



Forest Facts

OREGON'S FORESTS: SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

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How big are Oregon's forests?

Oregon's forests cover more than 30 million of the state's 63 million-acre land base, or about 48 percent of the state's total landmass.

Who owns Oregon's forests?

About 60 percent of all forestlands in Oregon are owned by the federal government. Various private owners hold 35 percent; 3 percent belongs to the State of Oregon; 1 percent are tribe lands; 1 percent is in other public ownerships.

Are Oregon's forests growing faster than they are being harvested? Are Oregon's forests sustainable?

Oregon timber harvests have been between 4.3 and 4.5 billion board feet over the last several years. This is well below the 5.0 billion board feet considered to be sustainable under current policies and regulations.

Oregon timber harvests have been relatively stable over the last 5 years. However, this trend may not continue because of declining prices for lumber and plywood, and low timber sale levels from Oregon's federal forests.

A viable primary forest processing industry contributes to state and local economies, provides raw materials for secondary processing, and helps preserve financial incentives for preventing forest land from being converted to other more developed uses. Public lands are now harvesting approximately 11 percent of public forest's potential for growing timber. Private forests are harvesting approximately 93 percent of private forest's potential for growing timber.

Maintaining timber harvest levels while also meeting other environmental, economic, and social needs is very important to Oregonians. Oregon was the first state to enact comprehensive rules governing forest practices and protecting forest resources including water, fish, wildlife, soil and air. With strong support from industry leaders, the Oregon Legislature enacted the Oregon Forest Practices Act in 1971. The Act requires reforestation, protection of water resources and wildlife habitat, limits on clearcuts and proper road construction and maintenance.

What about development?

Although lands statewide are remaining in forest, farms, and rangeland, many tracts are experiencing significant increases in structures and population. We

are not losing much forestland, but additional dwellings are being built on private forest land.

Fire risk and suppression costs increase dramatically in these rapidly expanding wildland-urban interface areas. There is also increased potential for conflict over management practices and commodity production.

Around the globe and here at home, we need actively managed healthy forests.

How many people work in Oregon's forest products industry?

As of mid-2009, there are about 40,000 Oregonians working in sawmills, plywood plants, forestry services, pulp and paper manufacturing operations, logging and trucking companies, and wood furniture and other secondary wood products manufacturing facilities. These jobs account for some 3 percent of jobs in Oregon and 4 percent of the state's labor income.

The total economic output supported directly and indirectly by Oregon's forest sector is about \$22 billion, or about 11 percent of the total value of goods and services produced in Oregon.

What is the state's largest wildfire since 1900?

The 2002 Biscuit Fire on the Siskiyou National Forest burned more than 400,000 acres. Estimated to be one of Oregon's largest in recorded history, the Biscuit Fire encompassed most of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness. The boundary of the Biscuit Fire stretches from 10 miles east of the coastal community of Brookings, Oregon; south into northern California; east to the Illinois Valley; and north to within a few miles of the Rogue River.

By contrast, the Tillamook Burn, which actually comprised four fires between 1933 and 1951, covered 360,882 acres. Today, because of the massive reforestation effort, the Tillamook Burn area in Northwest Oregon is a healthy, growing forest.

What is the No. 1 cause of wildfires?

People cause the most fires; on the average, about 68 percent of all wildfires are human-caused. Lightning and natural causes are responsible for the remainder.

What's the most common tree east of the Cascades?

The ponderosa pine is the most common tree east of the Cascades and is Oregon's No. 2 tree. Mature ponderosa pines have an interesting bark that flakes off in shapes like jigsaw puzzle pieces. Older trees have a distinct yellow or orange color.

What is Oregon's most common tree?

The state tree...the Douglas-fir. West of the Cascades, you could guess that any evergreen tree you see is Douglas-fir, and you would be right eight of 10 times. Also, there are 30 species of conifers and 37 species of hardwoods found in Oregon's forests.

Are conifers the same thing as evergreens?

Conifers are often called evergreens because most hold their leaves all year long. However, some conifers are deciduous. Over 600 species of trees and shrubs are classified as conifers. Some well known groupings include the firs, pines, cypresses, redwoods, junipers, larches, yews, and spruces, among many others.

All conifers are also called softwoods, because their wood is relatively soft when compared with that of other trees.

What and where is Oregon's largest tree?

Oregon's largest tree was a Sitka spruce – a 206-foot-tall behemoth that grew along the coast near Seaside. The Sitka Spruce tree fell victim to a hurricane-force windstorm on December 2, 1907. The tree broke off at an old lightning scar about 80 feet above ground and the top portion fell to the ground and splintered. The 17-foot diameter trunk remains, and visitors can get a

sense of the massive size of the tree. Large portions of the fallen tree will be left on the ground to become a “nurse log” for a new generation of the Giant. The park remains the first Oregon Heritage Tree Site.

The largest tree is now a 329 foot-tall Douglas-fir – that's taller than a 28-story building! It is located in Coos County's Brummet Creek.