

Forests, Lane County, and the Association of O&C Counties (AOCC)



Standing up for
backyard forests and
public lands

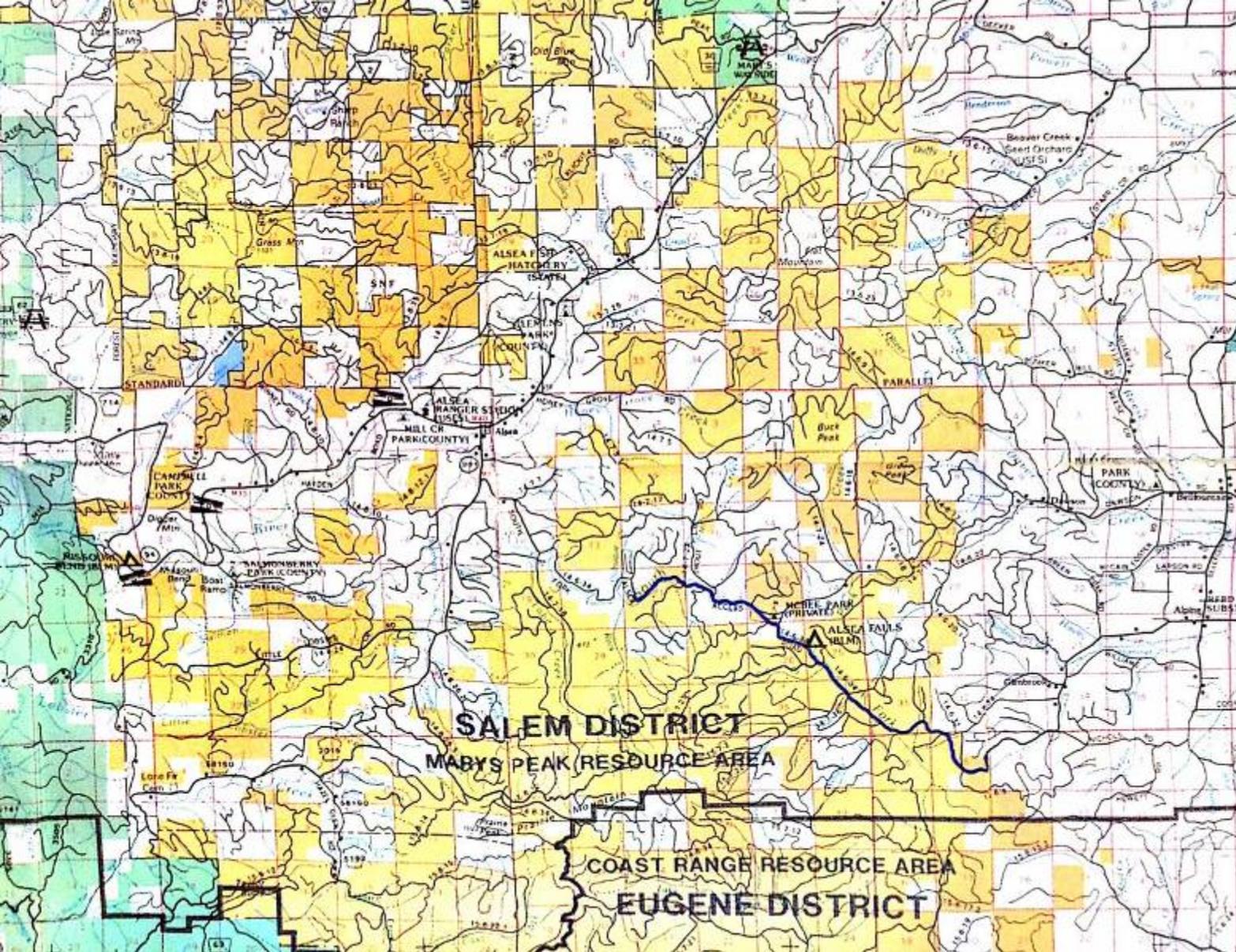
The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages 2.6 million acres of forests in western Oregon – most of this is O&C lands.



