

NORTHEAST OREGON DISTRICT



Wallupa Fire

2007 Annual Report

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State Forester

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DISTRICT FORESTER'S COMMENTS

This annual report highlights some of Northeast Oregon District's (NEO) collective accomplishments during this past year. It is intended to both inform and acquaint you with the work of the Oregon Department of Forestry in the northeast corner of Oregon.

Calendar year 2007 was a very active year in northeast Oregon. The District addressed numerous personnel changes, a very demanding fire season, and continued progressive work in the areas of forest practices and fuels treatment.

Several personnel changes occurred within the NEO District over the past year. Mike Shaw was selected as the Wallowa Unit Forester, replacing Andy White who promoted in late 2006 to the Assistant to the Area Director for Northwest Oregon. Prior to this selection, Mike was the Stewardship Forester in Wallowa. To fill the vacancy created with Mike's move, Steve Meyer was selected as the Stewardship Forester for the Wallowa Unit. Steve had been the SB 360 Coordinator for the District. Brandon Daniels was hired as the District's Communication Specialist replacing George McDonald who retired in November of 2006. Prior to coming to the District, Brandon worked for ODOT. Jeremy Sullens, the Protection Supervisor in Pendleton created another vacancy when he accepted a Stewardship Forester position in West Oregon District in October. This vacancy has recently been filled with the selection of Julia Lauch as the new Protection Supervisor in Pendleton. Julia worked in the Western Lane District prior to coming to the NEO District.

Fire season 2007 was a significant season for the NEO District. It was the third year in a row that the District faced a difficult fire season as a result of very high to extreme fire indices and above average fire starts. It was an expensive year as well for the District and for landowners that fund our fire protection program. In light of the severity of the fire season across the four northeast Oregon counties in 2007, the District's Protection from Fire Program was for the most part successful in terms of minimizing damage to landowner assets within the District. This success came about through a combination of factors including dedicated firefighters and fire managers willing to work hard to suppress fires; excellent partnerships with

landowners and forest operators; strong cooperators relationships; adequate suppression staffing augmented by State and Federal severity resources when faced with extreme fire conditions.

The District was involved with six large fires in 2007 that were managed by Type 1 or 2 Incident Management Teams (IMT). The Cottonwood Creek Fire, in the northeast corner of Wallowa County, was managed by Tom Savage's State IMT #1. The team did a very good job suppressing this fire at 8,100 acres with a very limited supply of firefighting resources. The Ukiah Complex series of fires occurred during the middle of August as a result of a very productive lightning storm. The storm dropped 27 lightning strikes that started 21 fires. These fires were managed by the District and the ORCA IMT and burned 4,100 acres of state protected lands. Battle Creek, Grizzly Ridge, Ironside Mountain and Irish Springs were other large fires that burned on State protected lands in the NEO District. While large fires get most of the attention in this business, the fires that I believe illustrate the capabilities of the District are the fires that burned well under extreme fire conditions and were suppressed before they became large fires. In 2007, this was a long list as all the following fires fit this description: Pole Creek, Copper Creek, Log Springs Complex, Government Mountain Complex, Yarrington Road, Rawhide, Rysdam Canyon, Gordon Creek and Edna's Point.

Our Stewardship Foresters in the Private Forests Program continue to provide high quality assistance to operators and landowners concerning the Oregon Forest Practices Act and cost-share programs related to forest management. In 2007, all of our Stewardship Foresters made significant contributions to the fire program in the NEO District.

In summary, the effort and teamwork put forth by District employees along with the support and collaboration provided by landowners, operators and a wide variety of cooperators made for a very productive and successful year in Northeast Oregon in 2007.

I truly want to thank you all for your contributions and continued support of the District's activities.

John Buckman

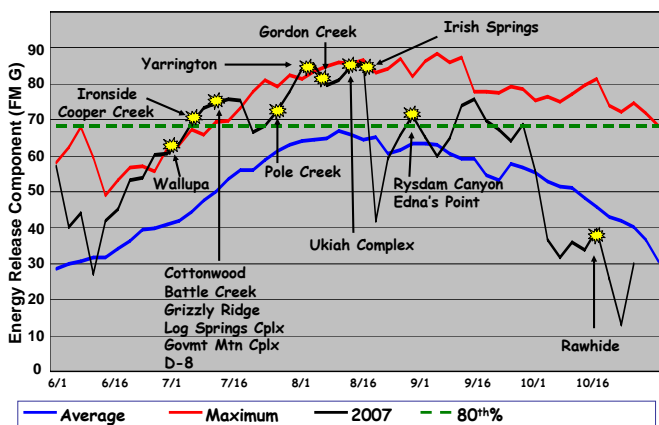
Northeast Oregon District Forester

PROTECTION FROM FIRE

Once again Mother Nature showed us who was in charge when she dumped the third tough fire season in a row on the Northeast Oregon District. One of the driving factors of the tough season was how early fire season arrived. A combination of light snow pack and minimal spring rains put us in extreme fire danger at a very early date. July had unprecedented early hot dry weather which effectively extended the length of our fire season. In fact, 2007 ranks as the fourth longest fire season since 1980 (121 days). This early drying created an environment of rapid fire growth that posed problems for firefighters all summer. During the month of July, the District experienced nine, 100+ acre fires. The 20 year average for fires of this size in July is less than two. Fortunately, with the condition of the fuels, dry lightning episodes were relatively isolated.

