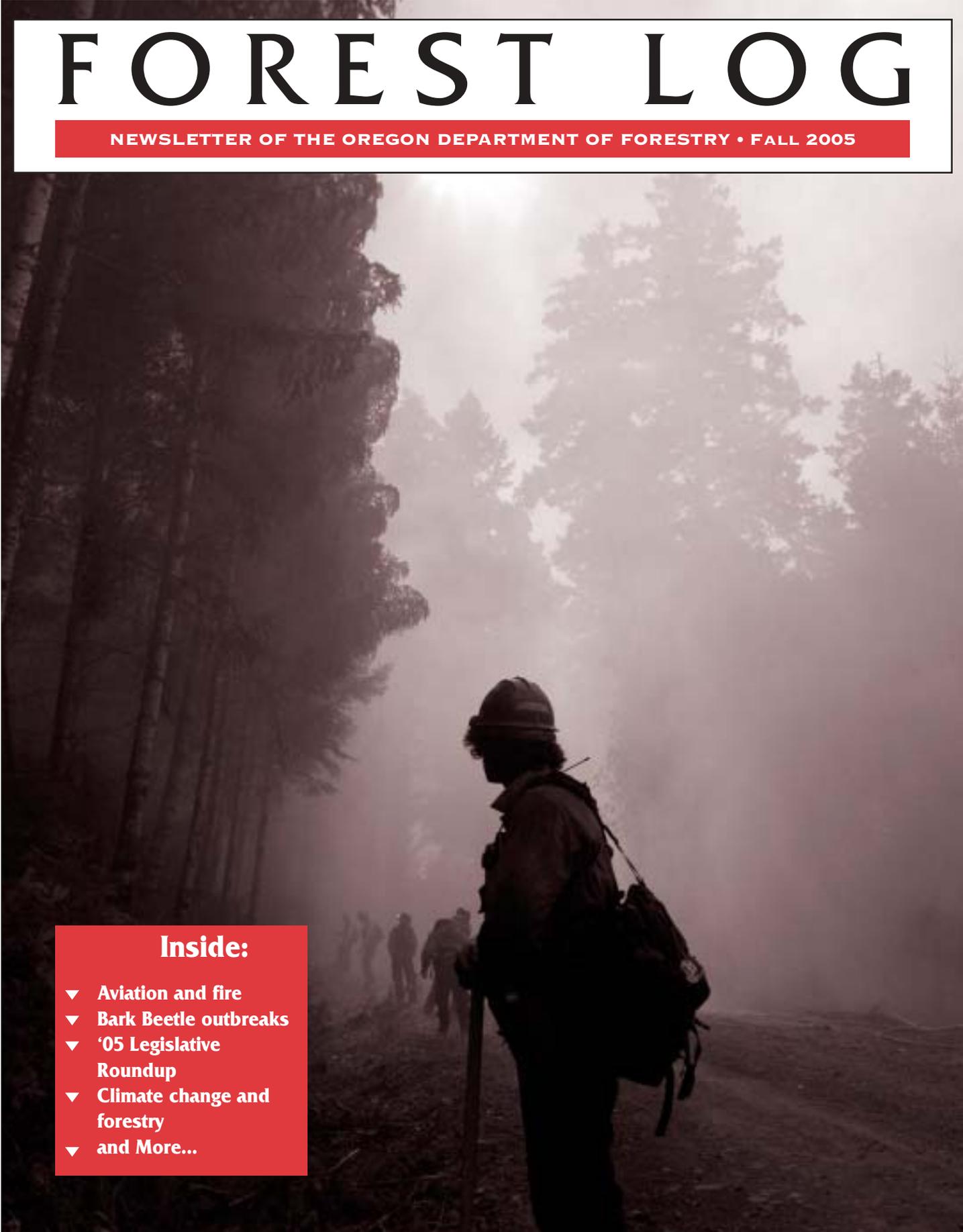


# FOREST LOG

NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY • FALL 2005



## Inside:

- ▼ Aviation and fire
- ▼ Bark Beetle outbreaks
- ▼ '05 Legislative Roundup
- ▼ Climate change and forestry
- ▼ and More...

## From the State Forester

Dear Readers,

I'm sitting here watching it rain for the first time in a long while and thinking this signals the end of another successful fire season. We experienced near record dry fuels again this summer, but were fortunate not to experience as much lightning as usual. Still, folks were very busy and did a great job.



*State Forester  
Marvin Brown*

Several articles here relate to the fire program. We continue to use air attack resources in a very effective manner, as you will see highlighted by several examples. We had Department of Forestry Incident Management Teams dispatched four times this summer. I was able to visit on-site at each one, including the Wasson fire where we helped protect a tiger sanctuary and were warmly thanked by both the caretakers and the

residents! In this issue we also talk about continued implementation of Senate Bill 360 related to wildfire prevention practices in the urban interface, and there is also a piece looking at fuels management more broadly.

In the last legislative session several bills passed affecting forest policy in the State. Ones of note include authorization to implement a limited Forest Legacy Program,

a new statute that authorizes our Department and the Board of Forestry to get more involved in promoting biomass and getting more heavily involved in federal land management issues, and a new law that allows local governments to issue revenue bonds that would be used to purchase forest lands where the public interest is in maintaining these lands as working forests. All in all, it was a fairly active session for forestry issues and the Legislative Roundup describes that in more detail.

Coverage of a recent conference on climate change, what we're doing to deal with bark beetle infestations and recognition for the Elliott State Forest's Seventy-fifth Anniversary complete this issue. As always, lots of interesting things to talk about.....I hope you enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marvin Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# FOREST LOG



"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

Fall Issue 2005  
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**Cover photo:** A firefighter with the Baker River hotshot crew waits for his crew mates on the Blossom fire. Photo by Chris Friend, ODF.

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*Cedar waxwing  
(Bombycilla  
cedrorum Vieillot)*

Photo by Terry Spivey, USFS,  
courtesy forestryimages.org

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# Aviation resources play vital role when it comes to fire

Rod Nichols, ODF Public Information Officer

**D**uring the 2005 wildfire season, Oregon Department of Forestry fire managers often looked to the sky for help. Intense air attack in the early stages of a high-potential fire has become standard practice for the agency.

Although expensive, this up-front investment to stop a fire at relatively small size typically pencils out as a bargain in the long run. Extended attack on a fire that has grown too large for the local district to handle entails deployment of a small army of personnel and equipment.

"When I receive a request from a district forester and subsequently mobilize one of our incident management teams, that's an immediate \$100,000 decision," said Fire Operations Manager John Boro, who is in charge of Oregon's large fire mobilization process.

The department maintains three teams of specially trained personnel to take over the complex operation of fighting a large wildfire. In several instances this season, intense air attack precluded the need for a team deployment.

## Airshow at La Grande

When the Rhinehart Road Fire broke out near La Grande Aug. 7, conditions were dialed in for an explosive fire. The temperature hovered near 100 degrees, a prolonged stretch

of hot weather had thoroughly dried out trees, shrubs and grasses, and a breeze was blowing.

"We almost caught it at 250 acres,

then the wind shifted to the south and pushed the fire into a stand of timber," La Grande Unit Forester Mark Jacques said. "That's when we lost about 400 acres."

Seeing that the fire could soon overwhelm local firefighting resources, Jacques requested a department team be placed on alert.

In the meantime, three air tankers (two federal, one state) and three helicopters (two federal, one state) hit the fire hard. The tankers dropped 14 loads of liquid fire retardant on the blaze as the helicopters doused it with bucket after bucket of water. The aerial blitz was not lost on local residents: They flocked to nearby vantage points to watch.

"I heard one of the old-timers say, 'Boy, firefighting has come a long way,'" Jacques said. "It was one of the most impressive and coordinated initial-attack air operations I have seen."

The bombardment halted the Rhinehart Road Fire's advance and enabled ground forces to begin establishing containment lines. The final size of 670 acres could well have been much larger, with extensive stands of valuable timber lying directly in the fire's path.

## Double trouble: Camas and Marlow

While one intense fire in a locale is bad enough, a second magnifies the challenge by complicating the deployment of firefighters and equipment. Such was the case in early August when the Coos Forest Protective Association received a call reporting the Marlow Creek Fire. As the dispatcher took down information on the fast-moving blaze, a second call was put on hold. That caller was waiting to report the Camas Creek Fire.

"When you have two fires close together," District Manager Mike Robison said, "aircraft are essential to buy time till you can get established on the ground."

Heavy air attack slowed the spread of both fires while ground forces rushed to the sites and began building fire lines. The Camas Creek Fire in particular will be recorded as a textbook "save."

"It could easily have gone large and required an incident management team," Robison said. "We drew a line and supported it with helicopters and tankers, thinking that

*News media turned out in July to photograph Airtanker 62, below, and speak with Southwest District Forester Dan Thorpe. Thorpe explained that this airtanker is primarily intended for use on fires that take place on ODF-protected lands, and is a valuable tool for keeping small wildfires from becoming big ones.*



Photo by Brian Ballou, ODF

if the fire passed this trigger point we would need a team. We dropped 15 loads of retardant. For a day-and-a-half we pounded it from the air till we could get established on the ground.”

In the end, Forest Protective Association firefighters were able to control both Camas Creek and Marlow Creek without the added expense of outside forces. The rugged terrain and heavy fuel loads at both sites further attest to the effectiveness of the air attack. Harvest operations underway when the fires broke out meant that felled and bucked timber lay on the ground, along with logging slash - a potent recipe for extreme fire behavior.

**La Pine cliffhanger**

In late August, the aptly named Park Fire ignited in La Pine State Park. It spread quickly, jumping the Deschutes River. Officials evacuated 200 area residents as firefighters sought to block the fire from engulfing nearby homes. At one point, four tankers and two helicopters swarmed over the blaze, while 12 hand crews fought it on the ground. The outcome - no structures destroyed - was remarkable, considering the flames came within 40 feet of some homes.