Yellow = BLM

Green = National Forests

Red circle = Cascade Siskiyou
National Monument

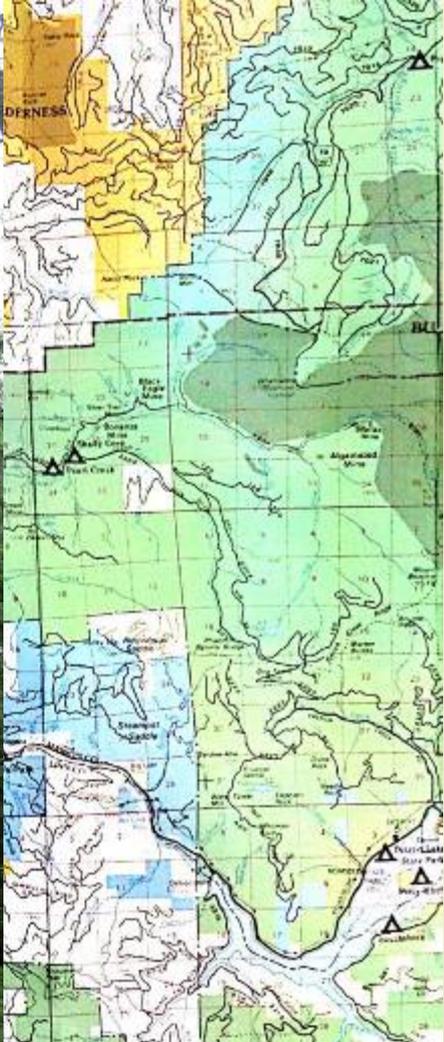


BLM lands are generally in one square-mile checker-board land ownership patterns.

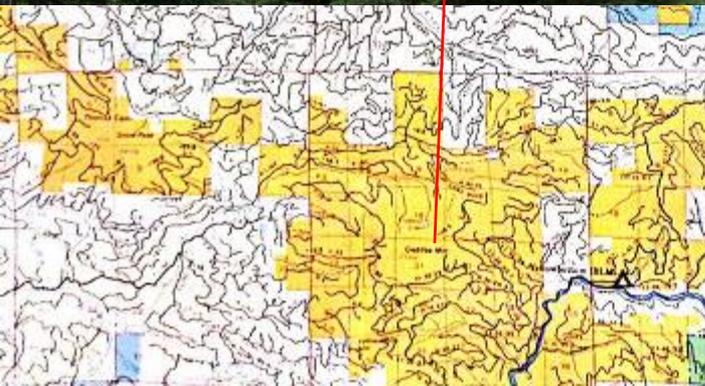
The Salem BLM recreation map of lands west of Corvallis. BLM lands are **yellow**, private industrial lands are **white**, Forest Service lands are **green**.



Crabtree Valley, on BLM lands, has some of the state's oldest trees.



BLM forest lands are ecologically significant despite their checkerboard nature – providing corridors of habitat from higher elevations and National Forest lands to lower elevations and valleys.



The Salem BLM recreation map of lands east of Salem. BLM lands are **yellow**, private industrial lands are **white**, Forest Service lands are **green**, State lands are **blue**.

Backyard Forest Values

- Drinking water quality
- Recreation
- Quality of life for rural communities
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Mature and old-growth forests
- Carbon storage & climate change mitigation
- Landscape connections



Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument



A Brief History of O&C Lands

1850s: Native people/tribes relocated, lands taken

1866: Railroad Act gave railroad companies 3.7 million acres of forests to sell to settlers to help settle the west and finance building the O&C Railroad. Certain restrictions applied.

- Railroad could sell land to legitimate homesteaders for \$2.50/ac.
- Instead, the railroad sold the land to corporate interests.
- Once the scandal was uncovered, the forestland was taken back by the U.S. government.

1916: Chamberlin-Ferris Act
Due to violation of above,
revested 2.4 million acres of
O&C Railroad lands to the
General Lands Office which later
became the Bureau of Land
Management (BLM).



1937 O&C Act

O&C lands shall be managed ... for permanent forest production, and the timber thereon shall be sold, cut, and removed in conformity with the **principal of sustained yield** for the purpose of:

- providing a permanent source of timber supply,
- protecting watersheds,
- regulating stream flow,
- contributing to the economic stability of local communities and industries, and
- providing recreational facilities.

