



Revision of the Olympic National Forest Plan

A Position Statement of the Washington State Society of American Foresters

Position:

Washington State Society of American Foresters (WSSAF) supports the federal national forest planning process and encourages an expedited Olympic National Forest plan revision.

WSSAF supports the review and amendment of the current land use allocations on the Olympic National Forest to include a mix of allocations that are consistent with the multiple use requirements of the National Forest Management Act and which establishes an Annual Sale Quantity (ASQ) that can be removed annually in perpetuity on a sustained yield basis. In addition, we believe a review of riparian protection strategies are warranted based upon advances in our knowledge of how these systems function, as recently noted by the Forest Ecosystem Assessment Team (FEMAT) scientists and others.

Issue:

The Olympic National Forest is a 633,677 acre unit of the National Forest System located on the Olympic Peninsula in the State of Washington. Gifford Pinchot, the founder of the Society of American Foresters and the first Chief of the US Forest Service, summed up the mission of the Forest Service, “to provide the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people in the long run.” In developing management plans to meet this mission the Forest Service is guided by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) of 1974 as amended by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976.

The current Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the Olympic National Forest was adopted in 1990 and amended in response to the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) released in 1994. The RPA requires that Forest Plans be updated on a 10 to 15 year cycle. The current Olympic National Forest plan is overdue to be replaced.

Background:

The Olympic National Forest provides a wide variety of environmental services including: clean water, fish, wildlife, dispersed and concentrated recreation and wilderness attributes. The current Forest Plan as amended allocates most of the forest land base to either Late Successional Reserve or Adaptive Management Areas. No matrix (timber production) lands are included in the allocation. The lack of a sustainable timber harvest from the forest has devastated local timber dependent communities and reduced the revenue used to maintain the forest road system that is used for a variety of purposes in addition to timber production. The declining condition of the Olympic National Forest road system is now widely recognized as the leading source of sediment delivered to important salmon streams on the Olympic Peninsula.

The Northwest Forest Plan has been in place for 15 years, with no major revisions. Forest management and timber harvest technology have undergone major changes not reflected in the NWFP. Technological and operational advances in forestland management have made enormous strides since 1994. Forest harvest new technology and methods have made equal gains and leave a much lighter footprint on the forest environment. Substantive revisions in

riparian system protection strategies should be considered based upon the advancement in our knowledge and recent assessment by FEMAT scientists.

The Olympic Forest Plan is due for revision and the revision process should incorporate changes to the land base allocation and updating of the riparian protection strategies. The Forest Plan needs to address the mission of the Forest Service by providing the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people in the long-run by insuring a mix of environmental services including a perpetual and sustainable harvest of timber and to provide more effective riparian protection.

This position statement was adopted by the Washington State SAF Executive Committee on July 23, 2009, and supported with 96.4 percent approval by member referendum in November 2009. This statement will expire July 23, 2014, unless after thorough review it is renewed by the Committee.