“If we hadn’t had a lot of airplanes and helicopters,” said Deschutes County Forester Joe Stutler, “it would have been a different outcome.”

As urban sprawl continues into Oregon’s forests and rangelands, air attack will play a crucial role in preventing the loss of structures to wildfire.

While heavy air tankers have always been intrinsic to the Department of Forestry’s suppression strategy, it wasn’t until a few years ago that the agency began leasing its own tankers. For decades, the federal fleet stationed a number of tankers in the Pacific Northwest for dispatch to wildfires. But the fleet reduced in numbers over the years, prompting the department to begin leasing tankers to supplement its needs. Then in May of 2004, the federal agencies announced the cancellation of their tanker contract due to airworthiness concerns.

Heading into the 2004 fire season with no federal tankers available, the department contracted with Butler Aircraft of Redmond for two ships. And through the Northwest Compact, a state-to-state and international agreement to share fire resources, the agency was able to secure two additional tankers from

the State of Alaska. This year, Butler again provided two heavy tankers. Department fire managers also lined up three more from Alaska to be available Aug. 1. But as the season wore on, the level of fire activity did not warrant bringing down the extra tankers. However, a lead plane was mobilized from Alaska under the authority of the Northwest Compact Act. In late May, the federal government recertified some models of tankers for service nationwide during the 2005 season. This move placed a few heavy tankers into service in the Pacific Northwest, enhancing Oregon’s overall initial-attack capability.

**Federal-state link**

To function as an effective firefighting tool, air tankers require support both on the ground and in the air. Experienced ground crews mix the fire retardant and load it into the big planes quickly to minimize turn-around time. And seasoned pilots flying maneuverable single-engine planes ahead of the tankers lower risk in the heavy air traffic over an active fire operation. To that end, the Department of Forestry’s close partnership with the U.S. Forest Service contributed significantly to the success of the state agency’s air operations this season.

“We’re using their bases for our tankers,” said Jim Ziobro, the department’s fire aviation specialist, “and their lead planes have guided the tankers to their drop sites.”

Air tankers and helicopters have in common speed of response. When a fire is reported, they can get on it quickly while ground forces are still in transit. Their roles differ in that tankers chiefly function to hold a fire. Retardant drops at the head of a fire can slow its spread until fire engines and hand crews arrive to begin direct attack. In contrast, the precision flying capability of helicopters actually enables them to put fires out.

Oregon Department of Forestry fire managers consider the 2005 season a success in view of the below-average total acreage burned under often extreme fire conditions. Aggressive air attack played a fundamental part in that favorable outcome.



Photo by Travis Medema, ODF

*An S-61 helicopter drops water on the Simpson fire.*

# Wasson fire endangers tiger sanctuary

*Brian Ballou, Fire Prevention Specialist,*

In July, a vehicle accident sparked a grass fire alongside Highway 140, approximately 19 miles east of White City, that turned into the 1,510-acre Wasson Fire. The fire was highly visible to much of the Rogue Valley and interrupted traffic on the highway, a major east-west artery across the Cascade Range.

At its height, the Wasson Fire had 750 firefighters, eight helicopters, ODF's two airtankers, and ODF's Incident Management Team 3 assigned to it.

The fire was reported at 2:24 p.m. on Tuesday, July 26. ODF engines and a bulldozer from the Medford Unit launched initial attack, supported by the Lake Creek Rural Fire Protection District. Recognizing that heavy fuel and an upcanyon wind were causing the fire to move rapidly into dense brush and forest north and east of the highway, an additional bulldozer, six 20-person crews and additional engines were rallied for the suppression effort. Two helicopters provided aerial reconnaissance and water delivery; one of ODF's contracted airtankers, stationed at the Medford Airtanker Base, dropped retardant.

No residences were immediately threatened by the fire, but scattered homes and the Oregon Tiger Sanctuary - all located east of the fire - were within the fire's potential reach.

On Thursday morning, ODF's Team 3, headed by Incident Commander Jim Walker, took control of the Wasson Fire and set up a camp at Touvelle State Park. The objectives were to stem the fire's advances to the north and east, which



**ODF's Dan Thorpe feeds a hungry tiger at the Oregon Tiger Sanctuary. Located east of the Wasson fire, the sanctuary lay within the fire's potential reach.**

Photo by Dan Postrel, ODF

was accomplished by relentlessly bombing the fire with aeryally delivered retardant and a battery of eight water-ferrying helicopters, and to keep the fire from crossing Highway 140, the fire's southern fire line.

ODF's second airtanker, normally based in Redmond, was moved to Medford. Both airtankers, along with one USFS-contracted

airtanker, dropped fire retardant along the north and east flanks of the fire in an effort to keep the fire from moving toward residences, and from spreading further into public and private forestlands. Such strong air support was necessary because the fire had moved into several deep, heavily forested canyons that were difficult to attack from the ground.

A structural task force rolled into the Oregon Tiger Sanctuary grounds on Thursday, and fire lines were cut on the west and north sides of the sanctuary. The Medford Unit's bulldozer also cut fire lines around



Photo by Brian Ballou, ODF



homes and other structures located in and near to the sanctuary. Firefighters planned to burn out from the fire lines should the Wasson Fire cross a ridge just west of the sanctuary.

Sanctuary staff worked throughout the day moving tigers and other animals from cages near the fire lines to other cages on the east side of the compound. Fortunately, the fire never reached the ridge, making burning out from the compound's edge unnecessary.

During the night, fire crews established a new fire line down the ridge between the Wasson Fire and Tiger Sanctuary, burned out fuels, and effectively stanchied the fire's eastward advance. The fire was stopped approximately one-half mile west of the sanctuary's grounds.

The Wasson Fire was declared contained at 6 p.m., Saturday, July 30. The cost of suppressing the fire topped \$3.2 million.

Traffic stoppages frequently occurred during the fire's initial run on July 26. The Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon State Police controlled highway traffic in the fire area. The reconnaissance helicopter used the highway as a landing pad on several occasions, and strong easterly runs by the fire, which ran parallel to the highway, prompted traffic stoppages.

Assisting with suppressing the Wasson Fire were firefighters and equipment from Douglas and Coos forest protective associations, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, private landowners, and several structural fire protection districts in the Rogue Valley.

The fire burned 727 acres of Bureau of Land Management land, 515 acres of private forestland, 264 acres of national forest and 4 acres of state-owned land.



Photo by Brian Ballou, ODF

**Helicopters provided both aerial reconnaissance and water delivery on the Wasson Fire.**

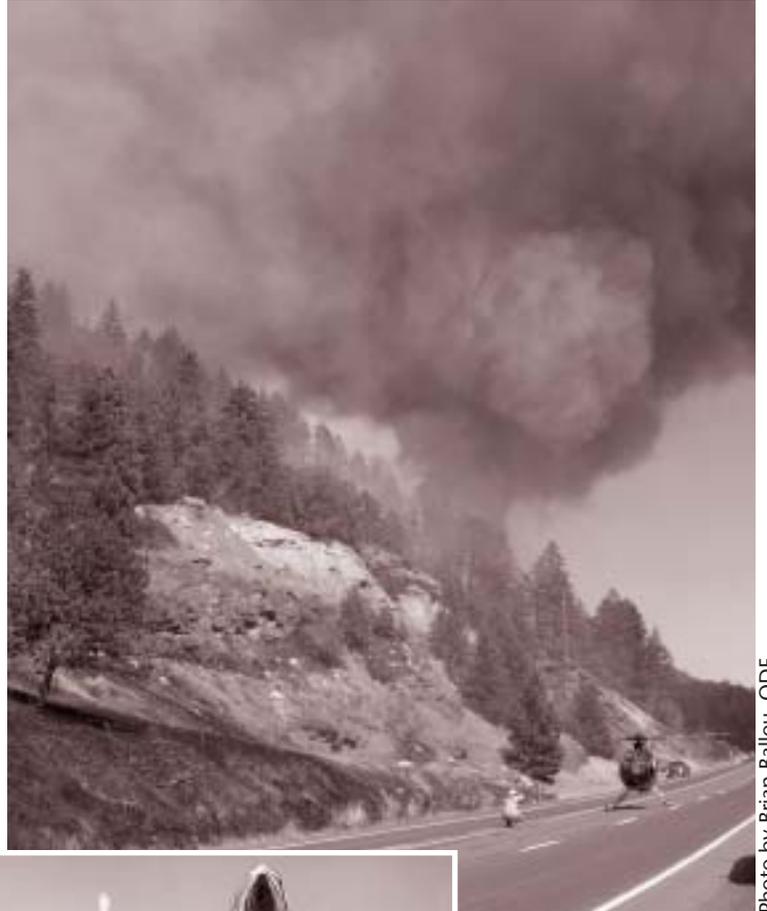


Photo by Brian Ballou, ODF



Photo by Jim Craven courtesy Mail Tribune

**Above: Helicopters used the nearby road as a landing pad, giving the incident commander a lift so he could view the fire size and behavior.**

**Left: An air tanker drops fire retardant on a fire in August near where the Wasson Fire burned in July.**

## Bland Mountain #2 Fire:

# One year later, what have we learned?

Tom Fields, Douglas Forest Protective Association

Standing high atop the Bland Mountain Lookout Tower the eerie feeling remains of what took place one year ago, and before that, 17 years ago on this serene, yet haunted landscape. The blackened trees and slopes remain scarred from an event that seemed to return from the grave. The tower, located 20 miles southwest of Roseburg, overlooks the point of origin of two of the most significant fires in Douglas County history.

On July 14, 1987 a rancher working his land panicked when the battery on his bulldozer shorted and sparked a fire underneath. In an effort to keep the equipment from burning, he maneuvered it into a nearby pond. In the process, the dozer left a trail of fire that eventually burned over 10,000 acres, destroyed 14 homes and killed

*The point of origin of both fires were less than 100 yards apart and, in both cases, infested with blackberries – a fire manager’s worst enemy.*

two people. The Bland Mountain Fire had left its mark; and just when signs of recovery started to conceal old wounds, fire #2 broke out.