[PUBLIC—No. 405—75TH CONGRESS]

[CHAPTER 876—1ST SESSION]

[H. R. 7618]

AN ACT

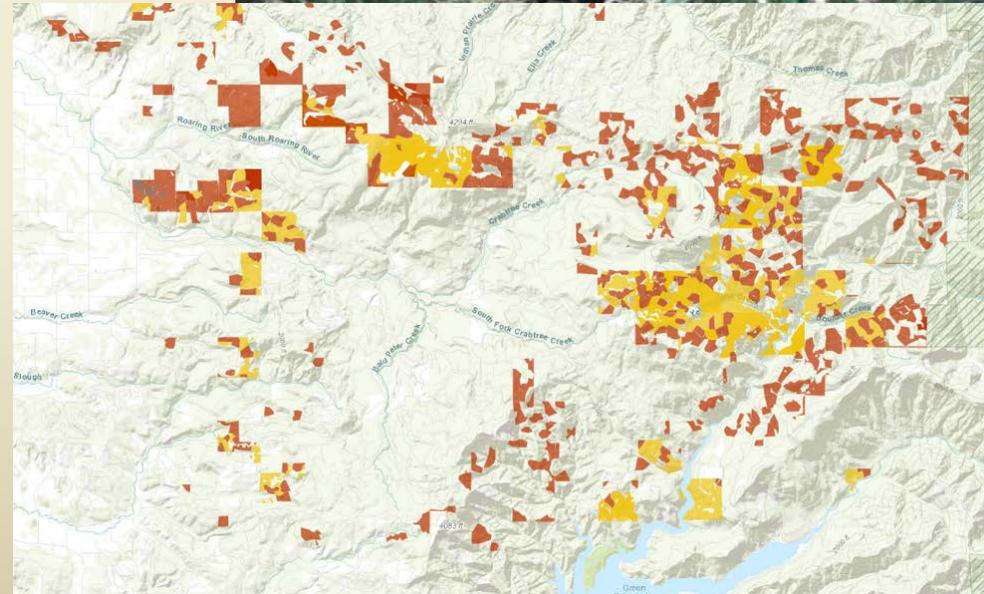
Relating to the revested Oregon and California Railroad and reconveyed Coos Bay Wagon Road grant lands situated in the State of Oregon.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That notwithstanding any provisions in the Acts of June 9, 1916 (39 Stat. 218), and February 26, 1919 (40 Stat. 1179), as amended, such portions of the revested Oregon and California Railroad and reconveyed Coos Bay Wagon Road grant lands as are or may hereafter come under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, which have heretofore or may hereafter be classified as timberlands, and power-site lands valuable for timber, shall be managed, except as provided in section 3 hereof, for permanent forest production, and the timber thereon shall be sold, cut, and removed in conformity with the principal of sustained yield for the purpose of providing a permanent source of timber supply, protecting watersheds, regulating stream flow, and contributing to the economic stability of local communities and industries, and providing recreational facilities: *Provided*, That nothing herein shall be construed to interfere with the use and development of power sites as may be authorized by law.

The annual productive capacity for such lands shall be determined and declared as promptly as possible after the passage of this Act, but until such determination and declaration are made the average annual cut therefrom shall not exceed one-half billion feet board measure: *Provided*, That timber from said lands in an amount not less than one-half billion feet board measure, or not less than the annual sustained yield capacity when the same has been determined and declared, shall be sold annually, or so much thereof as can be sold at reasonable prices on a normal market.

The Legacy of Logging

- From the 1940s-1980s logging rates rapidly increased on O&C Lands.
- Passage of environmental laws in 1970s (NEPA, ESA, etc.) did not slow the pace of clearcutting.
- Throughout the 1980s, over 200,000 log truck-loads of old-growth forests were hauled off O&C land each year.
- By 1988, out of 2.5 million acres of O&C Lands, only 348,000 acres of old-growth forests were left over 200 years old (1 million acres over 80 years).



