



Promoting and practicing sustainable forestry

# 2009-2011 BUDGET BACKGROUNDER



## General Focus Areas

### An Overview

Through July 2008, the Oregon Board and Department of Forestry are developing budget proposals for consideration by the Governor. This sheet describes broad focus areas that are helping to guide this work.

Budget development is based on priorities established by the Governor, and by the Board of Forestry, through its *Forestry Program for Oregon*. The Governor's priority issues include climate change, water quality and water supply. Sustainable, healthy forests are key to addressing these issues, and that is reflected in our budget development.

Although economic trends point to a potential need to reduce state government expenditures, the budget process includes opportunities to point out compelling or evolving needs, and to provide policymakers with options for addressing them. So, the department's budget proposals include opportunities for new investment.

The Board and department welcome discussion and public input as budget development continues.

### Focus areas

**Reducing large wildfires and costs.** At a time when fire danger is growing more severe, proposed new investments in "up-front" resources and readiness would seek to reduce the number of large fires and the associated costs. Landowners and the state would share in these investments – and in the resulting reduced risk of incurring the costs and damage of large fires. Benefits would also include protection of natural resources, enhanced public safety, and reductions in the smoke effects of large wildfires.

**Landowner assistance in many landscapes.** Oregon's changing landscape poses a broad range of forestry-related assistance needs – in urban areas, in the wildland-urban interface, and among family forestland owners and larger landholders.

The department seeks to replace dwindling federal funds for urban forestry; to assist with the sustainability of family forestlands; to participate more actively in the state's land use planning program; and to fill the gap between the Urban and Private Forests programs, by providing services focused on the unique needs of suburban fringes and other transitional areas.

**Investing in forest research and monitoring.** These activities provide information about compliance with and effectiveness of Oregon's Forest Practices Act and rules, about forest health, and about the effects of harvest and other forest activities on streams, wildlife and other resources.

Capacity is proposed to develop valid compliance surveys, effectiveness monitoring and auditing of management practices on private forestlands. The budget also proposes additional monitoring capability in state forests, and support for the Watershed Research Cooperative, which helps inform and improve rules that protect fish, streams and other natural resources at the lowest regulatory cost.



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## Budget Backgrounder General Focus Areas

### Focus areas (Cont.)

**Continuous improvement in managing state-owned forests.** Proposed new positions would assist with management of state-owned forests to produce a range of economic, environmental and social benefits. The positions would be funded from state forest harvest revenue; no state general fund dollars are sought.

**Forestland acquisition to protect working forests or special resources, prevent fragmentation and mitigate climate change.** These transactions, in partnership with other organizations or agencies, could involve smaller parcels adjacent to existing forestland, with unique habitat or other values, or larger tracts that would otherwise be divided and sold for other uses. Long-term management of these lands would protect or enhance forest values, and produce a broad range of benefits for Oregonians.

**Seeking solutions on federal lands.** The federal government manages about 60 percent of Oregon's forestlands. Any statewide vision for diverse, sustainable management of Oregon's forest resource must address the management and the future of federal forests. Additional staff could help with environmental analysis, biomass use, development of stewardship contracts and other activities to address challenges facing federal forests and nearby private landowners and communities.

**Providing adequate support to front-line programs.** The department's ability to serve Oregonians – through fire protection, forest landowner assistance and other activities – depends on a well-functioning network of department-wide support functions.

However, the agency's human resources, purchasing, contracting and facilities management capacities are below those of other comparable state agencies, and are falling further behind. In addition, capital investment is needed to address critical maintenance issues and to replace worn-out buildings. Investments also are needed to increase efficiency and reliability of information technology and business systems.

### To learn more

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