Because nearly everyone in the Douglas Forest Protective Association office had been involved in the 1987 incident, a concert of hairs

rising on the back of necks took place when dispatch received the report of the 2004 fire’s location. It started small, as all fires do, and it appeared as though initial attack crews had the fire within reach. And then,

within the blink of an eye, it was gone. The fire burned 4,705 acres of mostly trees that had been planted soon after the first fire.

Jerry and Donna Mayhew purchased 72 acres in the Days Creek area in 1989, two years after the first fire. Over 40 acres of the property covers a hillside above the house, while 30 more lie below, stretching along flat ground to the South Umpqua River.

“It was a mess,” replied Jerry about the scars from the first fire. The Mayhews planted 43 acres of Douglas Fir on the

blackened hillside between 1991 and 1993, which went up in smoke during the 2004 fire.

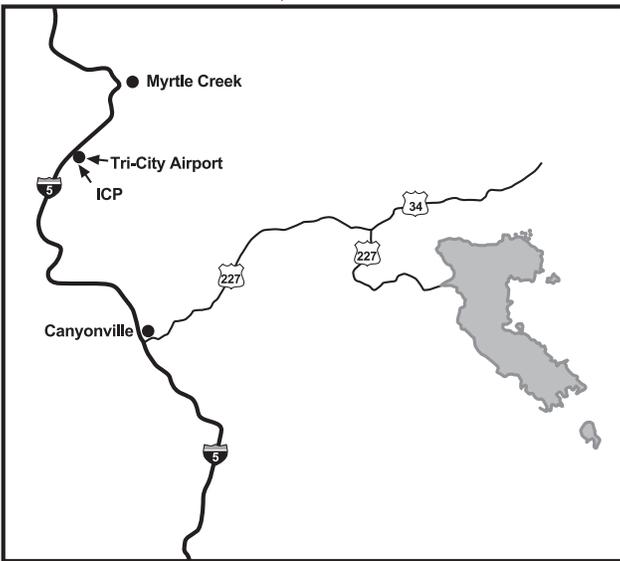
“It was starting to green up real nice,” recalls Jerry. “It was almost

as if you couldn’t tell there was a fire (in 1987).”

Shortly after the smoke from 2004 cleared, Donna told the local newspaper that “it was just getting beautiful again and now we have to start from square one.”

The Mayhews and many other small woodland tree farmers are starting over. They enjoy managing their tree farm, and thanks to local and federal assistance, they will be able to start fresh.

The Mayhews worked with the Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District to secure grants that allowed them to replant without major out of pocket expense. The couple not only replanted the hillside, but also planted the 30 acres below through funding provided by BLM, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The funding was made possible through fire rehabilitation and riparian restoration grants. Gary Groth, with the Douglas County Lands Department, contacted the Mayhews and other residents in the area who suffered losses to provide assistance



Bland Mountain Fire #2, shaded area, above.

during the rehabilitation process. Through Groth's advice, they planted Douglas-fir, incense cedar, maple and other hardwoods.

The larger landowners are also starting from scratch. Roseburg Forest Products (RFP) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lost a combined 3,000 acres to the fire. And while seedlings were hard to find, reforestation efforts began almost immediately.

"We replanted 300 acres last year and plan on doing the rest this winter," says BLM Silviculturist Kevin Carson. He says the seedling market was so depleted that it initially only allowed the federal agency to plant about 20 percent of what they lost. Carson says much of the remainder of the burned area will be replanted, except for some small pockets where regulations require them to leave snags for wildlife habitat.

"Roughly 400 acres of commercial sized forest stands burned spottily and at low intensity," says Carson. "We are not going to treat those acres. However 91 acres that suffered extensive mortality from the fire were salvage logged."

Roseburg Forest Products lost 1250 acres of young trees valued at \$1.2 million. The fire itself was looked upon in the same manner as site preparation for new or logged over units. RFP took this into consideration and felt the proper course of action was to reallocate seedlings planned for other units to the Bland Mountain site. The company planted 730 acres in 2004 and will plant the remaining 820 acres this winter. RFP expects to spend close to \$500,000 in the reforestation process.

**Debates continue**

The fires that occurred on Bland Mountain 17 years apart clearly show that fires behave differently in stands that have been managed differently. The 1987 fire burned primarily overcrowded forests, which produces more intense fires, unlike the 2004 blaze that burned 12-15 year old trees faster but with less intensity. The 2004 fire burned half as many acres as its predecessor, even though fire danger was more extreme due to the fact that it started one month later. The fire burned more intensely in areas that had been left untouched since the '87 blaze. Snags left over from the first fire lit



Photo by Scott Swearingen, DFPA

up like Roman candles and shot embers out ahead of the main fire. These widow-makers also made it unsafe for firefighters to obtain direct access to the fire. In contrast, most areas that had been managed through snag removal, replanting, and commercial thinning showed signs of less intensive fire behavior (see photo). Finally, in 1987, crews used burned over slash units, where the fire slowed down, to secure containment lines and ultimately stop the fire spread.

The common thread between 1987 and 2004 is southern Oregon's high fire risk. Preventing any fire from starting or properly managing these high fire danger areas to keep all fires small should be our first priority. The point of origin of both fires were less than 100 yards apart and, in both cases, infested with blackberries – a fire manager's worst enemy. When ignited, dry blackberry stalks become fire starters as well, carrying embers through the air and torching everything in their path. Such was the case in 1987 and 2004. Keeping this hazardous fuel at bay, as well as poison oak, scotch broom, gorse and other volatile vegetation, is one way catastrophic fires can be minimized.

Bland Mountain will recover. The question is, what can we do as a society to make sure history does not repeat itself 15 to 20 years from now?

*This photo shows where the Bland Mountain Fire #2 spread through a commercially treated area and an untreated area. Note the green crowns in the treated area where the fire burned less intensely and was confined to the ground fuels.*



# Wildland firefighters get hands-on training at Sweet Home

*Cynthia Orlando, ODF Public Information Officer*

The Oregon Department of Forestry teamed up with other state and federal agencies on a warm day in June to host a 5-day intensive training in wildland firefighting. More than 200 firefighters participated in the sixth annual Interagency Fire School held in Sweet Home. This intensive training - so essential to the safety and effectiveness of fire crews as they battle blazes during fire season - attracted attendees from far and wide.

"The fire school has grown beyond our belief," said Incident Commander Kevin

Crowell of Sweet Home. Trainees for the 2005 session came from Detroit, Lowell, Cottage Grove, Mapleton, Florence, and Grande Ronde.

"It was very well-attended with around 200 students, plus the instructors. It's a fantastic opportunity that fosters interagency cooperation and allows you to meet and network with people you might not otherwise meet until you see them at a real fire. It's also very cost effective," added Crowell.

To get just a taste of what life can be like in a real wildfire situation, attendees spent their days and nights in a simulated fire camp near Sweet Home. There, beginning firefighters attended courses ranging from basic fire behavior and map and compass use to firefighter safety and survival. They also received hands-on instruction in the use of engines, portable water pumps, hose lays and hand tools.

On the last day of the class, attendees had an opportunity to apply their new skills to suppressing and mopping up real fires that had been set on private land owned by Cascade Timber Consulting.

"This was truly an interagency project," said Linda Smith with ODF's South Cascades District.

In addition to ODF, participants included personnel from the US Forest Service from the Willamette, Siuslaw and Umpqua national forests; and staff from the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.



Photo by Cynthia Orlando, ODF

*Firefighters learned the basics of taking weather data at the sixth annual fire school, held near Sweet Home.*



*Attendees learned how to lay fire hose and use fire tools at fire training. Left, a crew boss in training shouts instructions to her crew.*



Photo by Cynthia Orlando, ODF

# Central Oregon landowners fight heavy bark beetle infestations with federal cost-share dollars

*Arlene Whalen, ODF Public Information Officer*

In recent years, The Dalles area of central Oregon has experienced below average precipitation, which has helped spark dramatic bark beetle outbreaks in mixed forest stands of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and grand fir.

Bark beetles have always been a major problem in pine and fir, but aerial surveys were showing an almost eight-fold increase in tree death along the eastern slopes of the Cascade Range and in associated watersheds.

When these pests proliferate to that extent, it's often an indication of poor forest health due to drought and over-stocked forest stands.

Remediating the situation requires diligent thinning to open up dense stand to prevent the larger spread of bark beetles and other potential pests and diseases. Research plots in Oregon have

shown that thinning ponderosa pine can help protect stands from bark beetles for several decades. Remaining trees receive more water, nutrients and sunlight, and their growth and vigor improves, making them more resistant to future beetle attacks and drought. These practices, which include the removal of dead and dying trees, also help prevent the buildup of dry, woody fuels that are ripe for catastrophic wildfires which kill live trees and do considerable damage to soils and streamside areas.

Fortunately, grant dollars from the U.S. Forest Service have now made it possible for the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to

work with several forest landowners in the area to tackle thinning projects, and reduce forest susceptibility to bark beetles and fire. Without such assistance, many of these landowners would not have the resources to do such work.

"The bark beetle project work ties in nicely with our National Fire Plan dollars," said David Jacobs, ODF Unit Forester, The Dalles. "It allows us to treat a larger landscape and helps us 'plug' some of the holes

or areas where National Fire Plan monies aren't available."

Richard Dodge, a private landowner in central Oregon who has treated over 1,400 acres of forestland, says "getting the financial assistance was the best thing that's happened" to his piece of ground in a long time. "It's beautiful up there," said Dodge. One of

the first stands he treated was part of an overstocked pine grove that was ignited from a fuel truck that had caught fire. "Approximately 700 acres burned," said Dodge. "We're now spacing our timber so we can deal with bark beetles and do some fire-proofing."