BLM lands logged from 1950-1995 south of Detroit. Red = clearcut, yellow = thinned



Overlogging led to the Northwest Forest Plan

- Northwest Forest Plan sought to balance wildlife needs and logging.
 - Integrated management on Forest Service and BLM lands to provide timber and habitat for salmon and threatened wildlife.
 - Riparian Reserves to protect fish and provide travel corridors for other wildlife.
 - Late Successional Reserves to protect and restore old-growth dependent species such as owls and murrelets.
- Shift from clearcutting old-growth to thinning of second-growth plantations and other watershed restoration.

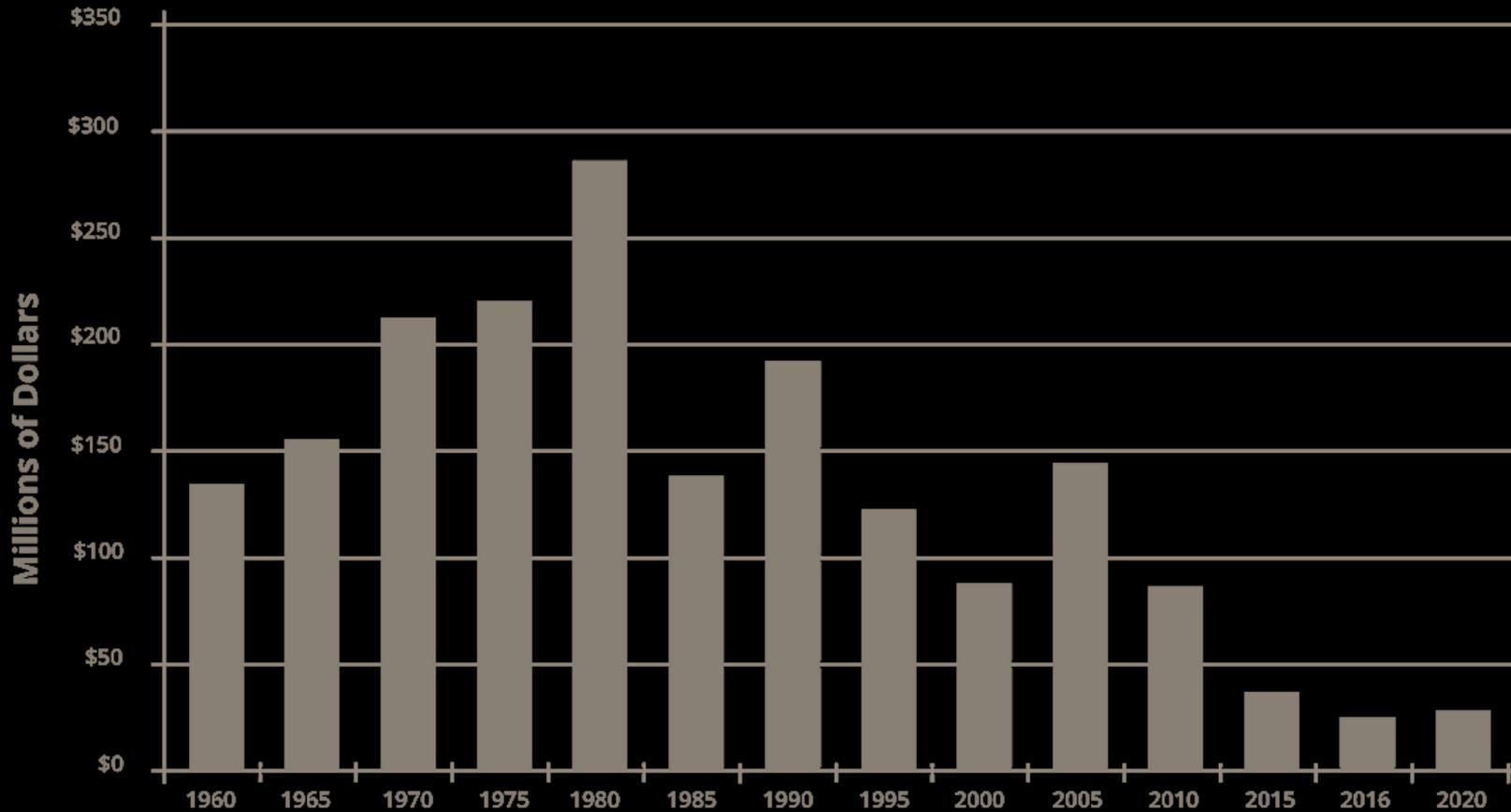
County addiction to timber

- O&C Act links 18 counties where the O&C lands are located to 50% of timber revenue. From 1975 to 1995, that was \$1.7 billion, an average of \$82.9 million a year.
- Decrease in logging under NWFP to deal with species protection and restoration of habitat = decrease in funding to counties from timber.
- Secure Rural Schools and Self Determination Act cut the ties between logging volume and payments to counties.
 - SRS payments initially linked to unsustainable logging levels of 1980s.
 - SRS funds have gone down over time
- Currently, no SRS payments, so counties back to being linked to timber harvest.
- Counties complain about the reduced revenue, but have very low tax rates as a result of the history of timber sale receipts.



O & C Payments to Counties, Historic and Projected

Constant Value Dollars



Payments for 1995-2015 were safety-net payments in lieu of shared timber receipts

Payments projected for 2020 are BLM's estimate with full implementation of its 2016 resource management plan



