

Volume Estimates

Forest Service

The Forest Service estimates that it manages more than 9 million acres of forest land in Region 6 (Oregon and Washington) that could benefit from thinning.¹ This includes forest stands less than 80 years old in forests managed in accordance with the Northwest Forest Plan, and forests more than 80 years old in forests managed in accordance with the Eastside Screens (i.e., 21" dbh [diameter at breast height] limit imposed).² The Forest Service estimates that there is approximately 10.8 Bbf (billion board feet) of volume that could be obtained by thinning forests less than 80 years of age.³ Increasing the stand age to 160 years, the agency estimates that there is 19 Bbf that could be thinned.⁴ Based on this information, approximately 14 Bbf of volume could be obtained by thinning forest stands up to 120 years of age.

In FY 2006, the most recent year for which information is available, the USFS in Region 6 cut a total of 382.1 MMbf (million board feet), which is close to the six-year average (380.2 MMbf).⁵ This amount includes all age classes, including old growth, as well as all forests managed in accordance with the Eastside Screens. ***It does not include national forest lands in California (Region 5) that are managed in accordance with the Northwest Forest Plan,***⁶ and falls far short of the 757 MMbf anticipated from all Northwest Forest Plan forests.

The Forest Service in Region 6 has stated that it believes it could thin 800 MMbf/year for approximately 25 years.⁷ This estimate does not include stands that contain trees larger than 21" dbh that are managed in accordance with the Eastside Screens, and nor does it include forests in Region 5 that are managed in accordance with the Northwest Forest Plan. Including these forests would yield additional volume on top of the 800 MMbf/year already predicted by the Forest Service.

Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) estimates that it manages approximately 1.1 million acres of forest land in western Oregon that is less than 120 years old and could benefit from thinning.⁸ In 2001, the BLM estimated that about 306,000 acres less than 80 years old in just Late-Successional Reserves (LSRs) were in need of thinning.⁹ According to the BLM, in the total volume would from such thinning would be about 1.65 Bbf.¹⁰

The agency also indicates that there are an additional 794,000 acres ($1,100,000 - 306,000 = 794,000$) of forest less than 120 years old that are outside of LSRs, and are available for thinning. If the total available acreage were thinned over a 25-year timeframe, it would yield a year timber volume of 237 million board feet per year. This estimate does not take into consideration in-growth of stands that are not presently available for thinning, but would be over the next 25 years.

Over the past 6 years (2001 – 2006), the BLM has cut an average of 99.3 MMbf per year. Although cut levels have been increasing, this number is no where near the 203 MMbf/year predicted in the Northwest Forest Plan. Moreover, the vast majority of this volume has consisted of mature and old growth trees, which are highly controversial.