Because the majority of the infestations are pine bark beetles, the Cascade East Slope Mid-Columbia Basin Watersheds Bark Beetle Mitigation Project has also included treating slash (tree tops, branches, bark and other debris left after a forest operation). This is important, because slash that isn't removed or burned can lead to another insect prob-



*When bark beetle outbreaks occur, it's often an indication of drought and over-stocked forest lands*

lem—Ips, a pine bark beetle that breeds in piles of green slash and then attacks standing green trees.

Since 2003, federal dollars have made it possible for the ODF to help landowners participating in the project treat 2,115 acres, overall. The cost to mechanically treat each acre averages around \$550 to \$600; however, the federal dollars available have reduced this cost to landowners. The grant

lem is addressed comprehensively, and that all land ownerships are involved in forest management activities to reduce threats from bark beetle infestations. A frequent frustration for forest landowners who are conducting bark beetle mitigation activities is the helplessness experienced when they see an adjoining or neighboring property infested with bark beetles, which then threatens their own property. This includes other privately owned lands, as well as state and federal forestlands. Even though Dodge is acting diligently in treating his land, he has had problems with adjacent lands being infested with beetles. “The feds are doing a fine job of management on a small portion of lands adjacent to us, but they, unfortunately, just don’t have the personnel or the ability to do near the amount of work that needs to be done for the long-term,” said Dodge.

It’s important that *all* lands be addressed to curtail the destruction that can occur from such pests, and that landowners have appropriate incentives to engage in effective forest management practices. After all, there isn’t an easy way to “quarantine” a sick forest.

To learn more about pine bark beetles:

[http://egov.oregon.gov/ODF/PRIVATE\\_FORESTS/docs/fh/PineEngrvr.pdf](http://egov.oregon.gov/ODF/PRIVATE_FORESTS/docs/fh/PineEngrvr.pdf)



Photo by Arlene Whalen, ODF

***Richard Dodge, private forest landowner (far right), shows ODF personnel the thinning work his crew has done to prevent bark beetle infestations and catastrophic fire.***

pays back up to 50 percent of the cost and the landowner is responsible for up to 50%. Even so, paying \$250 to \$300 an acre to get the work done is still a sizeable chunk of change for many smaller forestland owners. There isn’t any *immediate* value-added for landowners. In this case, they aren’t taking logs out of the forest to a mill for profit; tangible benefits to landowners won’t occur for many years until harvesting can be done. Even at a 50 percent cost-share distribution, such work remains out of reach for many smaller forest landowners.

Because bark beetle infestations are a landscape problem, it is important that stable grant funding remain available to landowners over time to ensure the prob-

# 2005 Legislative Roundup

Dan Postrel, ODF Agency Affairs Director

The 2005 state legislative session ended on August 5, with some key forestry-related decisions, including an agreement on the department's budget, made in the final few days.

The department's 2005-2007 budget requires several reductions, reflecting the tight budget situation across state government. These include a 3 percent, across-the-board, General Fund cut in capital outlay and services and supplies, as well as General Fund reductions in the Private and Community Forests Program (with a corresponding decrease in Forest Products Harvest Tax matching dollars).

Other budget highlights include restoration of the Industrial Fire Program, which had been proposed for elimination in the Governor's recommended budget; authorization of new positions and use of federal funds under the National Fire Plan; and fee-based funding of the Reforestation Tax Credit Program.

There was considerable debate regarding harvest levels in state forests, with legislators providing instruction to the agency through budget notes and other provisions. Positions necessary to open the Tillamook Forest Center were included, although with reduced amounts for capital outlay and services and supplies.

The Legislature addressed a variety of forest issues – ranging from fire suppression costs to state involvement in federal

forestland management – and approved administrative bills affecting PERS benefits for seasonal employees, criminal background checks and other topics.

Here's a look at major legislation affecting ODF:

## Budget

**SB 5612** was the agency's main budget bill, with **SB 5613** establishing a Smoke Management Program fee and **HB 2122** setting Forest Products Harvest Tax rates and providing for the reforestation tax credit fee.

## Other forestry related bills

### HB 2327 – fire protection funding

This bill was the product of a work group that, at the direction of the 2003 Legislature, examined Oregon's system for funding emergency wildfire suppression.

The bill adjusts the system to make it sustainable into the future, in light of escalating fire suppression and insurance costs. It continues major landowner participation in firefighting costs, continues the practice of purchasing catastrophic fire insurance, and formalizes the concept of "severity funding," in which state dollars finance extra firefighting resources during times of severe fire danger.

*continued on page 14*



Under the bill, forest landowners pay the first \$15 million of emergency fire costs each year, with the state general fund providing the next \$10 million. It's estimated that a state contribution would be necessary in three of every ten years. Insurance is in place to cover costs above this combined \$25 million.

**HB 2327** also calls for equal sharing between the state and landowners of the cost of insurance, an expense previously paid entirely by landowners.

**HB 5068 – purchase of fire insurance**

Passed early in the session, before work on HB 2327 was complete, this bill authorized purchase of a \$25 million fire insurance policy with a \$25 million deductible, for the 2005 fire season. HB 2327 later authorized landowners to reimburse the state for half of the premium, or \$645,000.

**HB 3083 – journalists' access to fire scenes**

The bill specifies that a person working for a news organization does not commit the crime of refusing to assist in firefighting operations if the person disobeys a firefighter's order. For this provision to apply, the person must be reporting on the fire, and must not reasonably interfere with firefighting operations.

**SB 1072 - biomass use, state participation in federal forest planning**

The bill recognizes the importance of collaboration between the state and federal governments in restoring the health of federal forests, and provides for this collaboration. It acknowledges that the department, with its expertise in science-based, active forest management, is well positioned to facilitate Oregon's involvement in the development of federal forest policy and plans.

It also allows the board to direct the state forester to help develop stewardship contracts that use private contractors to carry out habitat restoration, prescribed burning and other measures to improve the health of federal forests.

In addition, the bill establishes state

policy that supports utilization of biomass as a means of reducing fire danger and restoring forest health on federal lands. It contains a variety of biomass-related provisions, including direction to the department to work with other agencies in promoting understanding of biomass issues.

**HB 2729 – Community Forest Authorities**

This legislation offers a tool that may be useful in addressing the loss of commercial forestland to residential or commercial development, or other uses. It allows cities or counties to create non-profit Community Forest Authorities that can purchase tracts of forestland. The forest would be managed for a range of community benefits. Bonds used to finance the purchase would be repaid with revenue generated from the timberland.

**SB 786 – Seedlings for family forestland owners**

This legislation gives the Board of Forestry various options, including establishing a cooperative of private nursery growers, to more effectively and efficiently provide seedlings to meet the needs of family forestland owners. The department will continue to operate the Phipps nursery until other options are studied and proved to be successful.

**SB 496 – Forest Legacy program**

This bill allows the department to receive federal funds to acquire forestlands under the Forest Legacy program, but only if those lands are within an urban growth boundary.

**SB 82 – land use “big look”**

The legislation establishes a task force to conduct a comprehensive review of Oregon's land use planning program. The 10-member panel will be appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate.

The group will conduct public meetings, survey citizens, and explore such issues as the current system's effectiveness, and the respective roles of local and state government. The task force will develop proposals for consideration by the 2007 legislature.

*continued on page 15*

**HB 2577 – noxious weed control**

This bill requires the state Department of Agriculture, in conjunction with the state Weed Board, is required to implement plans for improving noxious weed control.

**SB 290 – pesticide use reporting**

The bill re-establishes and funds the Pesticide Use Reporting System, which will require pesticide use reporting, probably starting sometime in 2006. Forest pesticide applicators will be required to report into the system.

The bill prohibits collection of pesticide use data that identifies the owner, lessee or specific location of property.

**SB 785 – Plant Pest and Disease Emergency Response Fund**

The bill creates this fund and appropriates money to the Department of Agriculture for responding to pest and disease emergencies as necessary to protect the nursery industry.

**Administrative Bills**

**HB 2157 – criminal record checks**

This bill authorizes a number of state agencies to conduct fingerprint-based criminal background checks. For the Department of Forestry, checks may be conducted on employees who provide forest education or recreation programs for minors, and for staff engaged in firefighting and fire investigation. The agencies must adopt rules to implement the new authority.

**HB 2189 – break in PERS service**

The bill modifies the break-in-service rule for people who leave public employment for more than six months. It allows a continuation of PERS membership for seasonal employees.

**SB 177 – firefighter liability**

This legislation relieves forest protective association firefighters of liability for injury to people or property when they are working under the direction and control of the state forester. The bill does not change the substance of existing law, but remedies what some experts believed was a technical flaw in the current law’s language.

**HB 2868 – small forest tracts**

This bill alters the dates by which an application for continuing qualification of forestland for small tract forestland assessment must be filed following sale or transfer of the property.

**HB 2101 – security and radio communications**

Provisions in this bill include creation of the State Interoperability Executive Council, to help ensure that Oregon has a strong, interagency radio communication system to serve emergency and other needs. The Department of Forestry will be represented on the council.

**Legislation that did not pass**

Bills that failed during the 2005 legislative session included proposals that would have:

- Eliminated funding for the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, or provided for increased, direct legislative review of the institute’s budget.
- Established no-harvest reserves onstate forestlands.
- Provided for license plates carrying an image of Smokey Bear, as a means of raising money for wildfire prevention messages.
- Made various changes to the membership of the Board of Forestry.
- Addressed a range of policy and administrative questions raised by voter approval last November of Ballot Measure 37. The measure requires state or local government in some instances to grant compensation or waivers to landowners who are affected by certain land-use restrictions.

# Interface Act Implementation Expands

*Brian Ballou, Fire Prevention Specialist*

The Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act's implementation is expanding into several counties this year and on into 2006. Jackson and Deschutes counties have mailed notifications to forestland-urban interface property owners, effectively concluding the implementation process in those areas.

Klamath County assembled its forestland-urban interface classification committee in June, and implementation plans are underway for Douglas, Crook, Jefferson, Wasco, Hood River, Umatilla, Baker, Union and Wallowa counties.

