



To create awareness and appreciation for the value of trees, and encourage an understanding about the protection, management and conservation of the renewable forest

11/05/2019

Board of Forestry Testimony

Chairman Imeson, State Forster Daugherty, and Honored Members of the Board;

My name is Melissa Thompson and I am here today to tell you all my “WHY”. I was born in Mapleton, Oregon... a town that epitomizes the very definition of RURAL OREGON. A town from which slogans like “Timber Dollars at Work” were designed.

My hometown was built, funded, and ran for many years on money generated from the timber industry. Born the daughter of a mill worker and granddaughter of loggers and mill workers; my very first paying job was for the sawmill in town. This sawmill, with its various logging and forestry operations, supported MANY working families, from all the local towns and cities nearby. Some of my earliest memories in this life are of the sounds of a mill operation, yarder whistles, and the smell of timber being milled and loaded on trucks and trains to be delivered to destinations abroad.

By the time I was in high school, the lines of misinformation regarding this industry were very apparent. I found myself often defending the industry simply because fellow students were being told things that were either false or had been greatly exaggerated by extremist. The effects of environmental extremism were even then wreaking havoc on this once thriving community. It wouldn't be long before all the mills from the town I knew and loved would be closed; taking with them countless jobs and revenue. To say it was devastating doesn't even come close.

Now, as an adult, I am the owner of a small logging operation. Our belief for our company and this industry remains the same... Managed forests are, and will ALWAYS be, crucial to the well being of ALL! As such, the jobs in forest management and the timber industry have the unique opportunity to support working families, as they did when I was a child.

I joined Oregon Women in Timber as a way to further my ability to help educate others of the importance of proper forest management. I love the science-based information we provide to both children and adults alike. I look forward to working with this fantastic group of women as we continue to grow awareness.

My hope for the future is that Oregon will continue to lead the country in sustainable forestry and active forest management. This will mean listening and learning and working as a team. Only this will ensure Oregon's forests will continue to thrive for generations to come. Thank you.