

# Timber firms, environmental groups agree on logging law

By Sam Stites

Oregon Capital Bureau

A new deal between Oregon's timber industry and environmentalists to protect forest waters, modernize logging regulations and create a new conservation plan was announced Monday by Gov. Kate Brown and representatives of both interests.

The two sides have been at odds over policy and practices for decades, and this agreement aims to create a mediation process for updating the Oregon Forest Practices Act, passed in 1971.

The deal has three major points, the first being participation in a mediated process to change the Forest Practices Act by creating a conservation plan for all private timberland to protect threatened and endangered species and provide certainty for the timber industry.

The second piece is agreement over legislation that would require timber companies to notify nearby residents when aerial spraying of pesticides occurs and place buffers along streams in Southern Oregon forests that supply drinking water.

Finally, both sides agreed to drop forestry-related ballot initiatives and pending litigation. Environmental groups were working to get stricter forest rules into law by going to the voters this fall.



Amanda Loman /The Coos Bay World via AP

A deal between Oregon's timber industry and environmental groups will revise the state's Forest Practices Act.

*"This agreement is a genuine show of good faith from everyone involved. All sides have agreed this process of improving the Oregon Forest Practices Act will be informed by science and driven by science."*

— Oregon Governor Kate Brown

The agreement was joined by Hampton Lumber, Weyerhaeuser, Stimson Lumber, Roseburg Forest Products, Hancock Natural Resource Group and Port Blakely and the Oregon Small Woodlands Association on the timber

side. Oregon Wild, Cascadia Wildlands, Beyond Toxics, the Wild Salmon Center, Oregon League of Conservation Voters and Rogue Riverkeeper highlight the environmental groups that signed on.

"This agreement is a genu-

ine show of good faith from everyone involved," Brown said at a news conference Monday morning. "It ensures that all key voices will be heard in the process, including our vital small-woodland owners and Oregon's federally recognized tribes. All sides have agreed this process of improving the Oregon Forest Practices Act will be informed by science and driven by science."

Present in Brown's ceremonial office to make the announcement with her was Bob Van Dyke of the Wild Salmon Center, representing the environmentalists, and

Greg Miller, representing the forestry coalition.

"This is a shared recognition of the diverse benefits Oregon's forests provide and the need for more meaningful dialogue around forest issues across the state," Miller said.

According to Brown, the agreement between the two sides started when CEOs from the state's largest timber companies approached her to find a way out of the embroiled dialogue surrounding timber practices and conservation. A series of conversations followed over the past four weeks that led to the agreement.

For Van Dyke, the agreement culminates more than 20 years of bickering and lawsuits between timber interests and environmentalists over what takes place in Oregon's forests while Washington state led the way in conserving endangered species and protecting drinking water.

"While the Wild Salmon Center and many of the signers of this (memorandum of understanding) today have been part of that 20 years of tension, the results have been a lack of trust, gridlock on forest policy and growing public demand for broader reform of laws," Van Dyke said. "Today we're starting a new approach."

From a 10,000-foot level, the deal seems to favor environmental interests, but Miller

believes that isn't so.

According to Miller, the timber industry in Oregon is proud of its environmental stewardship and is equally interested in protecting water from aerial spraying of herbicides and using technology to let local residents know in real time of spraying.

"This is going to be a best-in-class practice for real-time notification, increasing the distance for the notifications, and having the spray records available within 24 hours," Miller said. "Those kinds of things are difficult to develop in terms of execution on the ground. ... I think that's the thing that got us over the hurdle."

The agreement cites moving forward with a science-based approach, but often the two sides have offered different science to back their positions. Miller and Van Dyke agreed that while they guarantee there still will be differences of opinion, they're committed to using science as a means to engage and work together on solutions.

Brown said that, moving forward, the next step would be to shepherd through the Legislature new rules and buffers on aerial spraying in forests and notification for local residents. After that, both sides will update the Oregon Forest Practices Act and create the statewide habitat conservation plan.

## FLOODING

Continued from Page 3A

Roberts said Pendleton police have been aided by the city's affected areas being isolated to the Riverside neighborhood on the east end and a smaller location on the west end where they've been able to focus patrols.

"Unfortunately, it hasn't slowed down any calls for service coming between those locations," he said.

According to Roberts, officer's vehicles have alerts programmed

into their system to remind them to make regular trips around the impacted locations.

Riverview Mobile Home Estates has also been easier to monitor because there's only one road in and one road out, Roberts said, and so far there has been one report of a theft at the trailer park that is under investigation.

According to an email from Milton-Freewater Police Chief Doug Boedigheimer, his department hasn't made any arrests of looters, but has increased patrols in neighborhoods

east of Highway 11 and South Main Street where people were evacuated between Friday and Sunday morning.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said other than the substantial damage suffered at Riverfront Park and surrounding areas, Hermiston neighborhoods weren't impacted like those elsewhere in the county. However, a disruption to regular traffic patterns led to a higher volume of vehicles and a few crashes in town and on Highway 395.

"The influx of traffic caused quite

the nightmare," he said.

With much of the most impacted areas coming outside city limits along the county's back roads, Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan said he has directed his deputies to patrol those areas as often as possible. But many of the more affected areas, such as Bingham Road, Walla Walla River Road and Mill Creek Road, are impassible even for police.

However, Rowan said neighbors who are waiting out the aftermath of the floods in those areas of the county have been "vigilant" in watching

out for the homes of neighbors who evacuated.

In a press release Monday night, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Incident Command announced it has directed the Umatilla Tribal Police Department to send additional patrols to affected areas on the reservation.

"Anyone traveling along upper Cayuse and Bingham roads may be subject to a traffic stop to determine residency and official business to be conducted in affected areas," the release said.

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