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Background Brief on ...

# Forestry

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## **Background**

Forests cover 49 percent of Oregon's land area, or about 28 million acres.

Some of the most productive forestlands in the world are forest areas in the Coast Range that receive more than 100 inches of rainfall annually. Oregon's forests are integral to the state's identity, its economy and its quality of life, providing clean water, wildlife habitat, timber products, jobs, revenue for public services, and recreational and tourism opportunities.

Many states have experienced substantial conversion of forestland to development, agriculture and other uses, Oregon has maintained its forestland base; however, given Oregon's growth and changes in forestland ownership patterns, fragmentation or loss of working forestland remains a concern for many Oregonians.

In addition to the 28 million forested acres, Oregon's forest resource includes *urban forests*, trees in neighborhoods and other developed landscapes, which have benefits in property value, retention of storm runoff and other areas.

Oregon leads the nation in lumber production. Although harvests have dropped sharply on federal lands and jobs and industry infrastructure have been reduced, the forest sector remains important, particularly in rural communities, providing 190,000 direct and indirect jobs and 11 percent of Oregon's economic output.

## **Oregon's Forest Practices Act**

Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 527.610 to 527.770, 527.990(1) and 527.992 make up the Oregon Forest Practices Act. The Act provides for timber harvest consistent with environmentally sound management of water, soil, air quality, fish, wildlife and scenic resources. The Act's requirements include leaving streamside buffers and reforestation after harvest.

## **Oregon's Forest Policy**

As expressed in the Board of Forestry's *Forestry Program for Oregon*, state policy holds that keeping forests sustainable requires balancing economic, social and environmental values. These values are interdependent.

Maintaining *environmental* values protects the forest's health and productivity, which is the basis of providing benefits. *Economic* values are to retain forest use in the face of growing pressure to convert to other uses, and to pay to protect and enhance forest productivity. *Social* values, such as recreation, revenue for public services, and public confidence that forests are managed in a balanced way.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

As Oregon continues to grow, there is an emerging movement for *forestry services relevant to urban and suburban residents*. Issues include an orderly, environmentally sound transition from forest to developed use, and addressing concerns that may arise among neighbors or local entities when commercial forestry is practiced near homes and other built-up areas.

Large expanses of forests, primarily federally owned land in eastern and southern Oregon, are in *poor health* – overcrowded with small trees, under insect and disease attack, and vulnerable to large, unusually severe fires. Fire suppression efforts have prevented fire from playing a natural role in forest ecosystems. Reducing fuels and restoring health across millions of acres of forest is a challenge.

However, the condition of these forests do pose an opportunity: *use of woody biomass* to restore forest health, provide a renewable energy source, and stimulate local economies that have suffered as federal timber harvests have diminished in recent years. The Department of Forestry (DOF) is working with its partners to explore and develop this possibility.

Recognizing the importance of federal lands, the Board and Department have increased their involvement in federal forest policy, planning and management. For instance, the Board has convened an advisory committee to help it define a vision of how federal forests can best contribute to Oregon's well being.

*Budget cuts* have impacted the Department's ability to carry out its core duties and the reductions represent diminished investment in the

health and productivity of Oregon's forests.

### **The Oregon Board of Forestry**

The Board of Forestry consists of seven citizens appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Board appoints the state forester, and oversees the Department of Forestry and general forest policy of the state.

DOF's major activities include:

- Providing fire protection on approximately 15.8 million acres – primarily Oregon's privately owned forestlands, but also including state-owned forests and a limited amount of other publicly-owned land
- Administering the Forest Practices Act
- Providing guidance and technical assistance to landowners
- Research and monitoring
- Managing state-owned forestland for a mix of environmental, economic and social benefits (Oregon has five state-owned forests: the Tillamook, Clatsop, Santiam, Elliott and Sun Pass, and other scattered state-owned holdings)
- Helping cities, community groups and other entities to manage urban forests

### **Staff and Agency Contacts**

Marvin Brown, State Forester  
503-945-7211

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541-737-1585

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503-945-7420

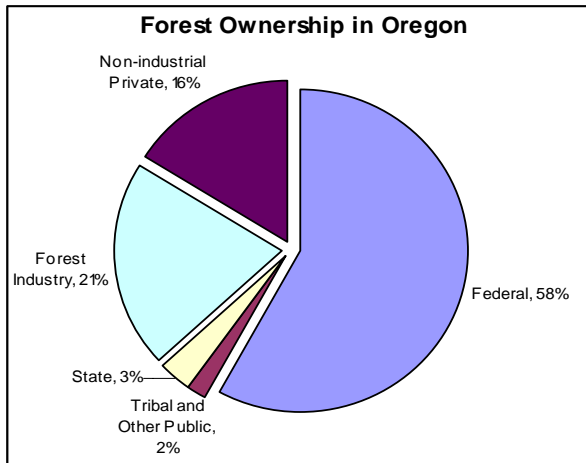
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*The Department of Forestry assisted with the development of this document.*

Figures and Statistics:

Revenue to Counties from Timber Sales on Board of Forestry Lands*					
County	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Benton	\$605,756	\$1,009,413	\$2,596,528	\$792,073	\$1,473,011
Clackamas	\$998,337	\$336,256	\$850,961	\$294,440	\$504,622
Clatsop	\$12,124,086	\$26,399,160	\$19,312,820	\$14,979,101	\$18,966,770
Columbia	\$1,443,747	\$1,026,224	\$741,227	\$963,567	\$680,851
Coos	\$91,680	\$184,951	\$262,816	\$109,904	\$460,526
Douglas	\$571,521	\$252,451	\$0	\$30,348	\$334,652
Josephine	\$104,676	\$76	\$0	\$0	\$0
Klamath	\$1,832,427	\$511,363	\$392,276	\$1,806,073	\$758,077
Lane	\$1,311,575	\$1,957,402	\$979,385	\$2,741,105	\$1,938,839
Lincoln	\$1,452,752	\$1,220,373	\$738,319	\$1,400,617	\$1,439,611
Linn	\$4,283,070	\$3,459,852	\$4,051,916	\$5,342,905	\$3,234,956
Marion	\$156,344	\$674,845	\$1,059,923	\$3,057,678	\$3,497,389
Polk	\$268,255	\$663,546	\$134,808	\$207,030	\$189,675
Tillamook	\$10,055,579	\$9,408,191	\$10,140,265	\$13,083,756	\$18,190,282
Washington	\$7,391,017	\$2,696,736	\$6,656,840	\$3,781,002	\$6,328,066
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$42,690,822</b>	<b>\$49,801,650</b>	<b>\$47,918,084</b>	<b>\$48,589,600</b>	<b>\$57,997,327</b>

**Common School Lands**  
 In addition to Board of Forestry lands, ODF manages Common School Lands under agreement with the State Land Board and the Division of State Lands. The federal government deeded these lands to Oregon at statehood. Timber sale revenues from the lands are dedicated to the state's Common School Fund.



Annual Timber Harvests for All Oregon, by Ownership Group, 1985-2005  
 in Billion Board Feet

