

8190 (OR 932)

Honorable John Kitzhaber  
Governor of Oregon  
160 State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Kitzhaber:

I am pleased to provide you and your Natural Resources staff a copy of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) 2000 Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watershed Accomplishments. BLM Districts have compiled data that reflect BLM's progress in achieving the 15 measures the agency included in the Oregon Plan.

In addition to reporting on the BLM's progress during 2000, I would like to highlight several other efforts that BLM supports and which demonstrate our commitment to the Oregon Plan. I have also included comments on how the Oregon Plan is working, and what relevant issues may be emerging from a BLM perspective.

- ❑ *Willamette Restoration Initiative (WRI)*: Throughout 2000 the BLM participated in WRI efforts to complete the Willamette Restoration Strategy, a geographically explicit chapter of the Oregon Plan. In strategy development I interacted with my counterparts on both the WRI Board and federal Regional Interagency Executive Committee. My staff has taken a leadership role in the Willamette Measures Integration Group, a synthesis of members of the federal Willamette Province Interagency Executive Committee (PIEC) and Oregon Plan Implementation Team. It is my hope that state, federal, and local partners continue to work together to support implementation of the Strategy as presented to you in February, 2001.
- ❑ *Southwest Oregon PIEC and Southwest Interagency Group (SWIG)*: The federal Southwest Oregon PIEC and state SWIG counterpart continue to work on key issues of mutual interest. During fiscal year 2000 these entities provided on-going support to the Rogue Basin Restoration Technical Team. Initiated in April, 1999 by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Team actively identifies and prioritizes watershed health needs in the Rogue River and South Coast basins, providing land management agencies and watershed councils a comprehensive basis for identifying restoration projects. The Team Coordinator also oversees direct technical assistance to watershed councils, enabling the effective accomplishment of many projects and studies.

The Southwest Oregon PIEC and SWIG also held four Restoration Roundtables in each of the major basins of the province during the fall of 2000. The objectives were to encourage collaboration and increase the effectiveness of restoration efforts through enhanced information exchange. A summary report was developed describing eleven themes/issues of concern, with recommendations for follow-up actions. The Southwest Oregon PIEC and SWIG have made identifiable progress in the first half of fiscal year 2001 in tackling several of these issues.

- *Blue Mountain Demonstration Project:* The BLM is in its second year as a partner in the Blue Mountain Demonstration Area. Though we manage less than one percent of the land base within the Demonstration Area, we are actively involved with the cooperative effort of protecting the health of ecosystems and making an economic contribution to rural communities. We are completing our second year of a multi-year plan for riparian restoration and noxious weed management within the Lower Grande Ronde sub-basin. Planting of native vegetation, culvert replacement for fish passage, and fencing of sensitive areas are just some of our accomplishments to date. Our noxious weed program is an aggressive four-year plan to help prevent a potential serious loss of productivity from taking place in this watershed. We include a variety of treatment and restoration methods and have entered into an MOU with the Forest Service (USFS), Tri-County Weed Management Area, and Wallowa Resources, to fund a weed coordinator for this area, allowing for weed management across ownership boundaries.

In the very near future, we expect to complete planning for a 750 acre forest health project. Next year we plan to contract out commercial and pre-commercial thinnings, large woody debris placement within streams, as well as seeding of riparian areas.

- *Columbia Basin Monitoring:* The BLM has been collaborating with other federal agencies over the last five years on the development of a monitoring strategy for PACFISH, INFISH, and the Bull Trout Management Strategy. PACFISH is an aquatic management protocol designed to protect steelhead and chinook in the basin. INFISH is the USFS protocol to protect bull trout, while the Bull Trout Management Strategy is directed at lands managed by the BLM. We are currently implementing a module for grazing and have four new pilot modules scheduled for field testing this season. These include vegetation, wildland fire, recreation, and minerals. In addition, effectiveness monitoring is done for a subset of watersheds across the Columbia Basin. Over the long term, this monitoring strategy will allow us to determine if our management will result in improvements in aquatic habitat.

I have spoken with my staff regarding how the Oregon Plan is working. Our BLM measures are general in nature and continue to accurately state our commitments. An internal challenge lies in communicating expectations and reporting accomplishments between our Oregon/Washington State Office and nine Oregon Districts. The State Office is not able to provide additional funding to each District to engage in Oregon Plan activities, and Districts must do so within the limitations of their existing resources. The Oregon Plan does, however, provide a strong context for the activities Districts engage in as related to state policy and priorities, and is often used as the basis for additional funding as it is available.

There are several emerging issues relevant to BLM's measures of which the state should be aware. First, our Districts face increased workloads in two main areas: energy (both in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing and new applications for energy production facilities and transmission lines) and linkage of Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act (to account for planning and compliance). Second, as you are aware, the BLM has been unable to produce the amount of timber contemplated under the Northwest Forest Plan. We are reviewing our options now, and would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these issues with you and your staff in the near future.

Given the emerging issues described, the need to coordinate across agencies and levels of government to ensure ongoing protection of fish habitat is great. I would also offer several points regarding what is working and where improvements might be made as related to interagency interactions:

- *State and Federal Executive Level Dialog:* There is a need for dialog between state and federal agencies at an executive level. The purpose of this dialog would be to create an understanding of: 1) the limitations and opportunities that dictate each agency's capacity for collaborative work; and 2) how and why different agencies engage in various processes and what each agency hopes to achieve. A real conversation is needed about how we might collectively pursue national and regional processes/programs and integrate work and budget planning. The Northwest Power Planning Council's sub-basin assessment process is just one example of where we could come together to develop a common context and prioritize work. With a self-focus, agencies often move forward implementing redundant programs or processes. The necessity for better coordination at an executive, as well as staff, level cannot be overemphasized.
- *Federal MOU Partners Working Group:* This forum works well to share information and resolve issues limiting state and federal agency ability to coordinate on various activities. For example, the BLM and others were recently asked by the Oregon Plan Implementation Team for input to the state's watershed restoration database. At this meeting the State emphasized the need to coordinate information management and data development between state and federal systems. This message identifying the need for consistency between systems is one that agencies have supported in concept, and the BLM looks forward to continued discussion on how state and federal agencies can improve our progress toward this goal.
- *Monitoring Activities:* There has been a general lack of awareness regarding federal monitoring efforts. The BLM is working toward better coordination with other federal and state agencies. The BLM, USFS and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife are preparing tables listing monitoring projects by watershed in order to reduce duplicative efforts, facilitate information sharing, and look for opportunities to combine resources for monitoring projects.

Governor, I believe there is great value in both the context the Oregon Plan provides and the on-

the-ground work it supports. The BLM continues to support the plan through implementation of our measures and as a means of coordinating the task of achieving healthy watersheds throughout the state.

Sincerely,

Elaine Y. Zielinski  
State Director

Enclosure

1- District Compilation: OPSW Annual Implementation Reporting Form FY 00 (16 pp)

cc: Neal Coenen, Oregon Plan Manager w/Encl.

Oregon District Managers (DM) w/Encl.

Tom Dyer:	Burns DM
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Julia Dougan:	Eugene DM
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Barron Bail:	Prineville DM
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