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A Basic Management Plan for the U.S. Forest Service lands in the eleven Western States.

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Note: The core concepts of this plan were first put on paper August 1, 2008. Since then it has been revised and refined, based on the evolving nature of the issues surrounding National Forest lands in the West and the input of many experts with diverse points of view.

1. Based on subbasin-scale (5,000- to 50,000-acre) watershed allocations to assure suitability and manageability, divide the National Forest lands into the following categories:
 - a. One-third to conservation, including: wildlife, wilderness, parks, recreation areas, and old growth preservation;
 - b. One-third to riparian management of rivers and streams for drinking water, flood control, and healthy native fish populations;
 - c. One-third to produce sustainable forest products for the American public.
2. Require the Forest Service to manage the watersheds in each category for its designated purposes. A portion of harvest and recreational revenue would be retained by the Forest Service for resource management purposes within the same land category.
3. Land exchanges among categories would be permitted to enhance the ability of the Forest Service to efficiently carry out the purposes of each category.
4. Establish this Plan for a minimum of 80 years.
5. Eliminate nuisance lawsuits against the Plan by requiring plaintiffs to establish a bond to pay for any damages.
6. Require Congress to order the U.S. Forest Service to review implementation every two years, resulting in a report to the President and US citizens.

IMPLEMENTATION:

This management plan would be implemented by the passage of non-discretionary legislation to ensure the fulfillment of each element of this integrated concept.

BENEFITS

1. Jobs. Most importantly, the Plan would invigorate rural communities and our nation's forests, wildlife populations, and waterways with needed jobs and small business opportunities.

2. Water. Active riparian management would be for purposes of assuring abundant freshwater supplies, mitigating flood damage, and enhancing native fish populations. Such activities would also produce a significant number of needed jobs, food, and marketable forest products. Commercial activities, including timber harvest and recreational businesses, would be permitted on riparian lands if in compliance with these objectives, best management practices and current ground-based research.

3. Conservation. Easements would be focused on preservation of local native plants and animals (including old-growth forests and federally designated rare and endangered species) and on providing a wide variety of recreational opportunities for all citizens. Commercial timber harvest and recreational businesses would be permitted on conservation lands, so long as they enhance the purposes of the category and meet the approval of local groups espousing those purposes.

4. Forest Products. Timber harvesting provides quality employment, which in turn contribute tax revenue to state governments and the U.S. Treasury, along with supporting industries' tax payments. In Oregon, for example, every million board feet of timber harvested is estimated to create 16.5 direct and indirect, year-round, family wage jobs. This approach should ensure harvesting of the maximum sustained yield of the timber on an annual allowable sale acreage. Example: If it was determined that an 80 year growing cycle would produce the maximum sustained yield, this would allow a cut of 1/80th per year. The same applies to every growing period, thus assuring the same amount of timber growth in perpetuity.

5. Tax Savings. The Plan would eliminate the need for Secure Rural Schools payments to the counties, which has allocated billions of taxpayer dollars to Western states.

6. Trade Imbalance. The Plan would help our imbalance of payments to foreign countries because the U.S. would export more, higher-value products and import less raw materials. Softwood lumber imports have increased steadily since 1991 to an amount equal to approximately 30% of the raw material supply of Western mills. This Plan would greatly reduce softwood imports and also reduce the environmental footprint of transporting raw materials long distances.

7. Wildfire Mitigation. The Plan would help reduce forest fires and reduce the extraordinary financial burden to the American taxpayer in paying for wildfire suppression (\$1.7 billion in 2015).

8. Government Transparency. The Plan would allow each side in the debate to demonstrate to the American public and its representatives on the ground the strengths of its approach to management.