



Iron Triangle L.L.C.

P.O. Box 325
John Day, OR 97845

CCB 130005

541 575-2102
Fax 541 575-2333

March 23, 2017

TO: Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Representative Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means

RE: Full funding for the Oregon Department of Forestry Federal Forest Restoration Program

Senator Devlin, Representative Nathanson, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means;

Iron Triangle LLC is writing to express our strong support for full funding of the Oregon Department of Forestry Federal Forest Restoration Program at \$4.4 million in the 2017-2019 biennium budget. This investment, as demonstrated in the last two biennium, is critical to increasing the pace, scale, and effectiveness of restoration of Oregon's federal forests.

In Grant County more than 64% of the land base is managed by the USFS and BLM, statewide more than 60% of Oregon's forests are managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. These forests provide diverse economic opportunities, clean air and drinking water, critical wildlife habitat, and recreational experiences. Grant County has historically realized some of the highest unemployment rates in the State of Oregon, we have experienced steadily declining school enrollment and given the current funding formula for public schools this has put our schools in a death spiral. In addition, recent research has suggested that at least 2.5 million acres of federal forestland in Eastern and Southwestern Oregon alone requires active restoration in order to restore forest health. Changes in forest management over recent decades has also resulted in the loss of much of the state's forest products infrastructure and associated jobs.

The Federal Forest Restoration Program works to support the development of a sustainable forest products infrastructure that provides living wage jobs in restoration and stewardship of federal forests through collaboration, innovative partnerships, and integration of science into planning and management. The program seeks to enhance fish and wildlife habitat, reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildfire, and produce timber supply for mills and forest products companies. Oregon pioneered the model of forest collaboration that has expanded across the West and we take pride in moving beyond an "us versus them" mentality towards a "triple bottom line" solutions oriented approach.

Grant County has recognized the decline in forest infrastructure, and the need for accelerated ecological restoration of our forests. Through cooperation with the counties, State of Oregon and the US Forest Service, the stakeholders on the Malheur National Forest began a process of collaboration nearly a decade ago to do all we could to accelerate the pace and scale of forest restoration on the Malheur National Forest. This process resulted in the issuance of a 10 year stewardship contract being let on the Malheur National Forest and the commitment by the USFS to maintain a 75 MMBF harvest on the Malheur National Forest. This has proved to require extensive cooperation, coordination and collaboration by all stakeholders on the Malheur National Forest.

In the 2015-2017 budget, the legislature invested \$5 million in this unique program and expanded it statewide. That investment paid off and has been leveraged more than 2:1 by the U.S. Forest Service in priority treatment areas across Oregon. As a result, a 16 percent increase in restoration-related jobs and a 14 percent increase in federal timber harvest have occurred across eastern Oregon since the program's inception. On the Malheur National Forest their portion of the funds were utilized by providing timber marking crews to layout and GPS the unit boundaries of timber sales and task orders for the 10 Year Stewardship Contract. These crews which were incorporated into existing work crews, allowed for more units to get laid out, on more projects and therefore finishing the planning and layout for more timber sales and task orders on the Malheur National Forest. The physical assistance provided in marking and layout combined with the additional LIDAR and Stand Exam contracts which were funded with these monies on the Malheur National Forest, allowed the Malheur National Forest to maintain the pace and scale necessary for the restoration of the forest ecosystem on the Malheur National Forest.

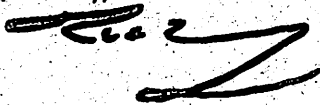
In the next biennium we have the opportunity to build upon these successes by incorporating the program in the ODF base budget and developing and implementing the Good Neighbor Authority agreement that Governor Brown recently signed. The increased investment and use of new tools will support additional partnerships between state and federal land managers and enable greater returns and benefits to the State of Oregon and participating partners.

Iron Triangle LLC, the holder of the Malheur 10 year Stewardship Contract is keenly aware of the contribution these State funds have to the continued economic growth, ecological restoration and social well-being of the citizens of Grant County. As one of the major employers within the county we understand the importance of maintaining the consistency, pace and scale of the current programs on the Malheur National Forest.

We appreciate the Department of Forestry's implementation of the Federal Forest Restoration Program over the past two biennium and strongly encourage you to continue to support this groundbreaking effort. Full funding for the Federal Forest Restoration Program at \$4.4 million in the 2017-2019 biennium is integral to improving the health and resilience of our federal forest lands, creating and sustaining restoration and stewardship jobs in rural communities, protecting unique habitat for fish and wildlife, and restoring public lands for the benefit of all Oregonians.

Thank you for supporting this important program.

Respectfully,



Russ Young, LLC Manager
Iron Triangle LLC