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Contact:

Ivan Maluski, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club – 503-449-2270

Russell Bassett, Association of Northwest Steelheaders – 503-735-5088

Bob Van Dyk, Wild Salmon Center – 503-504-8471

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**Governor Kitzhaber Outlines Vision for Conservation Areas on State Forests
at Oregon Board of Forestry Meeting
Conservation and Fish Protection Groups Testify in Support**

Forest Grove, OR: In remarks to the Oregon Board of Forestry today, Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber today outlined a vision that included the creation of areas on state forests managed primarily for conservation values. The Governor urged the Board to “establish areas managed primarily for conservation on state forests” and to “consider ways of establishing and managing these areas that provide certainty and improved habitat and species recovery outcomes, restoration jobs and other economic benefits such as recreation.” The Governor issued a challenge to the Board to “provide a visible and durable conservation area commitment in a scientifically meaningful manner.”

The remarks came before a Board discussion on 2012 state forest work plan, used to focus agency planning and management activities. During the work plan discussion, conservation and fish protection organizations testified in support of protections for high-priority conservation areas in the Tillamook, Clatsop and other state forests in the 2012 state forest work plan. Conservation and fish protection groups are advocating that the Board use its authority to designate protected areas around key salmon and terrestrial anchor habitats that provide habitat for threatened wild fish and wildlife, high value recreation lands, and other values, such as carbon sequestration.

The Board of Forestry and State Forester had been discussing the creation of conservation areas, and after public testimony and discussion, they agreed to include the issue in the 2012 work plan to put a higher emphasis on the issue.

Also during the meeting, the Board agreed to maintain the current definition of Greatest Permanent Value (GPV). In early 2012, the board will conclude a three year process in which some members of the board had tried to change the definition of GPV to place timber harvest above all other values of Oregon’s state forests, including environmental and recreational values.

Currently, the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests contain no significant tracts of land off limits to logging and road-building. Earlier this year, an [independent science review by Oregon State University’s Institute for Natural Resources](#) said the Department of Forestry’s plans to increase clearcutting and reduce protections for fish was not based on the best available science.

“We need to maintain balance in state forest management,” said Bob Van Dyk of the Wild Salmon Center. “We support the Governor’s call to protect key conservation areas to ensure the long-term health of these forests, while making sure that timber production occurs without trumping all other values.”

The Sierra Club presented a stack of more than 1,250 names of state forest users who signed a petition this summer calling for the creation of permanent protected areas on state forests. The statement read: “As part of a balanced plan, the undersigned endorse the designation of permanently protected conservation areas in Oregon’s state forests to ensure clean water, enhance wild salmon habitat, protect endangered species, store carbon, and provide for wildland hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, and biking.”

“We believe that all Oregonians want to ensure that clean water, wild salmon, recreational opportunities and other environmental values are protected on state lands,” said Ivan Maluski with the Sierra Club. “We believe moving forward with protecting key conservation areas on state lands is the right approach.”

Fish conservation groups pointed to the economic value of healthy fisheries emanating from state forest lands. “Fishing is a key economic driver in Northwest Oregon,” said Russell Bassett of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders. “Unless we strategically protect key salmon habitat and the forests that surround them, we can’t ensure the health of these fisheries for the long term. Thankfully, Governor Kitzhaber has provided the right direction to the Board to better protect key salmon streams.”

The groups pointed to a 2009 research report funded by Travel Oregon and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife called “[Fishing, Hunting, Wildlife Viewing, and Shellfishing in Oregon](#)” which showed that these activities generated \$136.5 million in economic activity in Tillamook and Clatsop Counties in 2008 alone.

In addition to anchoring globally important wild salmon and steelhead runs, the Tillamook and Clatsop state forests provide abundant wildlife habitat, air and water purification, flood and climate regulation, carbon sequestration, wetlands, air quality, world class recreation opportunities, and diverse forest products. More than 400,000 people get some or all of their water supply from rivers flowing from the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests.

The full text of Governor Kitzhaber’s speech to the Board of Forestry can be found at http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/media_room/speeches/s2011/testimony_boardofforestry_110311.shtml.