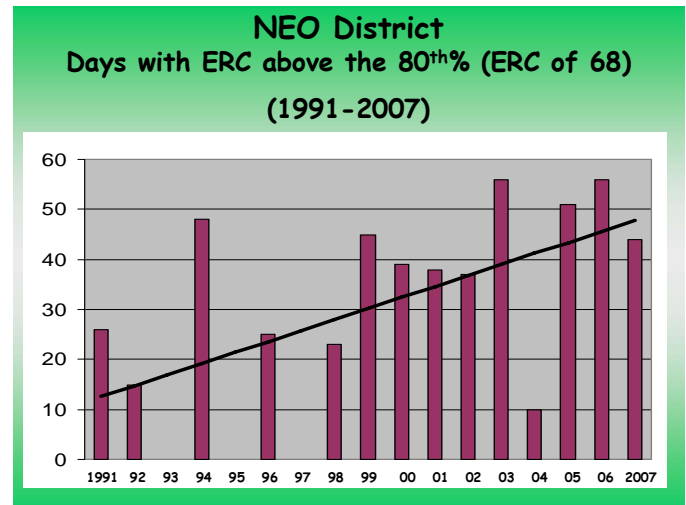
Lightning was not the only cause of fire this year, as the La Grande Unit experienced four arson caused fires. Three occurred in close proximity to each other on one day, and nine days later another was detected. Strong, coordinated actions by the District and cooperators kept each from becoming much larger incidents. In addition to the arson fires, there were also a few significant human caused fires which required quick attention to bring under control.

NEO - ERC (1987 - 2007)



ERC Chart showing Fire danger trend-lines (2007, Average, and Maximum for the day), Dates of Large Fire Occurrence, and 80th Percentile.

Energy Release Component measurements are an indication of wildland fire potential. In 2007, the NEO District set new daily maximum values for 17 days of a 22 day period between June 26th and July 17th. In addition to these daily maximums, 43 days exceeded the 80th percentile ERC. Fires that occur above this point have a high potential for large fire growth. The following chart shows the increased exposure the NEO District has had to contend with relative to this 80th percentile value over the past several seasons.



Early July through mid-September, were very active months for all wildland fire agencies. Pre-planning, shared severity resources (both State and Federal) and strong interagency cooperation were instrumental in minimizing the loss of private forest land acres and resources in NEO.

Fire Season 2007 began with a challenging fire north of Wallowa in June. The steep topography hindered fire crew efforts to stop the Wallupa Fire at 40 acres. Soon thereafter, an early July lightning storm that came through the Unity area started the Ironside Fire and the Copper Creek Fire. Strong efforts by Baker City initial attack crews and good inter-agency cooperation prevented these fires from burning more ODF protected lands. On July 13, both the Pendleton and Wallowa Units were pounded with a lightning storm that resulted in several significant fires. The Log Springs Complex in the Ukiah area and the Government Mtn. Complex in the north end of the Pendleton Unit split initial attack resources responding from Pendleton. Excellent initial attack firefighting contributed to "catching" both of these complexes by the end of the first burning period.

By the evening of July 13th, the lightning had moved across Wallowa County, starting three significant fires. These fires were not reported until the next morning, creating problems for initial attack crews. The Cottonwood Creek Fire was approximately 500 acres in size by the time initial attack resources arrived on scene. Limited resources and difficult access continued to hamper efforts to control the fire. This fire was turned over to an ODF Incident Management Team (IMT) to handle, freeing District resources to handle new incidents. Meanwhile, the USFS had their hands full with the Grizzly Ridge Fire and the Battle Creek Complex. Although these incidents were managed by federal IMTs, ODF personnel were utilized to help protect private ownership involved in these fires.



Cottonwood Creek Fire

The Pole Creek Fire, another lightning fire in the Unity area near the end of July challenged fire crews as fuel and weather conditions continued to deteriorate.



Pole Creek Fire

The La Grande Unit entered the fray in earnest the first week of August with some challenging fires that saw great initial attack. These fires were a challenge not only due to the weather and fuel conditions, but because they were human caused. A great job was done by fire fighters to protect the origin area so District fire investigators could conduct successful investigations.

On August 15th, an incredibly “hot” storm moved through the Ukiah area dumping 27 strikes that resulted in a remarkable 21 fires. This series of fires became the Ukiah Complex. Fire fighters did an amazing job “catching” these fires by the end of the first burning period. Fire managers followed this up with innovative ways to keep fire costs down and utilize readily available local (or in-place) resources.



Owens Creek Fire (Ukiah Complex)

Two days later, the Irish Springs Fire started south of Unity. Fortunately, some timely rains helped keep this fire from burning more ODF protected land. On August 31st, a lightning storm passed through the Wallowa area, igniting the Edna’s Point Fire. This fire was not discovered until the afternoon of the following day when burning conditions created challenges for crews responding to the fire. If not caught, this fire had a lot of potential to burn industrial timber land in the county.