## Central Oregon

Deschutes County has now moved to the certification phase, which means forestland-urban interface property owners in that county have received their notification letters and certification cards from ODF, and may return their signed card to ODF within two years. The certification card confirms that the property meets the fuel reduction standards required by the act.

ODF's Central Oregon District. Tom Andrade is the district's Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act coordinator, and is based in the Sisters Sub-Unit office.

To assist property owners with on-site fuel reduction evaluations, and to perform fuel reduction work, Andrade has trained more than 70 accredited assessors. Assessors must be licensed and bonded contractors, or be members of a fire protection district or a homeowners' association. Additionally, assessors must have either two years of fire suppression or prevention experience, or two years of forestland management experience. A list of accredited assessors is mailed to property owners with their notification letters and certification cards.

Central Oregon District staff is working with central Oregon Realtors to help ensure that, when a forestland-urban interface property is sold, sellers are made aware of their obligation to inform buyers that they may request a new certification form from ODF.

The district is working toward implementing the Fire Protection Act in Crook, Jefferson, Wasco and Hood River counties. Emergency services personnel in Crook County are being briefed on the implementation process, and the county's geographic information systems (GIS) personnel are developing a base layer map for future forestland-urban interface identification and fire-risk hazard classifications. Similar actions will occur in Jefferson, Wasco and Hood River counties during the fall of 2005 and the winter of 2006.

"I am pleased with both the progress we are making and the positive response from our close cooperators and landowners," said Central Oregon District Forester Bob Young.

## Southwest Oregon

Jackson County forestland-urban interface property owners started receiving notifications from ODF's Southwest Oregon District in May, and all notifications will be

*The characteristics of a proper fuel break around a home include a primary fuel break extending at least 30 feet from a structure, nonflammable ground cover such as asphalt or concrete, gravel, lawn, or succulent ground cover, and no ladder fuels, among other things. In many cases it may be necessary to create a secondary fuel break.*



Photo by Brian Ballou, ODF

Approximately 30,000 Deschutes County property owners were mailed notification letters and certification cards in the latter half of 2004 and the start of 2005. As of August 2005, about 5,000 signed certification cards had been received by

mailed by the end of 2005. More than 12,000 lots in the county were included in interface areas by the Jackson County Forestland-Urban Interface Classification Committee, which issued its findings in October 2004. Property owners have two years after receiving their notification to return a certification card, asserting compliance with the fuel reduction standards of the Fire Protection Act. As of September, more than 700 property owners had returned certification cards to the district.

The Fire Protection Act coordinator for the Southwest Oregon District is Brian Ballou.

District staff and Josephine County officials are discussing implementing the Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act in that county late in 2005. Implementation has been delayed to allow the county time to complete its comprehensive fire plan, and to allow ODF to complete implementation of the act in Jackson County. It is estimated that as many as 14,000 lots may be reviewed during the forestland-urban interface identification and classification process in Josephine County

**Klamath County**

The Klamath County Forestland-Urban Interface Classification Committee started holding meetings in June, beginning the process of mapping forestland-urban interface areas and assigning fire-risk classifications to those areas. Approximately 4,800 lots in Klamath County may meet the criteria to be included in forestland-urban interface areas.

The classification committee is chaired by Gene Rogers, a U.S. Forest Service fuels management specialist (retired); the secretary is John Ernst, Interfor Pacific's general manager for log procurement. Rogers and Ernst, along with Dewaine Holster, fire chief of the Chiloquin-Agency Lake Rural Fire Protection District, were appointed to the committee by the Klamath County Board of Commissioners. Other committee members are John Ketchum, chief of the Keno Rural Fire Protection District, and Danny Benson, ODF's Klamath Unit forester. Ketchum was appointed to the committee by the state fire marshal, and Benson was appointed by the state forester.

CarrieAnn Capp is the Klamath-Lake District's Fire Protection Act coordinator.



Photo by Brian Ballou, ODF

**Northeast Oregon**

ODF's Northeast Oregon District will implement the Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act in Umatilla and Baker counties in late 2005. Implementation in Union and Wallowa counties is expected to begin mid-to-late 2006. It is estimated that as many as 10,000 to 15,000 lots will be reviewed during the forestland-urban interface identification and classification process across the four counties.

The district's Fire Protection Act coordinator is Steve Meyer.

**Douglas County**

The Douglas Forest Protective Association is handling the implementation and administration of the Act in Douglas County. Tom Fields is the coordinator.

DFPA staff will work with the Douglas County Board of Commissioners on appointing a forestland-urban interface classification committee during the fall. The task of identifying and classifying forestland-urban interface areas is expected to be completed by fall 2006. Owners of forestland-urban interface lots in Douglas County may receive notifications from DFPA during the winter of 2006-07.

*In the event of a wildfire, recent fuels reduction work around several homes in this suburban Bend neighborhood will pay off with lower fire intensity.*

# Conference on climate change looks at implications for resources, forestry

Cynthia Orlando, ODF Public Information Officer

*"The uncertainties concerning climate change include how fast the planet will warm, exactly how much it will heat up, how this warming will play out on a regional basis, and how the ecological systems of the planet will respond. Nobody knows the definitive answers to these questions because we've never run this 'experiment' before."*

*Dr. Jane Lubchenco  
Oregon State University  
Distinguished Professor of Zoology*

The Oregon we enjoy today could be a much different place in the future because of climate change. That was the overarching theme of a three-day conference about climate change for natural resource managers held in Portland in June. The conference, "Bringing Climate into Natural Resource Management," was hosted by the Western Forestry and Conservation Association and the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain research stations.

The three day gathering for natural resource professionals presented the latest developments and findings about climate change and impacts. Implications for western water management, bark beetle management, and the latest discoveries about invasive plant species were among the highlights.

"We're trying to find out how climate changes environmental conditions and how that affects the ecological conditions land managers have to manage," said Richard Haynes of the Forest Service, who

was one of the conference organizers.

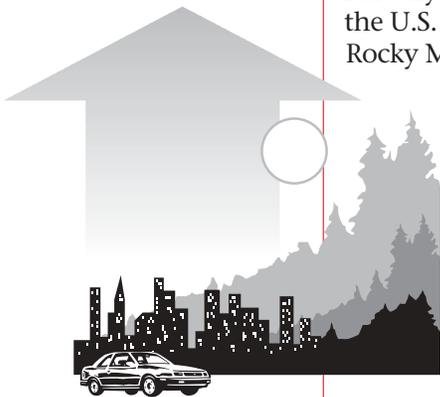
## What's going on?

Although essential for photosynthesis, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is increasing in the atmosphere, causing most scientists around the world to be concerned about the potential for changes in the earth's climate. While there is general agreement among scientists that our climate system is changing as a result of increasing concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub>, the degree to which temperature and precipitation patterns will change remains uncertain. Fossil fuels and changing land uses are thought to be the primary causes of the steady rise in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. Strategies to remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere are the focus of global change research and international treaty negotiations.

The Portland conference provided researchers and land managers the opportunity to share and discuss implications of recent natural resource studies related to climate change. Topics included western bark beetle outbreaks, climate change and Pacific Northwest cold-water fish, invasive plant species, and implications for landscape-level fire severity ratings. Conference speakers told the audience that managing forested ecosystems to keep as much carbon as possible stored in trees and plants will require us to know more about past, present and future land uses. Understanding how timber harvest and forest practices affect carbon sources and large storage capacity at regional scales will also be important.

## Possible consequences: spread of bark beetles and invasive plants

Warmer weather patterns have already occurred in Alaska, and people there are more likely to accept the reality of climate change than those living farther south, where changes have not yet been as pronounced. According to conference speakers, possible consequences of climate change include extended warmer



weather, water shortages, variable precipitation patterns, ocean warming and sea level rises, increased energy demands, and loss of wildlife species and habitat. Other possible impacts include a decline in the ski industry, reduced salmon populations, and a reduction of biodiversity.

Jesse Logan, Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station, discussed climate change implications for managing western bark beetle outbreaks. As CO2 levels rise and temperatures warm, beetle outbreaks are occurring at higher elevations and spreading farther north through Canada, said Logan. White-bark pine - a key species for wildlife that grows at the tree line throughout the Cascades and northern Rockies - has not demonstrated good natural defenses against attacks by bark beetle, said Logan. "And," he added, "other 5-needle pines including Jackie pine and Bristlecone pine are equally vulnerable." White-bark pine is kind of a "sitting duck" for succumbing to bark beetle, he concluded.

Climate change and invasive plants will probably not be a good mix, said Agricultural Research Service speaker Lewis Ziske, who pointed out that not all plants react in the same way to changes in CO2 levels. Ziske told the audience that many invasive and non-native plants produce vegetatively from below ground, and as CO2 levels rise, these plants respond with increased growth. In addition, increasing carbon dioxide levels reduce the effectiveness of some herbicides. Also, levels of carbon dioxide increase as one travels from farm to park to inner city. How these different factors may affect fire frequency and fuel loads remains uncertain; research by the Forest Service is ongoing.

In her talk "*Community Responses to Disturbances*," Courtney Flint, Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station, talked about how people in communities respond to change. Flint told the audience that communities located near forests are typically comprised of multiple kinds of stakeholders with multiple experiences and views. She warned natural resource managers against assuming homogeneity within these forest-based communities.

What is certain about the discussion on climate change is that there are many uncertainties. One speaker even noted that President Harry Truman once asked for a

"one-armed economist." Truman made the strange request after listening to many different experts who came before him, saying "on one hand" and "on the other hand" while trying to predict the economic outlook.

### **Western Governors play key role**

Governors in western states including Oregon, Washington and California are leading much of the discussion on climate change. The Western Governors' Association is a non-partisan organization of governors from Oregon, Washington and California and other places including New Mexico, Nevada, Alaska, Hawaii, American Samoa and Guam. In June of last year, they voted unanimously to accommodate the population's growing energy needs, position the Western energy system to respond to environmental challenges, and take advantage of new technologies that will lower the cost of renewable energy and of controlling emissions from the fossil fuel resource base.

