

W.U.A.

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LANE COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION AND
ORDER No.

-) IN THE MATTER OF URGING THE OREGON
-) CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO MAKE
-) THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COOS,
-) LOWER UMPQUA, AND SUISLAW INDIANS'
-) FOREST LAND RESTORATION PROPOSAL A
-) TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY, AND WORK
-) TO ENSURE THE CONGRESS ENACTS ITS
-) PROPOSAL DURING THE 110TH
-) CONGRESSIONAL SESSION.

WHEREAS, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians (Tribes) are one of nine federally-recognized tribes in the State of Oregon, and are a respected community partner with Lane County and the entire state; and

WHEREAS, the Tribes lived and prospered in their Ancestral Territory of 1.6 million acres of land in the central Oregon coast and coast range for centuries before EuroAmerican settlement of the west; and

WHEREAS, in 1855 tribal leaders signed a treaty with the U.S. government that required them to give up their ancestral homeland, with the promise of compensation and other benefits from the federal government such as education, housing and economic support. While the Tribes lived up to the spirit of the treaty, it was never ratified and the Tribes were forcibly removed to the Alsea sub-agency of the Siletz Reservation where half of the tribal members perished during the move and at the reservation, mostly due to starvation and inhumane living conditions; and

WHEREAS, a further injustice occurred in 1954 when the U.S. Congress terminated the tribe's federal recognition against their fervent opposition; and

WHEREAS, it wasn't until 1984 when the Tribes' federal recognized Indian tribal status was restored; and

WHEREAS, today the Tribes remain the only federally-recognized Indian tribes in the State of Oregon that has never received compensation from the federal government for the loss of their homeland nor had ancestral forestlands restored; and

WHEREAS, the Tribes have worked for more than a decade on the Forest Land Restoration Proposal that would return to the Tribes close to 43,840 acres of their ancestral homeland that is currently part of the Siuslaw National Forest. This represents less than 3 percent of the Tribes' original ancestral homeland; and

WHEREAS, the land would be held in trust for the Tribes by the U.S Department of the Interior/Bureau of Indian Affairs, but management would be the Tribes' responsibility, working in close collaboration with local, county, state and federal governments and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the Tribes would manage the land consistent with the objectives of the adjacent Siuslaw National Forest, while adhering to federal environmental laws including the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act; and

WHEREAS, the Tribes' comprehensive land management strategy for their restored homeland includes preserving archeological and culturally sensitive sites, cultivating a healthy forest ecosystem, protecting old growth forests, improving fish and wildlife habitat, improving recreational facilities, and retaining public access; and

WHEREAS, a forest homeland would allow the Tribes to provide educational opportunities for young tribal members, and non-tribal members, to learn the value of protecting and managing forests and watersheds; restoring fish, wildlife, and their habitats; and respecting tribal heritage; and

WHEREAS, revenues from the Tribes' thinning to accelerate the development of late successional characteristics will be used to provide economic stability to support tribal programs and to restore habitat in the forest; and

WHEREAS, the Tribes on its tribal forests will prohibit all clear-cutting or harvesting of timber more than 120 years of age; and

WHEREAS, if the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 is not renewed or replaced by other legislation to compensate counties for lost federal timberland revenues, 25% of revenues from timber sales off the tribal forests will go to Lane County and other affected counties in accordance with the 1908 National Forest Revenue Act; and

WHEREAS, the Tribes have worked collaboratively on this proposal with conservation groups, the timber industry, the federal government, local governments and other stakeholders. Through this collaboration, the Tribes have produced a public resource management strategy that describes how they will actively manage a forest and watershed for long-term health and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that a land base to call their own is the only way for an Indian tribe to become economically self-sufficient, while preserving its culture and connecting spiritually with their ancestors and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the fact that the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians have been without a restored homeland is an Oregon and national indignation. This injustice has gone on for far too long and it is time for the Congress to right a wrong.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Lane County Board of Commissioners urges the Oregon Congressional delegation to make the Tribes' forest land restoration proposal a top legislative priority, and work to ensure the Congress enacts its proposal during the 110th Congressional session. County staff and consultants are instructed to place the Tribes' forest land restoration proposal on Lane County's federal agenda, and advocate for its passage with the Oregon Congressional delegation.

DATED this _____ day of October 2007.

Faye Stewart, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners

APPROVED AS TO FORM

Date 10-11-2007 Lane County


OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL