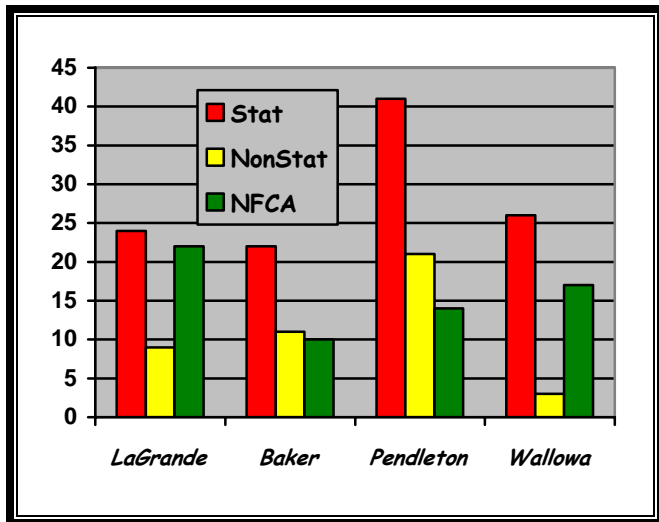
A late season fire in the La Grande Unit finished off the year for the NEO District crews. The Rawhide fire was a wind driven fire in October that pushed our limited crews. Many summer personnel had left to return to school, so good cooperation among the

Unit offices and our cooperators was instrumental in gaining control of this fire.

Fire season for the Northeast Oregon District began June 19th and ended on October 18th, a total of 121 days. This is above the 10 year average of 105 days. The District enacted a Regulated closure on July 10, and was finally able to suspend the closure on October 1st. Regulated closure precautions were in effect for 81 days. The 10 year average is 46 days.

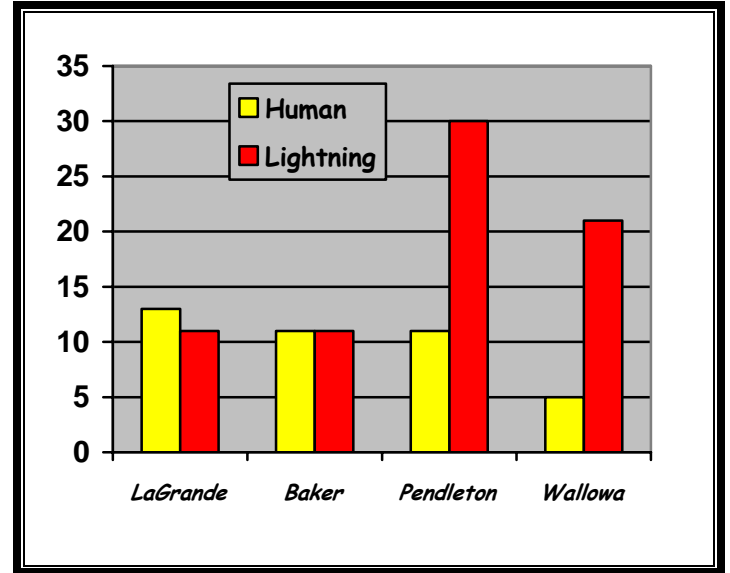
Fire Statistics

In addition to the severe burning conditions, the District experienced more statistical incidents than average. These are fires for which ODF has the primary protection responsibility. A total of 113 fires met the criteria as compared to our ten-year average of 90. Lightning was determined to be the cause of 73 of those fires. This is well above the ten year average of 53 per year for the Northeast Oregon District. Unfortunately, human activity accounted for 40 fires, a little above the average of 37. Lightning-caused fires burned 8,779 ODF protected acres while human-caused ignitions were blamed for the loss of 1,348 acres. All told, a total of 10,127 acres were burned, which is significantly higher than the average acreage lost each year to fires in NEO.



In addition to the statistical incidents, northeast Oregon resources helped with 44 mutual assistance fires. Joint initial attack on fires occurring on adjacent ownerships and protection (Federal, RFD, unprotected) often makes the

difference between fires that are caught quickly, and fires that grow to involve private forest lands. The ability to help our neighbors pays strong dividends in our overall protection capability. Non-Fire Crew Actions (smoke chases, non-permitted controlled burns not requiring suppression action, etc.) accounted for 63 additional responses.



Significant or Large Fires in NEO District in 2007

La Grande

Fire Name	ODF Acres	Total Acres
D-8	30	30
Yarrington	222	222
Gordon Creek	17	17
Rysdam Canyon	34	34
Rawhide	340	340
Haywire	27	27

Baker

Ironside Complex	30	926
Copper Creek	188	188
Pole Creek	210	210
Irish Springs	644	47,930

Wallowa

Wallupa	39	39
Cottonwood Creek	2,117	8,100
Battle Creek Complex	83	79,216
Grizzly Ridge	675	6,474
Edna's Point	15	40

Pendleton

Government Mtn. Complex	851	851
Log Springs Complex	80	80
Ukiah Complex	4,099	4,767

The Past 10 Years in NEO

Year	# Of Fires	Acreage
2007	113	10,127
2006	85	3,311
2005	69	2,057
2004	80	39
2003	91	1,613
2002	90	1,407
2001	110	15,320
2000	79	4,375
1999	114	542
1998	97	867

Severity Resources

Northeast Oregon District made good use of severity resources during the 2007 fire season. At critical times, the District used budgeted dollars to place standby dozers on contract, hire a medium helicopter and increase the immediately available engine/personnel resource level. State severity funded a medium helicopter contract in NEO, two heavy air tankers for statewide use and various move-up and local engines. Federal severity provided a heavy heli-tanker and other engine/crew resources at critical times throughout the summer. Through close coordination and a strong commitment to initial attack on new incidents, each agency was able to utilize any or all of these resources as needed and as available. All of these resources were utilized heavily and effectively throughout northeast Oregon. These joint resources, both State and Federal, were crucial to the successful outcome of the 2007 fire season. Without the additional help provided by severity funding, many of the fires caught during initial attack would likely have gone to extended attack or even project level fires.

Fire Prevention

For the Northeast Oregon District in 2007, fire prevention activities were prevalent, productive and effective. Our focus, as it has been in past years, was on our highest human-caused fire start categories in order to bring the number of preventable fires down as low as possible. The

following narratives will document successes throughout the Northeast Oregon District this past year.

Collective District Efforts

The District was able to utilize prevention grant dollars to construct and erect 85 new fire regulation level sign boards throughout Umatilla, Baker, Union and Wallowa Counties. The design was developed by the Assistant Unit Foresters, and the actual sign work was contracted through Snake River Correctional Institution for construction. Fire crews built the frames and installed the components at the designated sites. These highly visible reminders of fire danger and burning conditions were placed in areas of high traffic or fire concern. The signboards incorporated a unique "fold-down" format that will replace several paper type "Keep Oregon Green", "fire season" and "Regulated closure" signs. They were designed to be used on a year-round basis and should last for many years before needing replacement.

In cooperation with the USFS and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the District led an effort to send personalized prevention letters to over 19,000 northeast Oregon deer hunters in late September. The letter contained a pertinent fire prevention message as well as information on current fire season conditions, closure regulations, and who to contact for additional information. In past years, this effort realized a declining trend in hunter/recreationist related fires in the late summer and early fall months. For 2007, this again proved true and is an effective way to get a specific prevention message directly to the public who will be recreating in NE Oregon during times of critical fire danger.

La Grande Unit

- Participated in four well attended parades in Union County including the Ag/Timber parade in La Grande.
- The La Grande Unit stayed active with the Grande Ronde Fire Prevention Cooperative in late spring by assisting with team teaching at local grade schools to the 1st through 3rd grade levels.

- Smokey Bear made numerous appearances in 2007 including the Union County Fair and the Headstart Preschool.
- The Unit put together a well thought out visual tri-fold display and utilized it at the annual Union County Sportsmen's Show.

Baker City Sub-Unit

The Baker City Sub-Unit is a key participant with an incredibly successful organization called the "Baker County Interagency Fire Prevention Team". Through their cooperative efforts much has been accomplished in Baker County.

During Wildfire Awareness Week, the Fire Prevention Team focused on the "Living with Fire" document project. The Baker County Interagency Fire Prevention Team developed a 16 page, color brochure, "Living With Fire - A Guide for the Homeowner" project. The Team was able to develop a partnership with Sterling Savings Bank (Baker City) who provided funds for the printing costs. The overall goal of the Team was to print 12,000 copies, insert approximately 7,000 into newspapers countywide during Wildfire Awareness Week, develop stories covering the effort and the new document, and post the document on several web pages. The Team was successful in accomplishing all project elements.

A "Safe Burning" campaign was started in 2007 in Baker County. The Baker County Interagency Fire Prevention Team worked with Baker City Herald, Record-Courier, and Hells Canyon Journal on a story about spring burning. The Team provided bulleted topics, and allowed media flexibility in preparing a story. These happened after "Wildfire Awareness Week", but topics covered included safe open burning, permit processes, and protection of power poles during ditch burning. Six "Community Fire Education" meetings were scheduled throughout Baker County in an effort to improve public information dissemination and prevention awareness.

Finally, there were numerous community events and campaigns accomplished due to the outstanding efforts of the Baker County Interagency Fire Prevention Team. These include:

Campaigns: "Home Fire Safety – It's Up To You!", "Living With Fire," "I'm Concerned about...(Debris Burning, Camp Fires, Wildfires, etc.)"

Community Events: St. Elizabeth Health Fair, Baker County Elementary Schools (Team-Teaching), Wildfire Awareness Week (Living With Fire (newspaper/radio), Sumpter Flea Markets, Miner's Jubilee (Interagency Fire Team in the Park), Kiwanis Parent Resource Fair, Baker County Fair and Rodeo, D&B Family Fun Fair, National Fire Prevention Week - Escape Planning (newspaper/radio)

Pendleton Unit

With funding assistance through a National Fire Plan Prevention Grant, the Pendleton Unit continued to lead an effort to insert timely fire prevention ads in the East Oregonian, the Walla Walla Union Bulletin and the Confederated Journal (CUJ) throughout fire season. This year, the CUJ ads were funded directly by the Umatilla Agency BIA through a prevention grant. Forest Officers made numerous one-on-one contacts with the public through patrols and while writing burn permits.

The newly formed "Northwest Passage Fire Prevention Cooperative" continued to work toward an interagency approach to fire prevention this summer. The group was successful in applying for grant "seed money" to help with this effort. The area served by this group encompasses Umatilla and Morrow Counties in Oregon, and the Walla Walla County area in Washington. Work is continuing on potential projects for future years.

Wallowa Unit

The Wallowa County Fire Prevention Cooperative (WCFPC) was very active supplying year-round public service announcements to local radio and print media. The PSA's focused on debris burning, equipment fires, recreational fires, home fire safety, holiday fire safety, winter fire safety around the home, and fire liability. Two separate team teaching opportunities were realized at local grade schools this year. Smokey Bear assisted the WCFPC in making the Smokey 5-point program in May a success. This county-wide program targeted

kindergarten through 2nd grade. The “Beeping Ben” Smoke Detector Safety Program in January targeted the 1st grade. After watching a video and having class discussion, each student was sent home with a new smoke detector for their home. In addition to these activities, the WCFPC drafted and sent over 750 individualized hunter letters to incoming archery hunters in late August during our most critical fire severity period. This effort has been maintained for the last 5 years and has proven to be a tremendous success due to our declining trend of recreationist fires.

The Wallowa Unit participated in numerous parades, fairs, and outdoor events to spread the fire prevention message. Public contacts with recreationists remained a high priority during the busy summer and early fall seasons.

Corrections Inmate Firefighting Program

The Inmate Firefighting program for the District continues to be an integral part of the fire suppression program in northeast Oregon. While Powder River Correctional Facility downsized their participation in the program to include only providing camp support and lunches, Snake River Correctional Facility continued with “on-the-line fire suppression crews” in addition to providing camp support on some incidents. Over 60 inmates were trained at Snake River Correctional Institute as wildland firefighters. This involves the successful completion of the 48 hour Basic Wildland Firefighter course including Basic Fire Behavior and hot-line field exercises.

Over the duration of the 2007 fire season, the Snake River Inmate firefighting crews spent a total of 219 crew days on fires. This generated revenue to the Department of Corrections of \$493,283.00, and represented participation of on-the-line crews in 15 different incidents.

Powder River Correctional Facility “Camp Crews” participated in 6 different incidents representing 151 crew days and generating total revenue to the Department of Corrections in the amount of \$303,278. Powder River Correctional Facility also provided lunches on two fire assignments, making over 5,000 lunches in support of the fire program.

The Type 3 Kitchen that was put into operation by the Powder River Correctional Facility in 2004 was turned over to the Snake River Correctional Facility for continued support of fire operations in the spring of 2007. It took time over the course of the season to implement this program, and the kitchen was not available for dispatch until the first week of September. As a result, the kitchen was not deployed during the 2007 season. The kitchen is presently on line and will be ready for deployment for the 2008 fire season.

The 2007 season provided for some challenges to the District by “changes in operation of Department of Corrections program”. Both agencies worked hard to find ways to successfully continue to utilize inmate resources.

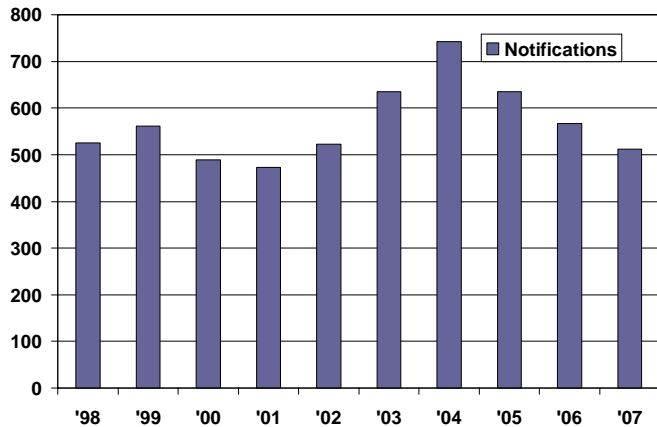
PRIVATE AND COMMUNITY FORESTS

Forest Practices Administration

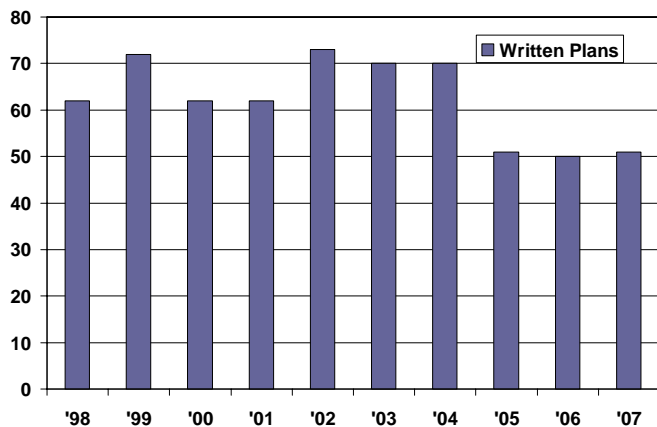
Since it’s inception in 1971, the Oregon Forest Practices Act (FPA), continues to be a national model for effective regulations, guidelines and sustainable standards for forest resource stewardship on state and private lands. The Act is multi-faceted, leveraging a balance of regulation, technical assistance, incentives, and education to effectively guide forestland and natural resource management in a proactive manner.

