable level of revenue from local activities. However, the Federal government must do its share to compensate counties for the impact of federal lands and the policies governing those lands.

**2. SUSTAINABILITY:** Timber harvest must be economically and environmentally sustainable. Timber harvests must produce more commercial product from O&C lands than is currently being produced and harvest should be guided by a scientifically-based, sustainable management regime that will meet or exceed the stated goals of the relevant federal and state environmental laws. Opportunities for active and adaptive management could include a variety of examples, such as the ecological forestry principles promoted by Norm Johnson and Jerry Franklin, as well as the pilot projects being currently promoted by various collaborative groups in Southern Oregon.

**3. CONSERVATION:** In addition to increasing timber harvesting, this legislation must result in wilderness and other permanently conserved lands proportional to lands designated for harvest. These should include protection of both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, including large blocks of Bureau of Land Management lands and old growth forests.

**4. MANAGING LANDS MORE EFFICIENTLY:** The legislation should seek opportunities to consolidate O&C and non-O&C lands. This will include addressing the checkerboard pattern of the O&C ownership and exchanging lands according to their best use whenever possible. It must develop an approach to rationalize land management between the O&C lands and adjoining private and public lands, both for timber and conservation values. The legislation should consider setting in motion a process to seek greater consolidation and management efficiencies on federal lands going forward.

Any consolidation or exchange should take into account concerns of neighboring private landowners, including access, rights of way and wildfire. This discussion should also address opportunities to finally honor unrealized treaty obligations to the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, understanding that some lands considered for their reservations may not be O&C lands. Both tribes have treaties pre-dating the O&C Lands Act.

**5. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TIMBER MANAGEMENT:** Management of these lands must comply with all applicable Federal laws. Development of the plan should include open discussions on how to better implement the National Environmental Policy Act. There should be particular focus on streamlining the objection processes (for example, as included in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and Senator Wyden's Eastside Forestry legislation), and categorical exclusions for timber projects and other defined situations.

**6. CHANGING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LAND MANAGEMENT:** Due consideration should be given to proposals for non-Federal entities managing lands designated for conservation or active management as long as there is broad support for the proposal among stakeholders. Negotiations must take into account the failures of other private management efforts and the general opposition to private management of federal lands in Congress.

**7. SAFEGUARDING OLD GROWTH:** Oregon's old growth must be protected. Old growth should be generally defined as 120 years of age or older, with exceptions made for significant ecological reasons.