At the June conference Gary Lettman, an economist for ODF, spoke briefly about agency policy, the *Forestry Program for Oregon* and the Board of Forestry's focus on sustainable forestry.

He noted the importance of tree species diversity and reforestation measures following timber harvest. Lettman also emphasized the practice of leaving key structure components like decaying logs and snags (standing dead trees) to aid in carbon storage after timber harvest.

In addition to listening to speeches and presentations, attendees were provided the opportunity to break into small groups to discuss issues as varied as water supplies, aquatic fish management, ecosystem health, timber production, forest fire management, and other topics pertinent to climate change predictions.

For more information about climate change, visit <http://egov.oregon.gov/ENERGY/SITING/Climate/climhme.shtml>

More information about upcoming conferences may be obtained online at: [www.westernforestry.org](http://www.westernforestry.org)

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*Levels of carbon dioxide increase as one travels from farm to park to inner city. How these different factors may affect fire frequency and fuel loads remains uncertain.*

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# Reducing fuels buildup is key to fire prevention near Sisters

*Cynthia Orlando, ODF Public Information Officer*

**O**wners of residences and vacation homes located in the wildland-urban interface area west of Sisters, Oregon, can breathe a little easier these days thanks to an ongoing partnership between the U.S. Forest Service and the Oregon Department of Forestry. For the past several years, fuels reduction projects to create buffers and reduce fire impacts have been taking place

eight years. In addition to overseeing district thinning operations, the Moyer father and son team coordinate with the district's Fire and Fuels shop for other fuels reduction work including controlled burns and slash burning.

Have many homes been protected by this ODF - Forest Service partnership? Dave Moyer, a 35-year career employee with the Forest Service, definitely thinks so.

"During the Cache Mountain Fire of 2002, homes behind the Black Butte area saw the benefit of these projects," says Moyer. "When fire came through, it had no ladder fuels to keep it running and it dropped right down." Moyer adds that a controlled underburn executed in previous years undoubtedly paid big dividends in reducing the fire's impacts to area homes.

In addition to Black Butte area homes, residences in many other neighborhoods of this fire-prone part of Oregon benefit by the fuels reduction projects taking place each year. Neighborhoods made just a little more fire-safe by the work of these crews include Cascade Meadow Ranch, Tollgate, Squawback Woods, and Crossroads subdivision, and homes in and around the City of Sisters.



Photo by Cynthia Orlando, ODF

*A partnership between the US Forest Service and ODF enables fuels reduction projects like this thinning in the Santiam Pass area.*

throughout the Santiam Pass area and in the Metolious Basin.

Credited with reducing dangerously high levels of forest fuels and lowering the odds of catastrophic wildfire, fuels reduction projects include forest thinnings, slash piling and controlled burns. Economics plays a part as well, since in many cases the small logs removed during forest thinnings are later sold as poles for construction, or as firewood.

***"When fire came through, it had no ladder fuels to keep it running and it dropped right down."***

Supervisory Forestry Technician Dave Moyer with the Forest Service in Sisters is well acquainted with the Oregon Department of

Forestry's crew foreman, who's responsible for heading up ODF's thinning crew. He should be. Travis Moyer, a crew foreman with ODF, is Moyer's son and a forest management technician for ODF. They've been working together on various fuels reduction projects for



Photo by Cynthia Orlando, ODF

*Following thinning, clumps of trees (left) provide wildlife cover and habitat.*

# Josephine County and ODF cut interface fire hazards

*Brian Ballou, Fire Prevention Specialist*

Following the Biscuit Fire in 2002, Josephine County officials launched a multi-pronged effort to reduce wildland/urban interface fuels and educate landowners about making their properties less vulnerable to wildfire. “The county put its money where its mouth is,” said Rick Dryer, ODF’s Grants Pass Unit forester. “It has put over \$1 million toward keeping crews working on fuel reduction projects on county-owned lands.” Most of the money has been distributed through Title II & III grants, much of which has funded ODF permanent and seasonal staff to do fuel reduction work in the off-season.

Crews thin trees and brush, and remove low-hanging branches – dubbed ladder fuels because they transfer fire into tree crowns - in the fuel-reduction project areas. Most of the debris is burned as weather and smoke management conditions allow.

Fuel-reduction projects on county lands include an 80-acre parcel in the Sunny Valley area, and a 150-foot-wide fuel break adjacent to the Cathedral Hills subdivision south of Grants Pass – an area where hundreds of homes are expected to be built in the next few years. Another 140 acres of county land are being treated or are scheduled for treatment in the near future. The lands being treated are either county forest lands or county parks and recreation lands.

The crews have also completed a 4-acre fuel reduction project around a county elementary school and a 5-acre fuel reduction project on a historical cemetery.

In addition to these projects, ODF staff at the Grants Pass Unit has made cost-share assistance grants available to Josephine County wildland/urban interface residential property owners. The grants help property owners to establish defensible space zones around their homes and along driveways. ODF forest officers develop a fuel reduction plan for the property, and after work is completed the property owner is paid. The cost-share monies come from National Fire Plan grants for fuel-reduction in the county’s wildland/urban interface areas.

“There’s more to the story than just fuel-reduction treatments,” said Dryer. “Following inspections on residential properties, many property owners took the advice of our folks and did the fuel-reduction work on their own.”

Since November 2001, the Grants Pass Unit conducted 3,165 residential property fuel-reduction inspections. Of these, 775 properties already had adequate fuel breaks, and 2,390 property owners elected to establish fuel breaks.

To further assist property owners with getting fuel reduction projects done, ODF has been a key player in the Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan, which has sponsored public meetings to educate people about defensible space, and assisted property owners with getting rid of woody debris. Community meetings were held this spring throughout the county, and several hundred attendees learned about defensible space guidelines, ODF’s cost-share assistance grant program, and the county’s Integrated Fire Plan. Presenters at the meetings included staff from the Integrated Fire Plan, the Josephine County Planning Department, ODF’s Grants Pass Unit, Rural-Metro Fire Department, the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service.

A woody debris disposal day was held at several locations in Jackson and Josephine counties on April 16. Residents were able to bring pickup and trailer loads of tree cuttings, brush, needles and leaves to designated sites for free disposal.

ODF’s Grants Pass Unit has also lent a hand with community fire plans in the Sunny Valley-Wolf Creek areas, and the Illinois Valley, and has provided advice and support on the county effort to revise Article 76, its wildfire and safety standards code for new and rebuilt structures.



Photo by Brian Ballou, ODF

*This home survived the Deer Creek Fire, thanks to fire-resistant plants and some immediate help from firefighters. The flames scorched groundcover plants in the foreground, but a green lawn between the flames and house gave firefighters a place in which to set up and go to work.*

# Protective Association tours North Cascade District, discusses fire risks

*Jamie Paul, ODF Office Specialist*



*A view of one of the dams in the Bull Run reservoir. Those on the tour were able to see first-hand the pristine treasure that supplies more than 800,000 Oregonians in the Portland metro area with pure, clean drinking water.*

The Clackamas-Marion Forest Protective Association, made up of industrial and private woodland landowners, recently took a tour of the North Cascade District to look at projects, issues and fire plans for the Molalla Unit of the North Cascade Protection District.

Also on the tour were representatives from the Mt. Hood National Forest, Clackamas County Forestry and Bureau of Land management.

At each stop, participants learned a little history about each area and what plans are being made locally to help reduce

the risk of wildland fire along with state, federal and county agencies. The tour took place in July with stops in the Bull Run watershed, Hoodland Fire Department and at Wapinitia near Mt. Hood.

At the secluded Bull Run watershed, those on the tour were able to see first-hand the pristine treasure that supplies more than 800,000 Oregonians in the Portland metro area with pure, clean drinking water. They also learned how the City of Portland Water Bureau, Mt. Hood National Forest and the North Cascade District plan to protect it from fire. At the Hoodland Fire Department, Chief Dave Olsen shared fire concerns and local solutions that have worked in the past.

Cindy Kolomechuk of Clackamas County Emergency Management presented updates on the Community Fire Plan for Clackamas County.

At the Wapinitia housing development, a group of 32 homes on private land surrounded by Mt. Hood National Forest are unprotected by any structural fire agency. Here, association members learned how residents are pulling together and working with local, state and federal fire agencies to reduce wildfire risk around their homes with defensible space education and fuel reduction efforts.

The Forest Protective Association's summer tour occurs every year with the intent to keep members with a vested interest in forest protection updated on the efforts being made to keep wild fire losses to a minimum.



*Board members discuss defensible space at an unprotected residential development in Wapinitia.*

Photos by Jamie Paul, ODF

# Foresters return to Elliott State Forest to reflect on 'getting the job done'

Jeff Foreman, ODF Public Information Officer

**Y**ou don't work on the Elliott State Forest and easily forget it. Vast and rugged, the 93,000-acre Coast Range forest northeast of Coos Bay sticks with you.

You remember the beauty. And most likely you have a vivid memory of a particular time when you climbed – tumbled, really – down an incredibly steep slope to lay out a timber sale.

Slowly you trekked back up, using the dense vine maple for hand-holds and resting occasionally against arrow-straight trees. Along the way, you tried to avoid the ever-present salmonberry stickers, but invariably you end up taking a few festering reminders home with you.

But the memories of the people who have worked on the Elliott don't fester. On the contrary, those cherished memories grow bigger and better just like a fish story.

For many at the Oregon Department of Forestry, the experience of working on the Elliott State Forest is a rite of passage. Some stay and complete their careers on the pitched hillsides, content to test themselves and defy gravity. Others leave that challenge behind and look to other parts of the state to pursue the profession of forestry.

But no matter where they go, they leave a part of themselves on the Elliott. This became apparent this summer when former district foresters and others took a trip down memory lane, trading stories about how they "got the job done."