Locally, the Northeast Oregon District administers the FPA in Baker, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa and portions of Grant, Malheur, and Morrow Counties. The District is fortunate to have Stewardship Foresters located at each of the field offices to accomplish the necessary field and administrative duties related to the Act. The District’s Stewardship Foresters continue to fulfill an incredible array of duties and responsibilities. These include but are not limited to: Forest Practices Act administration, wildland fire management (control and prevention), administration of various cost share programs, grant acquisition and implementation, and processing forest practices related complaints. Northeast Oregon’s field foresters have also spent considerable time during the past year assisting with local and statewide efforts in biomass waste-to-energy programs, and in value added product development, as well as representing the Department in a variety of community forums throughout the year.

Below are the FPA administration numbers and 10 year comparison graphs:



Education and training continue to be a critically important part of the forester’s duties, whether one-on-one in the field, or during the full day of training and the operator dinner last May. The District appreciates the commitment, leadership, and relationship with Forest Capital Partners, Associated Oregon Loggers (AOL), many non-industrial landowners, logging contractors, and Oregon State University Forestry Extension Programs in promoting and implementing Best Management Practices.



Landowner and Operator Recognition

For 2007, Union County nominated an “Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year” to the Oregon Tree Farm System. Bob and Janice Gasser were recognized at local events and at the Annual Oregon Tree Farm System luncheon held in November at the World Forestry Center.

The Gassers were nominated for their active management of a 450 acre farm located in Cove. Relatively new to forest ownership, Bob and Janice are extremely active in the education process. They attend many OSU Extension workshops and are always seeking more forestry related information. Bob wrote a stewardship plan for the property. Since 2003, Bob and Janice have planted nearly 7,000 native seedlings on the property. They have accomplished a lot of work in a short amount of time. Congratulations Bob and Janice!

Rod Anderson Construction was presented a Forest Practices “Letter of Commendation” for work conducted on Fivemile Creek in Umatilla County during 2006. Dennis Perilli presented the letter to Rod Anderson at the 2007 Operator Dinner in La Grande.

Dennis cited the conscientious effort in location, design, and construction that resulted in a road that met the landowner’s objectives and exceeded the requirements of the Oregon Forest Practices Act.

Congratulations to Rod Anderson Construction!

Forestry Assistance

A variety of funding sources were sought to assist landowners for this work, and numerous partnerships were continued and enhanced with cooperators. These included the older and newer Bark Beetle Mitigation grants, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board grants, Environmental Quality Improvement Program, Stewardship Incentive Program, Forest Land Enhancement Program, Bonneville Power Administration grants, Oregon Reforestation Tax Credit, and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. Partners included Watershed Councils, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Counties, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA Forest Service, forest industry, and especially private forest landowners. Funding from some of these sources decreased significantly, presenting new challenges to meet demand for this very beneficial work.

In addition to Forest Practices Administration, Stewardship Foresters were involved in training and field tours that displayed the benefits of active

forest management. These included Slashburning 101, Tree School East, and Basic Forestry in conjunction with OSU Extension, and annual operator training with AOL. Continued forest insect and disease activity also created demand for technical advice from Stewardship Foresters. Technical assistance was also provided to landowners interested in reforestation following wildfire.

Stewardship Foresters continue to advance biomass utilization potential on local, state, and regional levels. Legislation creating state tax credits for biomass utilization passed during the 2007 session, increasing interest and activity related to biomass utilization.

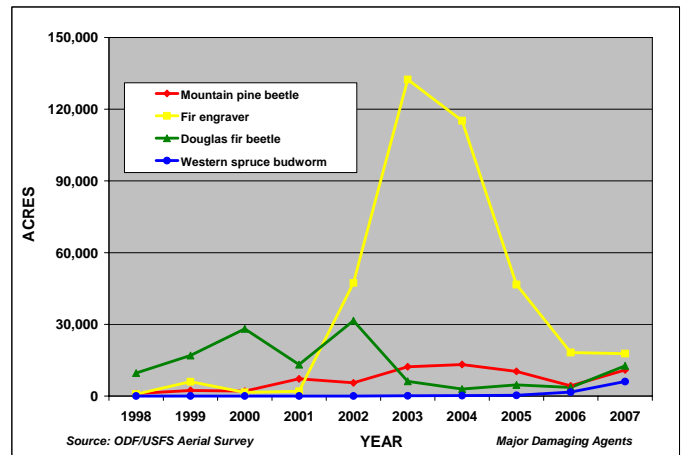
During 2007, some of the forestry assistance accomplishments included:

Non-commercial thinning	3,157 Acres
Fuel reduction/slash treatment	6,405 Acres
Tree planting	255 Acres
Commercial thin/salvage harvest	3,786 Acres
Stewardship Plans	6,645 Acres
Wildlife/fish habitat enhancement	190 Acres
Riparian enhancement	156,675 Feet
Streambank protection	11,000 Feet
Insect and disease tech advice	2,182 Acres
Marketing assistance	1,700 Acres

2007 Forest Health Conditions Report

In 2007, aerial surveys of forest lands in northeast Oregon detected over 200,000 acres of tree damage and mortality. Favorable survey timing and conditions, along with expanding insect infestations, resulted in increased detection of over 130,000 acres of damage compared with 2006. Ten-year damage trends for some of the major insect pests affecting northeast Oregon are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Ten-year damage trend for 4 of the major insect pests affecting northeast Oregon in 2007.