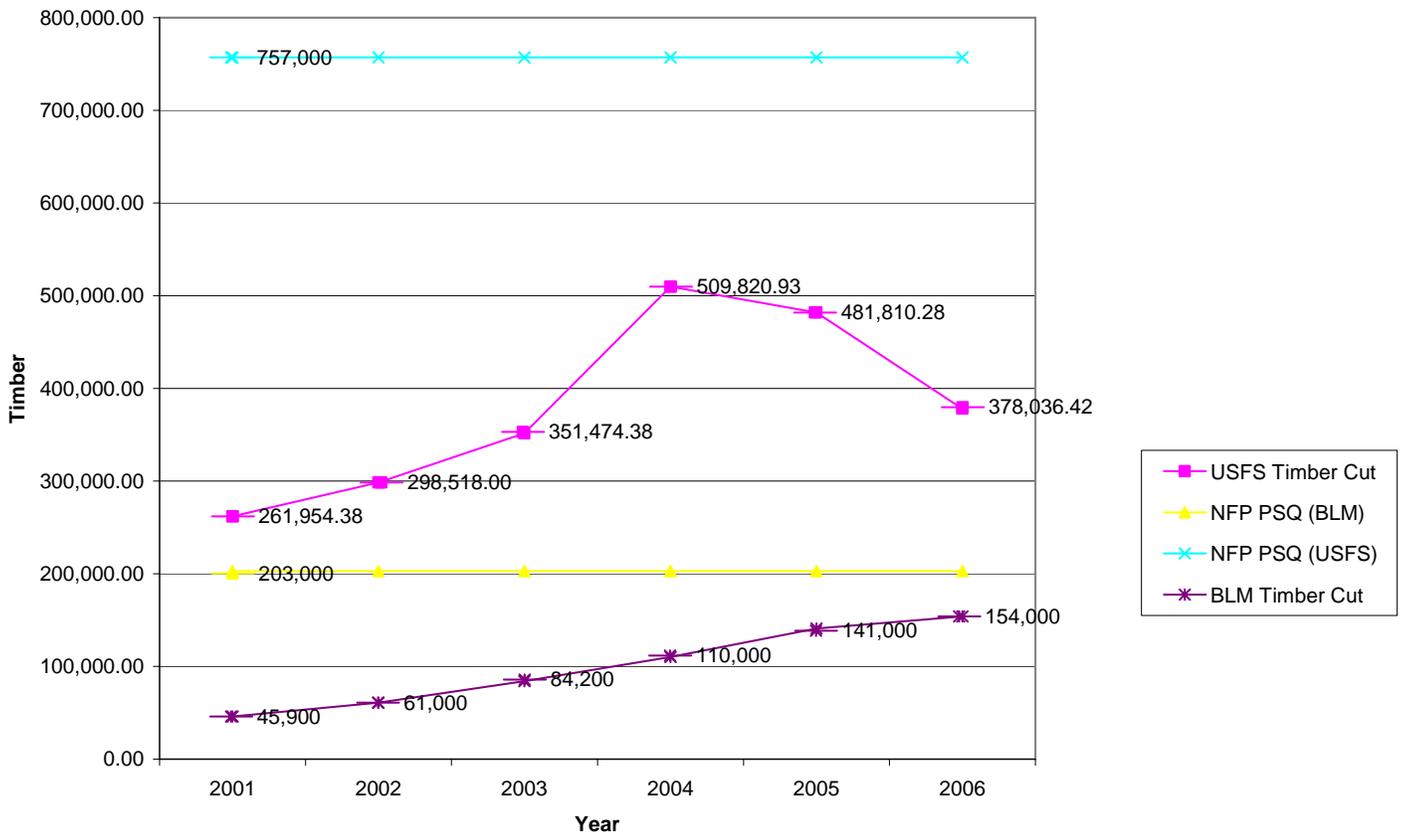
Caveats

While these volume estimates from the Forest Service and BLM are instructive, a few things should be kept in mind. First, it is possible that not every acre that the agencies have identified as "thinnable" is in fact an acre that should be thinned given site-specific issues with operability, accessibility, steep slopes, unstable soils, wildlife habitat needs, etc., which would preclude treatment. Second, it is likely that there are *more* acres available for thinning than the agencies suggest. For example, the Forest Service's estimates assume that *no* thinning would occur in any stands on the east side that contain a single tree larger than 21" dbh. However,

there is a scientific consensus that in dry forest types, smaller and younger trees – as well as larger firs that have encroached into pine stands due to fire suppression – should be thinned, while larger and older pre-fire suppression trees should be protected.

Regardless of these caveats, it is safe to say that the new forest management regime described in the DeFazio legislation will provide far more timber to local mills than under the Northwest Forest Plan, and that this volume will be noncontroversial with most of the public. The legislation will also conserve and restore old-growth forests for the benefit of future generations.

**Oregon and Washington Timber Cut
2001 - 2006**



¹ USFS, *Region 6 Thinning Potential Analysis* (2007).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ USFS, *Region 6 Timber Cut and Sold Report* (2001 – 2006). There is no indication how much of this volume comes from salvage sales, which is highly controversial.

⁶ Shasta-Trinity, Klamath, Six Rivers, and Mendocino National Forests, portions of the Lassen and Modoc National Forests, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in northwest California.

⁷ USFS, *Region 6 Thinning Potential Analysis* (2007).

⁸ Chris Cadwell & Richard Hardt, BLM, *Western Oregon BLM Thinning Briefing for Congressional Staff* (May 18, 2007)

⁹ BLM, *Late-Successional Reserves – Inquiry from NW Delegation* (Sept. 11, 2001).

¹⁰ *Id.* Thinning 306,000 acres (<80 years) would yield 165 MMbf/year for 10 years, or a total of 1,650 MMbf (or, 1.65 Bbf).

Assuming the same thinning intensity, 794,000 is to x MMbf as 306,000 acres is to 1,650 MMbf. Solving for x yields 4,281 MMbf. Adding 4,281 MMbf to 1,650 MMbf equals 5,931 MMbf or 5.931 Bbf. Dividing 5,931 MMbf by 25 years yields 237 MMbf/year.