The job has changed over the years, from one of nurturing a naturally regenerated forest and building roads to getting the cut out to managing for multiple benefits, including habitat conservation for threatened species (note: An accompanying story by former district forester Jerry Phillips provides a succinct history of how the Elliott State Forest became the first state forest and how it has evolved over the years).

The Elliott is unique in several ways. Established in 1930, it is Oregon's first state forest. It is over 90 percent Common School



Photo by Jeff Foreman, ODF

Land, which the Department of Forestry manages through a contract with the State Land Board and the Department of State Lands. And it is the only state forest in Oregon to be managed under a Habitat Conservation Plan approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Current Coos District Forester Jim Young welcomed his predecessors and others on July 21 for a history celebration tour. They celebrated the 75 years the forest has existed, and they toasted the 50 years it has been managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry.

With his entire 33-year career spent on the Elliott, Phillips was able to provide the most perspective on the forest. Other former Coos district foresters included Clark Seely, now the Forestry Department's second-in-command Associate State Forester, and Rick Rogers, now the District Forester at Western Lane District in Veneta.

*In succession, r-l: former Coos District foresters Jerry Phillips, Clark Seely and Rick Rogers join current District Forester Jim Young for a celebration this summer, recognizing 75 years for the Elliott State Forest and 50 years of ODF management. Former district foresters not pictured: Bob Mounteer and Everett Hunt.*

Each took their turn speaking, as they had done managing the forest, and each paid respect to those who had gone before them. Seely said he "lived a forester's dream," following Phillips in 1989, in his day-to-day dealings with the dedicated staff doing the work on the forest.

But it wasn't exactly a quiet time for Seely. Northern spotted owls and then marbled murrelets were listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act in the early 1990s. And to the surprise of many biologists who saw reserves as the only way to save these "old growth" birds, the owls and murrelets turned up in the Elliott's second-growth managed stands.

This confounded conventional wisdom, but it did allow the Department of Forestry to negotiate with the federal services to gain a habitat conservation plan and associated incidental take permit to continue managing the forest.

Without the conservation plan, foresters would have been required to continue surveying all timber sales and set aside areas being used by the birds. This option – with 20 owl pairs and 20 singles and the number of murrelets being found consistently growing – would have reduced timber harvesting to a fraction of its normal, sustainable level.

During negotiations, Seely relied on three principles: 1) past management was important and had value, 2) the forest will continue to be managed, and 3) there was a clear obligation to produce timber revenue for the state Common School Fund and counties.

In the process of developing the forest management and conservation plans, the Department of Forestry for the first time sought public involvement. Seely hailed the public component as a success, citing the use of legal "sideboards" to guide comments to make them relevant and useful, instead of a wide-open focus on simply "issues."

It fell to Seely's successor, Rick Rogers, to implement the plans for managing the forest and conserving habitat. Not an easy task with a new and complex conservation plan freshly approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Both the Department of Forestry and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service would be learning how to work together while implementing the new plan.

"Protecting owl sites was fairly straightforward – we knew where they were," Rogers said. "But we had to create a model for rating murrelet habitat and we could only work in the areas rated as a low probability of being occupied by murrelets."

Harvest levels gradually moved back toward pre-listing levels. But the incidental take permit for murrelets, issued for only six years because little was known about the seabird's forest behavior, expired in 2001. The permit for the more well-known spotted owl extended for 60 years.

Faced with the confining and often frustrating practice of avoiding take of the murrelet, timber sales have once again become vulnerable to wholesale changes or even cancellations. Surveying for the bird is required if the timber sale is in murrelet habitat; if they are found, the area becomes restricted.

This betwixt-and-between approach of operating with both incidental take and surveying for these birds coaxed the current district forester, Jim Young, to take on the challenge of revising the forest management plan, along with revising the habitat conservation plan.

Five years have been devoted to this planning. The process has allowed for consideration of alternatives, public comments and scientific review. The draft plan uses an integrated landscape approach that sees economic, environmental and social values as interdependent. It is designed so benefits include sustainable timber harvests and revenue, diverse habitat for native species, properly functioning streams and recreational opportunities.

Young said the management plan is scheduled to be taken before the policy-making Board of Forestry and the State Land Board, owners of much of the Elliott's land, in early 2006 for consideration of approval. Along with a newly negotiated multi-species habitat conservation plan, the Elliott would return to a more certain management path that enables predictable and sustainable timber harvest and revenue production, while protecting habitat for listed species as required under law.

To Phillips, the maze and complexity of all these plans and federal negotiations seem to only obscure the primary objective of the forest – to generate revenue for schools statewide. He and his predecessors, Bob Mounter and Everett Hunt, worked in simpler times, but they, too, had their trials and tests.

"Bob Mounter would say he only had one regret," Phillips said, "and that was he always had to work with old growth. It wasn't true forestry as far as he was concerned; it was more just an engineering problem – just figuring a way to get the timber out."

One month after Hunt took over as district forester in 1962, the Columbus Day storm hit and blew down 100 million board feet. To access the blown down timber, another 200 million board feet of standing timber had to be harvested. To help understand the magnitude, an average log truck carries about 4,500 board feet. That means there were more than 66,000 truckloads to be removed.

The salvage operation took three years to complete. Two hundred miles of roads were built during the process.

When Phillips became district forester in 1970, he wasn't sure he wanted the job. He saw that it involved a lot of office time; keeping him out of the forest, and that's where he (and most foresters) really wanted to be.

Phillips used his "office time" to add 5,000 acres to the Elliott, trading isolated tracts of land for pieces connected to the main forest boundary. This improved access and management.

"The forest keeps changing," mused Phillips. "And management needs to change. I didn't always feel that way. I was so sure we were doing it right years ago. Someone said this awhile back and it's very true: We need to have the public's permission to manage."

Over the last 50 years, the Department of Forestry has adjusted its management to meet the changing expectations for the forest. Each generation "got the job done" through careful and thoughtful consideration of current research and on-the-ground experience.

The healthy and productive Elliott State Forest stands as a tribute to all those foresters who left a little of themselves on the forest. They did their best to leave it in better shape than they found it. They have – each in their own time – earned the public's trust and permission to manage.

*Current Coos District Forester Jim Young served cake on the anniversary tour of the Elliott State Forest.*

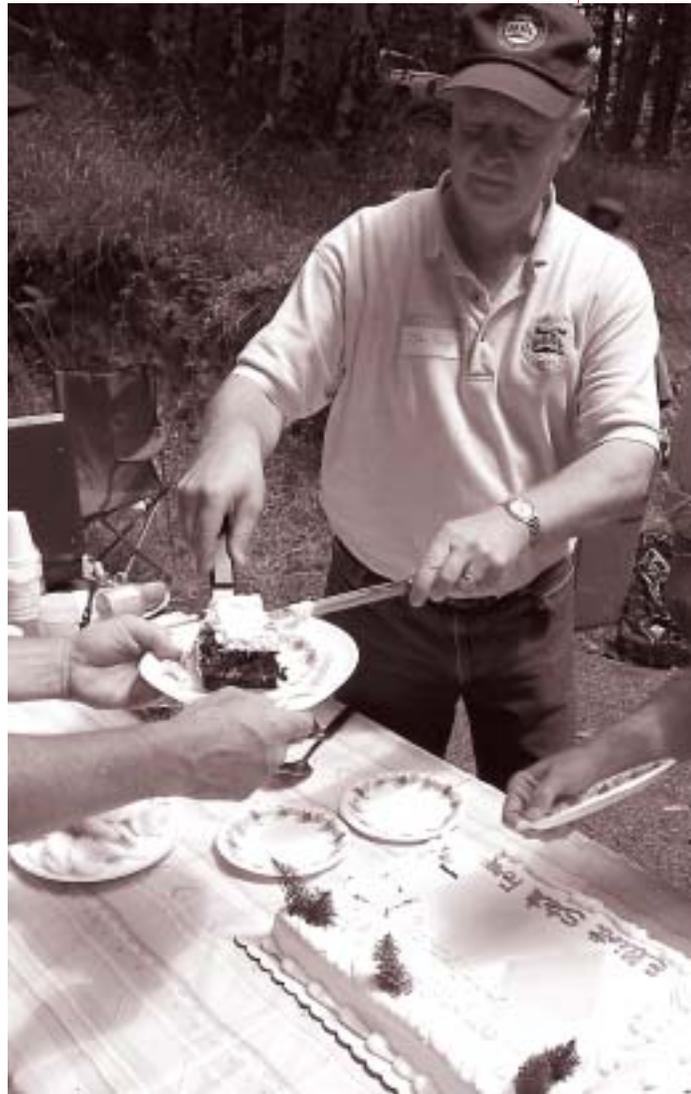


Photo by Jeff Foreman, ODF

# A diamond anniversary for the Elliott

*Jerry Phillips*  
*Former ODF District Forester*



Photo by Jeff Foreman, ODF

*Former ODF District Forester Jerry Phillips is recognized as a historian for the Elliott State Forest. He started work there in 1956.*

It's not often that one can simultaneously celebrate both a diamond and a golden anniversary. But this year, the Elliott State Forest, located a few miles northeast of Coos Bay, can observe such a combination.

Created through a large exchange of scattered state "school lands" for one solid block

of then national forestlands, the "Elliott" became Oregon's first state forest in 1930. So this year marks its 75th – or diamond – anniversary.

The golden anniversary comes from 50 years of management under the Oregon Department of Forestry. The 1955 Legislature paved the way for management to begin that year on July 1.

The 25-year delay in timber management was due mostly to our nation's Great Depression during the 1930s and the fact that the Elliott was a comparatively young forest. Ninety percent of the forest was in natural re-growth following the huge 1868 forest fire, so it wasn't ready for the commercial market until the 1950s.

All that occurred on the Elliott State Forest until the mid-1950s was work by the CCCs (the Civilian Conservation Corps), constructing roads, fire lookouts, and telephone lines.