Damage from mountain pine beetle was relatively low overall this year, although the affected area increased by over 6,000 acres. Outbreaks of fir engraver have historically caused high levels of tree mortality in northeast Oregon, but the outbreak that began in 2002 has continued to decline, with damage detected on 17,000 acres this year. In contrast, damage by Douglas-fir beetle increased by over 8,000 acres in 2007, and appeared to result from trees being weakened by recent fire and storm damage. It has been over 25 years since the last western spruce budworm outbreak, but damage has been increasing in recent years. Many areas may now be more vulnerable than in the past as the percentages of preferred hosts have increased. Budworm defoliation in northeast Oregon increased by over 4,000 acres in 2007, with damage intensity generally considered low to moderate in most areas. Vigorous trees can survive several years of defoliation, but become increasingly susceptible to root diseases and bark beetles.

Damage from the non-native larch casebearer moth has been observed in northeast Oregon since 1999, but aerial detection has often been obscured due to survey timing. In 2007, low to moderate intensity defoliation was detected on over 61,000 acres. Ground surveys indicated that while larch casebearer was widespread, needle diseases were

also common and may have contributed to damage this year. While larch is relatively resistant to defoliation and tree mortality is rare, several consecutive years of damage can severely reduce radial and terminal growth. Over time, it is hoped that the combination of previously released natural enemies and environmental factors will reduce populations below damaging levels in Oregon as has occurred elsewhere.

Balsam woolly adelgid, a non-native sap-feeding insect, caused widespread decline and mortality of true fir in western Oregon during the 1950s and 1960s, and has more recently been observed affecting grand and subalpine fir in northeast Oregon. Damage was detected on over 87,000 acres in 2007. Branch infestations lead to severe gouting (swelling) that reduces the production of new foliage and cones, while stem infestations disrupt phloem transport that leads to further crown decline. Weather patterns are the primary factors regulating adelgid abundance, with prolonged cold periods decreasing survival and warmer conditions allowing for rapid population growth.

National Fire Plan Implementation

The goals of the National Fire Plan are to improve fire prevention and suppression, reduce hazardous wildland fuels and utilize biomass, restore fire-adapted ecosystems, and promote community assistance and collaboration. The Northeast Oregon District has addressed these goals by promoting fire prevention and educating landowners/citizens about the risk of wildfire in wildland-urban interface areas. The District has continued its effort to seek out grant funding for cost-share assistance programs that promote the reduction of wildland fuels across landscapes in the wildland-urban interface (including utilization of biomass). National Fire Plan grants continue to be a valuable cost-share tool to encourage landowners to reduce fuel hazard around homes and property in order to protect them from large wildfire events. The NEO District has also continued to collaborate with other land/fire managers and groups/interested parties to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans for five counties within the District. Over six million dollars in National Fire Plan funding (and other county sources) has been brought into northeast Oregon by District efforts.

According to federal agencies that continue to fund National Fire Plan grant assistance programs, Community Wildfire Protection Plans will become even more important in the future. These plans are needed to address wildfire hazard mitigation that includes fuel reduction, improved fire response, and awareness of wildfire hazard utilizing prevention and education programs. Community Wildfire Protection Plans need to reflect achievement of mitigation strategies through collaborative relationships. These relationships are important to land and fire managers across northeast Oregon and to the communities they serve. These plans are located on-line at:

www.odf.state.or.us/areas/eastern/northeast/default.asp

Following is a summary of the National Fire Plan Accomplishments in the NEO District for 2007:

ODF Unit	Acres Treated (2007)	Acres Treated (To Date)	CWPP Completed
Baker Sub-Unit (Baker County)	540	5,177	Baker-Yes Malheur-by Nov. 08'
La Grande Unit (Union County)	480	3,900	Yes
Pendleton Unit (E. Umatilla County)	157	2,535	E. Umatilla-Yes W. Umatilla by Oct. 08'
Wallowa Unit (Wallowa County)	165	1,273	Yes
TOTAL	1,342	12,885	4 (2 in progress)

Senate Bill 360 Implementation

Implementation of the Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act of 1997 (SB 360) is continuing in northeast Oregon. This law, passed in 1997, is intended to help address the escalating concern of wildfires burning homes, firefighters risking their lives in conflagrations, and the rising costs of fire suppression. The act provides four important steps that lead toward an effective protection system by establishing legislative policy regarding forestland-urban interface fire protection; defining forestland-urban interface areas in Oregon and establishing a process and system for classifying fire risk in these areas; establishing standards for forestland-urban interface property owners so they can manage or minimize fire

hazards and risk; and providing the means for establishing adequate, integrated fire protection systems in forestland-urban interface areas, including education and prevention efforts.

Implementation of SB 360 in northeast Oregon is complete in Umatilla County, and nearly complete in Baker and Wallowa Counties. Classification of high-risk areas and the public meetings/hearings have been completed in Baker County, and landowners will receive their certification packets in early 2008. Classification of high-risk areas has been completed in Wallowa County, and the public meetings and hearing will be completed in early 2008. Once that is accomplished, homeowners/landowners in the affected areas will receive their certification packets in the mail.

