



Oregon efforts to protect water quality

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My experience with Oregon's coastal forests began as a forester in 1961 with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. I retired in 1993.

When I started, timber was king. I saw logging across stream beds, and a truck hauling dirt excavated from new road construction being dumped in the Nestucca river as a way to dispose of excess dirt. However, as time went on things changed dramatically. In the sixties Dead trees (snags) adjacent to clearcut harvest units were felled as they posed a fire hazard when slash was burned. Now, they are retained for cavity dwelling species. Windthrown trees and logging debris was removed from stream beds to improve fish passage. Later we were putting gabions and down trees into streams to improve habitat. Buffer strips were instigated along "Live" streams. Impacts on stream aquatic life was monitored for results. BLM was one of the first to set aside parcels to protect the Northern Spotted owl and hired the first biologist to inventory and make recommendations for their protection. How ironic that all the efforts to "Save" the Owl by not cutting "Old Growth" is failing because after at least two decades of ignoring it, the Fish and Wildlife acknowledges the "Barred Owl" is the real culprit. This bird was identified as a problem by "Jack Ward Thomas" chief of the U.S. forest service way back in the 1980's. The proposal to remove abandoned logging roads is foolish as many are very stable and any removal effort would simply defeat the very purpose of the effort. Most have simply been put to bed (water barred) and some closed off with a gate. I think water management on a watershed basis is superior to a grand scheme simply because limited funding can address problem areas, establish priorities and the knowledge gained from these efforts applied elsewhere...

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