My connection with the Elliott began on July 1, 1956. I helped on the first inventory crew and helped lay out many of the early timber sales. I spent my entire career on the Elliott, and from 1970 to 1989 I was the Coos District forester, so the Elliott is important to me.

It should be important to all Oregonians. Annual revenue generated from timber harvests goes into the state's Common School

Fund, where it is carefully invested by the Department of State Lands. The income from those investments is distributed yearly to every public school in the state, on a per-child basis.

When management on the Elliott began, the Common School Fund was very small. Since then, hundreds of millions of dollars have poured into that fund from Elliott timber harvesting, and today totals nearly \$900 million – mainly from that source.

Oregonians should also be pleased to know that the Elliott State Forest has always been managed on a conservative, sustained yield basis. And over the years, more emphasis has been placed on non-timber values, such as fish, wildlife and recreation.

The concept of Oregon having its own state forest came in 1912 from one of our state's most farsighted and conservation-minded governors, Oswald West, best known for his actions to preserve Oregon's ocean beaches as public property and accessible to all.

Gov. West noticed that the national forests – only about five years old at that time – had become a social and economic boon for the country. He figured those benefits also could be realized in Oregon, with its considerable timber acreage granted at statehood to support public education.

These scattered lands were traded to end up with a more manageable consolidated forest. Negotiations started in 1912 and took 18 years to complete, and spanned World War I.

Francis Elliott, Oregon's first state forester, shepherded this project along the entire time. Then, unfortunately, he died in 1930, the very year it was completed. The state honored his memory by naming the forest for him.

The forest's land mass grew slightly between 1936 and 1949 when Coos and Douglas counties transferred tax-delinquent parcels to the state. This represents about 9 percent of the total 93,000 acres.

Gov. West and his friend, State Forester Francis Elliott, would be proud of their creation today, 75 years later, with its beauty, productivity and other public values.

# Tillamook Forest's "Six-Year Jinx" appears to be over

Cynthia Orlando, ODF Public Information Officer

Those of us who lived and worked in Oregon during the summer of 2002 remember all too clearly the numbers and sizes of a long series of catastrophic wildfires that wreaked havoc in Oregon's forests all summer and fall.

The last several fire seasons have been mild in comparison, but ODF personnel - particularly those in the northwestern part of the state - had cause for a bit of apprehension this year. That's because 2005 marks the anniversary of what some ODF staffers still refer to as the Tillamook Jinx, a series of fires which began in 1933 and recurred in six-year intervals in 1939, 1945, and 1951.

## Is the "Jinx" still real?

A consultation with ODF retiree Larry Fick, who recently completed *Forest Protection in Oregon*, a book of facts and figures about fires and fire history in Oregon, shows otherwise.

According to Fick, the present Tillamook Forest has been visited by fire many times in the past 103 years. The first fire of record was the 1902 fire, started by settlers, that burned 29,030 acres in the lower Wilson River and Trask River areas. The next large fire was in 1918 when the Cedar Creek fire burned 29,700 acres starting in the middle Wilson and spreading into the Kilchis and Miami River drainages.

Next was a series of fires that started within logging operations: the 1931 Salmonberry fire that burned 24,700 acres, and the 1932 Cochran Fire which burned more than 35,000 acres.

## 'Six-Year Jinx' begins

The infamous 1933 fire was started in a logging operation in the Gales Creek canyon and burned 261,222 acres. This fire was the first of the fires that became known as the Six-Year Jinx. The second fire was in 1939 and burned 209,690 acres and the third fire was in 1945 and burned 182,370 acres. Unfortunately, the 1939 and 1945 fires

burned through much of the area burned in the 1933 fire.

"1951 - the next 6-year date - saw another fire caused by logging," says Fick. "This time, rapid attack by operator and state protection forces aided by some damp weather brought the first fire to a halt at 7,500 acres," he adds.

Another fire in June of 1951 was a result of re-ignition of the first fire, which had taken place in April. In July, a third fire was ignited when an operator topped a snag spar tree with dynamite.

The final 1951 fire in the Trask area broke out on September 21 when high east winds fanned a smoldering holdover from the July fire. This fire raced west for eight miles before stopping on September 24, slowed by a steady drizzle that brought the 1951 fire season to a close. The 1951 fires in the Trask areas burned 32,400 acres, some of it twice.

## The "Jinx" is broken

Since 1951 there have been several fires in the present Tillamook Forest, but new roads, snag corridors, lookouts and protection forces have made it possible to control them before they reached the size of previous fires. According to Fick, the largest fire in the area since 1951 was the 1956 Cronin Creek fire that burned 3,894 acres. It was started as a slash burn that escaped when weather changed.

Fick says the Tillamook Jinx was probably permanently put to rest by the work of District Forester Ed Schroeder, whom he credits with taking the preventive measures needed to keep large fires at bay. "Schroeder worked hard to build fire protection partnerships with local loggers and cooperators," says Fick.

It certainly seems as if that strategy has worked, and ODF fire staff - especially those in Northwest Oregon - are particularly thankful for that.

## Fire season 2005 in photos



Photo by Chris Friend, ODF

*Flames explode on the Blossom Fire in August in the wild Rogue wilderness near Gold Beach.*



Photo by Brian Ballou, ODF

*The Deer Creek Fire makes a big run through the timber as television cameramen from two Medford stations film the flames and smoke. Black spots in the center of the smoke column aren't dirt specks; they're geese circling a pond being used as a fill point by helicopters.*



Photo by Brian Ballou, ODF



*Helicopter drops water on the Wasson Fire in July.*

*Firefighters regroup on the Blossom Fire.*



Photo by Chris Friend, ODF

*Only the chimney remains of a home destroyed by the Deer Creek fire near Cave Junction in August.*



Photo by Brian Ballou, ODF

# Smiling faces and places

*Right: ODF's Salem headquarters was the site of a reunion picnic for former Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) members in July. When it was first constructed, participants in the CCC program built several of the buildings on the Salem compound, including the State Forester's Office, now included in the National Register of Historic Places.*

*CCC enrollees throughout the country are credited with renewing the nation's forests by planting an estimated three billion trees between 1933 and 1942.*



*Left: Sunriver Owners Association President John Salzer (right) receives Sunriver's 25th annual Tree City USA award from State Forester Marvin Brown, (center), and ODF Community Assistance Forester Katie Kause, (left).*



Photo by Melinda Sherrrieb, ODF

*District Forester Bill Hunt shares a moment with Sarah Muller, a 4th grade student at Shasta Elementary in Klamath County, during the 10th annual award ceremony for the wildland fire prevention poster contest. Sarah won in the "overall" category for her poster (below).*



Photo by Cynthia Orlando, ODF

*Mary Ellen Holly, president of the Keep Oregon Green (KOG), at the 2005 Polk County Fair. KOG's display focused on jobs, multiple projects and environmental benefits of a healthy and thriving managed forest, and was sponsored by Polk County, the Oregon Forest Industries Council, Oregon Small Woodlands Association and Oregon Forest Resources Institute.*

## Science of headwater streams to be theme of upcoming two-day conference

**A** two-day symposium presenting new research about headwater streams of the Pacific Northwest is slated for Thursday and Friday, November 17 and 18, at the LaSells Stewart Center on the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis.

The symposium features discussions and latest findings about headwater streams, including information about sediment and wood dynamics, riparian and biological characteristics, the influence of headwater streams to downstream reaches, and policy options for managing headwater streams.

On the first day, attendees can expect to learn much about headwater streams and water quality, including timber harvest practices, effects of streamside treatments, assessing sediment impacts, invertebrates



*Southern Torrent Salamander*

Photo courtesy Joshua L. Puhn, Salamander Wrangler website

and streamside microclimates. The symposium includes speakers from far and wide, including California, Washington, Idaho, North Carolina, Georgia, New Jersey,

Colorado, Oregon and Canada.

Topics on day two include habitat associations, headwater amphibians, headwater streams in Southeast Alaska, protections for small headwater streams in Oregon, and management and policy options.

Reduced rate lodging is available within walking distance of the LaSells Stewart Center at the Hilton Garden Inn. Registration information is available by calling 888-722-9416, or by going online, to: [www.westernforestry.org](http://www.westernforestry.org).

## Former ODF Radio Engineer Raymond Palmer passes on

A memorial service was held in September in Portland for Raymond A. Palmer, a former radio engineer for ODF.

Palmer, who worked for ODF for some 42 years, retired in 1977. Palmer worked in Salem's radio shop and is credited with the engineering feat of providing multi-district radio operations with single transmitter units.

Palmer also developed the portable mobile relay which eliminated the need for lookouts to relay messages. In the June, 1964 issue of *Forest Log*, Palmer said that the Department installed the first close-spaced mobile relay in existence, "so far as concerns public safety organizations." That relay was installed for ODF's Western Lane district.



**L-R: Bill Sanders, Sid Bartlett, George Lewis, Ray Palmer, Ernie Block, Clayton Raker, Joe Tomminger.**

## Forestry Calendar of Public Meetings

September 26	8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Board of Forestry ad hoc Sustainable Forest Management Indicators Advisory Committee meeting, Tillamook Room, ODF Salem Headquarters.
October 22	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Fall Fungi Tour, Smith Homestead Shelter Hwy 6, MP 22.5.
October 24	8:30 - 4:00 p.m.	Board of Forestry ad hoc Sustainable Forest Management Indicators Advisory Committee meeting, Tillamook Room, ODF Salem Headquarters.
November 1	8:00 - 3:30 p.m.	Wildfire Summit w/Insurance Industry Organization of Oregon and Idaho, Lake Oswego (503-624-8400 for info).
November 21-22	8:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Board of Forestry meeting, Tillamook Room, ODF Salem Headquarters.
December 8	9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Fall Board of Directors meeting, West Oregon Forest Protective Association, ODF Philomath office conference room.



"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

**OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY**  
**2600 STATE STREET**  
**SALEM, OR 97310**