The Association of O&C Counties

From www.oandc.org

The Association of O&C Counties (AOCC) is committed to the social and economic well being of our communities, and the health and productivity of federal “O&C” forest lands. AOCC advocates for sustained yield management of the O&C forests, as required by federal law under the O&C Act, to protect and support jobs and local economies, essential public services, and healthy resilient forests.

“The AOCC was formed in 1925 as an advocate for the Oregon communities with strong local interest in how the O&C lands are managed. Advocacy by the AOCC resulted in legislation in 1926 and again in 1937 with passage of the O&C Act that is still the governing law guiding management of the O&C lands today. The AOCC has been active in all legislation and all administrative actions regarding the management of these lands for the last 90 years...”



The Association of O&C Counties

Seriously. What is it?

- Unincorporated? Political Action Committee? A business? It is not clear.

What does it do?

- Lobbies for increased timber harvest on O&C Lands
- Pursues aggressive timber-dominant interpretation of O&C Act through litigation



The Association of O&C Counties

How is it funded?

- The AOCC asks for a total flat dues amount of \$500,000 from member counties. The proportion paid by each county is based on their O&C land base. (Douglas Co is 27%, Lane is 15%)
 - Additional funds are also contributed to AOCC for their litigation fund.
- It is not known whether there are additional sources of funding for the Association, and spending information has not been provided.
- In FY 2017-2018, Lane Co. paid from general fund
 - \$76,995 for membership
 - \$29,263 for AOCC Litigation Fund



The Association of O&C Counties

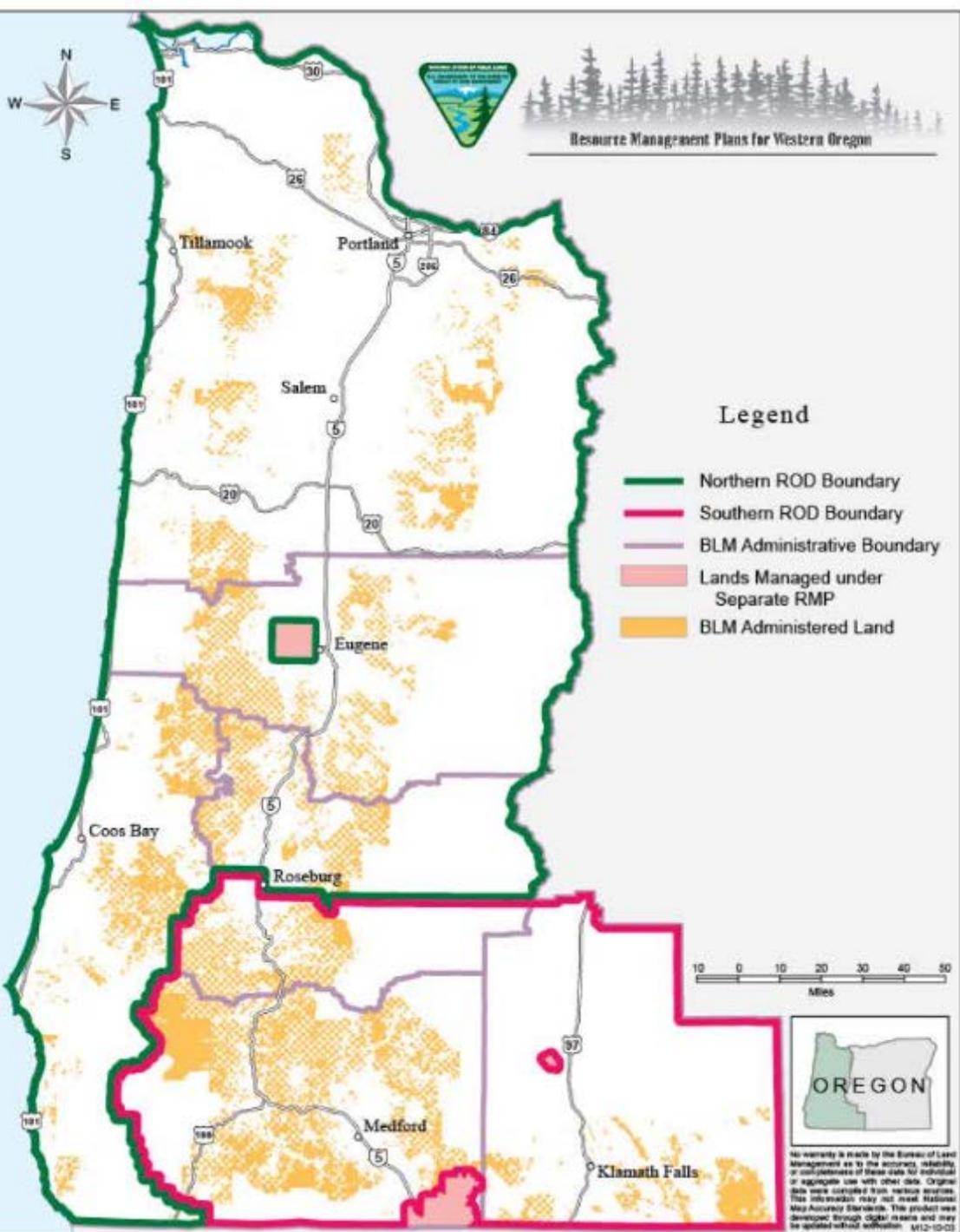
How is it run?

- Representation:
 - Until recently, Board did not represent all counties, and was chosen from within AOCC.
 - In 2018, changed to Board with one rep from each county, chosen by each county's commission.
 - For Lane County, our current rep is Jay Bozevich
- There does not appear to be any requirement to report the business or budget of the AOCC to any Board of Commissioners or the public.
- The public is not welcome to attend AOCC meetings.



AOCC interests align with timber industry

- Management plan revision dismantled Northwest Forest Plan
 - AOCC and timber interests sued for even more timber
- Timber sales that target some of our last older forests and impact threatened wildlife
 - Always supported by AOCC
- Legislation in Congress to increase logging at the expense of water quality, fish & wildlife habitat, restoration, and public participation.
 - Cheered by AOCC
- Administrative effort to shrink or un-designate Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument
 - AOCC sued government over protections



BLM's Resource Management Plans for Western Oregon

- Removes BLM from integrated NWFP landscape plan.
- Weakens stream protections
- Weakens wildlife protections
- Does not protect all old-growth
- Increases aggressive styles of logging and levels
- Increased impacts on climate change

Why Lane Co. should leave AOCC

- The AOCC is not transparent or democratic
- Paying AOCC is not a good use of Lane Co.'s taxpayer dollars.
- The AOCC's positions are not in line with Lane Co. residents' values
 - Outrage over timber sales like Thurston Hills in our backyards
 - Growing recreation economy put at risk by more logging
- There are other ways to support county budget

Leaving the AOCC behind: Why now?



