

Comments for the Northwest Forest Plan Amendment Scoping process

Issue: Community and Economic Considerations

From: CoastRangeAssociation

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Scoping Statement:

Community and Economic Considerations: Aligning timber and non-timber product supply strategies with community needs, environmental justice principles, and Tribal collaboration, reflecting the socio-economic dynamics influenced by forest management.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. The Scoping letter outlines laudable goals. Aligning timber and non-timber product supply strategies with community needs, environmental justice principles, and Tribal collaboration in light of socio-economic dynamics influenced by forest management. The Coast Range Association (CRA) has a long history in these very issues. We reference and note the Community Socioeconomic Information System (CSIS) tool developed by the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station (Donoghue and Sutton 2006a).

The CRA used the CSIS spatial data set of community boundaries and census data using 1990 and 2000 censuses and added the 2010 and 2020 census data. The result was a population data set for the entire Northwest Forest Plan area for all delineated community boundaries of the 2006 CSIS project.

Out of the new dataset, we built a **population change map** of rural Oregon comparing CSIS communities between 1990 and 2020. The results are dramatic. The difficult work of integrating two new Census data sets into the CSIS geospatial boundaries was accomplished by Spencer Zinke - a 2022 graduate from UCLA in Geography. CRA staff then characterized each community's population change between 1990 and 2020 according to four categories. Those four categories are related to Oregon's population growth of 49% between 1990 and 2020.

Categories of Population Change

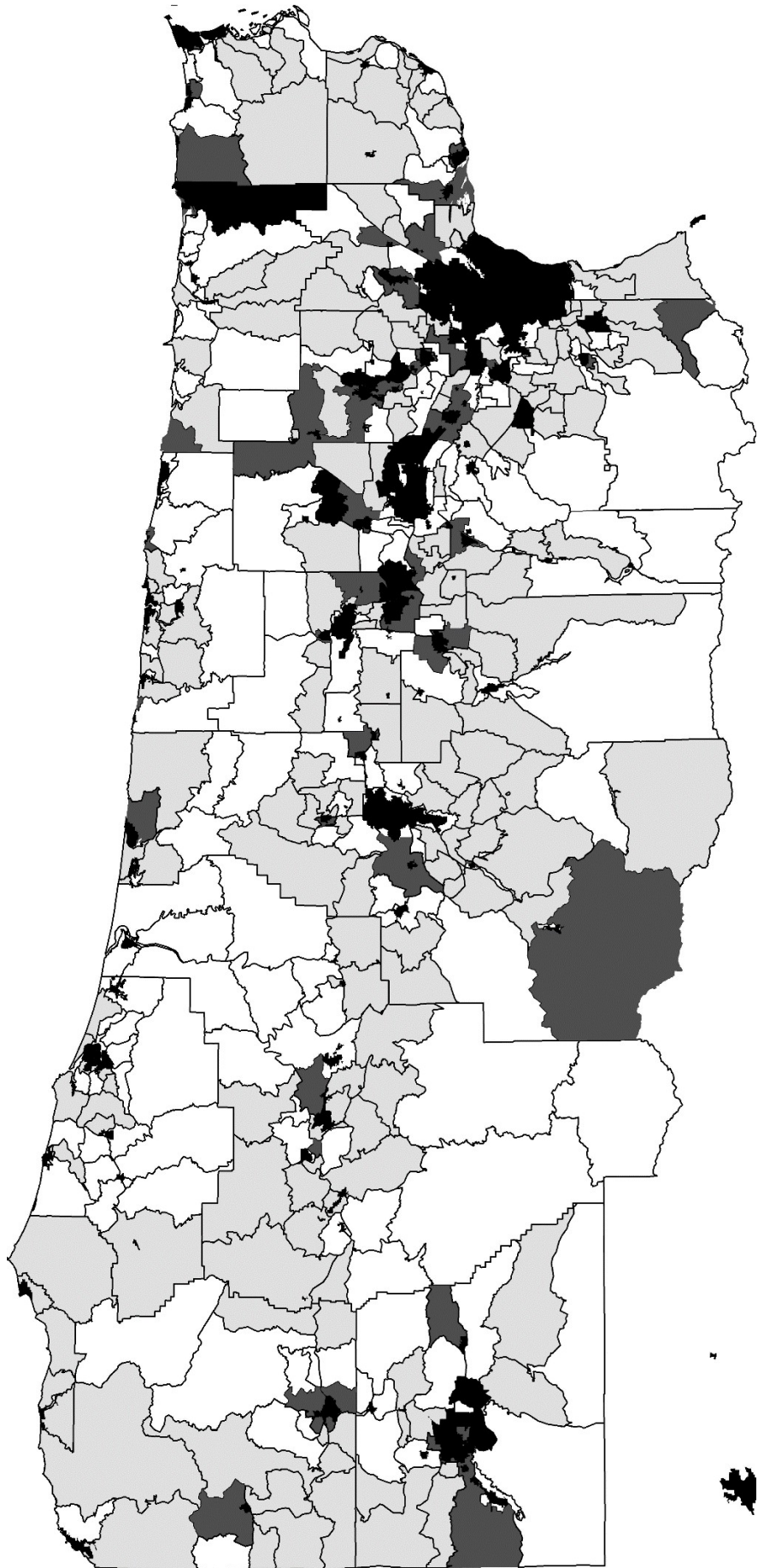
Loss = An absolute decline in population (<0%)

Poor Growth = Half or less of Oregon's 1990-2020 population growth of 49%. (0% to 24.5%)

Average Growth = 24.6% growth to 73.5% growth

Strong Growth = >73.6% growth or greater

The Results:



Color Key Categories of Population Change

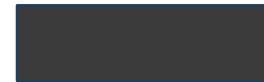
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Almost all average (dark grey) or strong (black) rural population growth occurred near urban areas, the Willamette Valley or select coastal communities.

Three areas with a high percentage of private forest ownership saw population loss or poor population growth. Those areas are Clatsop and Columbia counties, the Hwy 20 corridor between Philomath and Toledo, and Coos County.

Coos County forests are 62% privately owned. If any county should benefit from unrestricted logging it was Coos County. Yet, Coos County had the worst performance for population growth of all western Oregon counties. Coos county lost population between 1990 and 2020.

We are happy to share with the Forest Service our updated data for the CSIS communities.

Our population change research suggests the Forest Service consider the following questions as you move forward toward a Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

1. How can it be explained that population change suggesting social and economic decline occurred across all rural areas of western Oregon in spite of land ownership type?
2. How does western Oregon's population change between 1990 and 2020 mirror similar trends across the US?
3. What macroeconomic forces account for rural population trends in the US?