Urban and Community Forestry Assistance

The 1992 Oregon Legislature directed the Oregon Department of Forestry to provide technical assistance to Oregon cities and community groups to help them plant, manage, and care for the urban forest (ORS 526.510). ODF helps cities capitalize on the many economic, environmental, and social benefits that trees provide through the agency's Urban & Community Forestry Assistance Program (U&CFA) and its staff of three professional urban foresters. As one of the three "urban foresters", Katie Lompa, community assistance forester covers the 18 counties which make up the Eastern Oregon Area.

NEO District Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program Highlights-2007

- The City of La Grande can be proud of having someone on staff who recently graduated from the ODF U&CFA Program's Community Tree Management Institute (CTMI). Teresa Gustafson, Tree Care Educator for the city of La Grande, was accepted into the year long course and graduated in November. CTMI is a course in urban forest management for municipal employees who have tree related responsibilities.
- The Oregon Department of Forestry was proud to present the National Arbor Day Foundation's "Tree City USA" award to the Northeast Oregon District communities of Baker City, Echo and La Grande in recognition of their programs to plant

and care for public trees. In addition to "Tree City USA" status, the Cities of Echo and La Grande received a "Tree City Growth Award" for going beyond the Tree City standards. "Tree City USA Growth Awards" recognize the completion of special projects and environmental improvement, while encouraging higher levels of tree care.

Private Lands Forest Network (PLFN)

The PLFN is a not-for-profit organization, Board of Directors managed cooperative, designed to assist landowners in their reforestation needs by providing technical advice, planting tools, seedlings, and cooler space for seedling storage. In 2007, the PLFN had a very successful year, with almost 900,000 trees stored in the facilities in La Grande and Wallowa. Both industrial and non-industrial landowners use the facility each year.

For the 2008 planting season, the PLFN is forecasting nearly 1 million trees to be stored in the facilities. Once again, native stock is at high demand, so it is important to order seedlings early. The cooler is available to store seedlings from mid-March to the first part of June.

PLFN is currently trying to update their member information. If you are a PLFN member and have not received a newsletter for 2007, please phone (541) 963-0382 and update your information. In the interest of saving money, PLFN will be sending out electronic newsletters from now on. Members without e-mail capability can request a hard copy mailing.

Information about PLFN and tree seedling availability can be found at:

<http://mysite.verizon.net/restcxnr/privatelandforestnetwork>

Cooperative Work Program

The cooperative work program in NEO continues to employ and provide training opportunities for both permanent and seasonal employees. In 2007, employees worked for ODOT, ODF&W, the Wallowa-Whitman N.F., and the Umatilla N.F. Through this program, the District is able to offset some of the costs associated with personnel, provide well qualified employees to other agencies

during times when they need extra workers, help retain long term employees, and assist landowners with land management projects. Other short term projects included pile burning, prescribed burning, and pre-commercial thinning for industrial and private landowners. During the months of May through October, NEO was able to offset \$11,550 of District funds during a time that these employees would normally be funded by fire protection dollars.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Mike Shaw, Wallowa Stewardship Forester, was promoted to the Unit Forester position in Wallowa.

Steve Meyer, accepted the Stewardship Forester position in Wallowa, leaving the District SB 360 Forester position vacant.

Brandon Daniels, accepted the Communication System Analyst 2 position for the District.

Jeremy Sullens, Assistant Unit Forester in Pendleton, received a Stewardship Forester position in the Toledo Unit of the West Oregon District.

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Northeast Oregon District continues to have a strong Budget Committee that is supportive of District activities and provides valued input to manage and improve District operations. This

volunteer group is comprised of the following representatives from across the District:

- **Chris Heffernan**, Union County, Budget Committee Chair, non-industrial private landowner and rancher.
- **John Warness**, Union County, EOFPA (Eastern Oregon Forest Protective Association) President, and Region Manager Northeast Oregon Operations for Forest Capital Partners, LLC.
- **Bob Messinger**, Union County, EOFPA member and small non-industrial forest owner.
- **Lyle Defrees**, Baker County, EOFPA Director, and non-industrial private landowner and rancher.
- **Bill Shumway**, Baker County, EOFPA Director and non-industrial private landowner and rancher.
- **Pat Sullivan**, Baker County, non-industrial private landowner and rancher.
- **James Henderson**, Wallowa County, non-industrial private landowner and businessman.
- **Mack Birkmaier**, Wallowa County, non-industrial private landowner and rancher.
- **Hank Howard**, Umatilla County, forest and rangeland manager for Pacific Northwest Tree Farm.
- **Bob Holowecky**, Umatilla County, private forester representing Pendleton Ranches and Cunningham Sheep.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Jim Henderson is stepping aside as a Budget Committee member for the Northeast Oregon District. Jim has been on our Budget Committee for 47 years! This level of service is remarkable and is illustrative of the enduring partnerships that the District has enjoyed over the years with most landowners in northeast Oregon. Jim has provided keen, knowledgeable and constructive insight into our operations, functioned as a cooperater whenever asked, and has been a strong supporter of our budgeting process for the fire program.

Jim, for everyone that has worked in northeast Oregon – Thank you very much for your time and support!

Elwayne Henderson, Jim’s son will fill the vacancy on our Budget Committee starting in 2008.

Northeast Oregon District Organization Chart