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Multnomah County Chair

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January 26, 2018

Rocky McVay, Executive Director
16289 HWY 101 South, Suite A
Brookings, Oregon 97415
rocky@blupac.com

Dear Mr. McVay:

I am writing to withdraw Multnomah County from membership in the Association of Oregon O&C Counties (AOCC). Multnomah County will no longer be affiliated with or represented by AOCC, and will no longer contribute financially to AOCC. Please remove Multnomah County's name from your website and withdraw Multnomah County's name from any current or pending legal actions being taken by AOCC.

- We've got a progressive majority in Sorenson, Buch, and Berney on the Lane County BoC
 - We came close to leaving AOCC last time we had such a majority
- Momentum!
 - Multnomah Co. left AOCC, let's follow suit
 - Keep up the pressure on the timber industry for bad practices on both public and private/industrial lands.
- Democratic Party of Lane County passed resolution supporting leaving AOCC

What's the push-back?

Arguments we hear against leaving AOCC

- We need AOCC to lobby for county funding.
 - Response: We/the county can do this on our own, work directly with legislators.
- We need a seat at the table to effect change.
 - Response: The AOCC is unlikely to change. It's history is long and linked to timber interests.
- Membership doesn't cost that much.
 - Response: It may not, but it sends a terrible message, and makes us all complicit in an anti-environmental agenda.

What can we do?



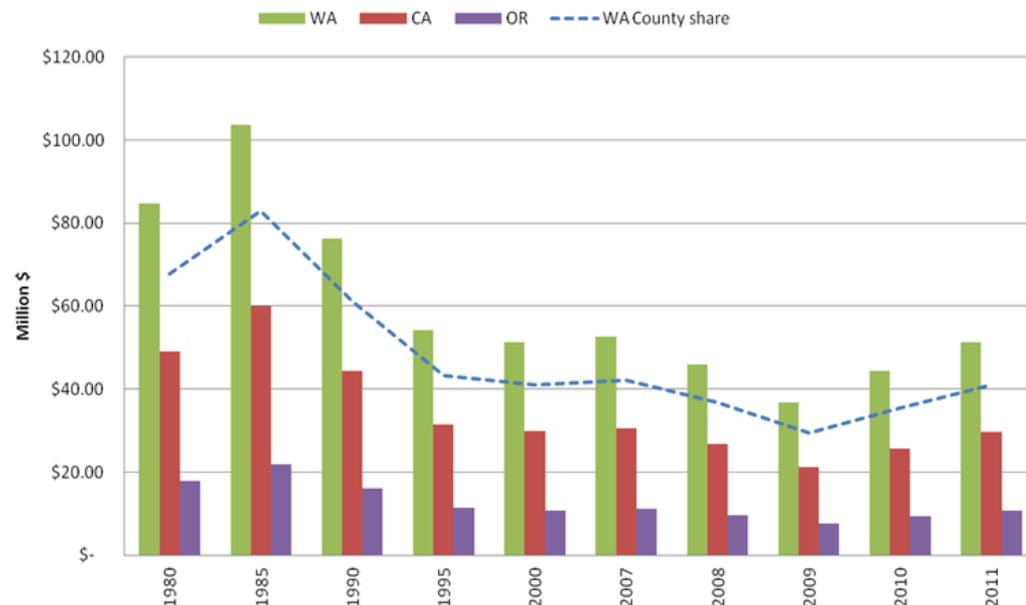
- Keep the issue in the news
 - Letters to the editor
 - Social media
- Attend and testify at BoC meetings
 - Support examination and cost/benefit analysis of AOCC and other orgs funded by County
 - Support un-funding through budget process
 - Support change in representation to more progressive commissioner
- Support decoupling of timber funds and county budgets

Other options: Shared responsibility and long term solutions for county funding

- Take the burden off of public lands by decoupling timber from the budget
- Federal share:
 - Create endowment for long term payments?
 - See Headwaters Economics
- State share:
 - Timber tax reform
- County share:
 - Modest tax increases



Comparison of OR, CA and WA Methods re: Timber Harvest
Tax Revenue in O&C Counties (Stumpage @ \$350/mbf)





OREGON WILD

**Working to protect and restore
Oregon's wildlands, wildlife,
and waters since 1974.**

Chandra LeGue
Western Oregon Field
Coordinator
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