

2009 Annual Report

North Cascade District



Gregg Cline, District Forester



Protection from Fire – State Forests Program - Private Forests
Equipment Pool - Administration

District Forester Comments

The economic downturn and recession of late 2008 - 2009 resulted in significant impacts to forestland owners and operators as well to the services provided by the North Cascade District. Funding streams for the Department from the General Fund, timber harvest tax and state forest timber sale receipts were all affected. The drastic decline in the number of nationwide housing starts due to the sub-prime mortgage crisis resulted in a precipitous drop in demand for lumber and plywood causing a 50% or greater drop in timber stumpage values as compared to the past several years. The strong correlation of housing starts to timber stumpage values suggests that the nationwide economic recovery will be slow and long.

District employees through these past months of uncertainty continued to maintain a high level of professionalism and overall continued to provide high quality customer service to forest landowners, operators and the public.

Protection from Fire Program

The direct impacts to the fire program were minimal on the District. The 2009 Oregon Legislature made a public safety policy choice and directed the Department of Forestry to maintain an adequate level of fire protection and not take reductions in fire protection staffing. The district maintained the same staffing level as in past years for seasonal fire personnel to support the statewide fire suppression system. The number of statewide large fires responses thankfully was significantly less than normal. For the North Cascade District, the 2009 fire season ended with 73 statistical fires, eleven more than the 2008 fire season. Debris burning continued to be the primary cause of fires within the District. As in years past the District partnered with local fire agencies, prevention co-ops, and Keep Oregon Green to educate the public and attempt to reduce fire starts due to human causes.

District employees supported the statewide complete and coordinated fire suppression system by spending 128 days supporting fire suppression efforts on other districts throughout the state. District engine crews were off district for nine days, an indicator of the lower fire activity in the state as compared to other years.

State Forests Program

The drop in timber stumpage values caused the Department to take immediate steps to reduce State Forests Program operating costs by approximately 40% through reduction of State Forests funded personnel and reduction of non-revenue producing activities. The North Cascade District made reductions by the elimination of funding for six positions, curtailed trail and campsite development, and deferred for the short term non-critical road maintenance and forest management activities. Staffing for timber sale layout and preparation was reduced, however the District's State Forest staff met their annual operation plan targets. During the calendar year eight timber sale contracts were auctioned with an estimated volume of 16.5 million board feet and an appraised value that exceeded \$5,1 million.

Private Forests Program

The 2009 Oregon Legislature was faced with difficult policy choices and the Department of Forestry General Fund budget was significantly reduced for the Private Forests Program. As a result the District eliminated three of six stewardship forester positions. Federal grants and Stimulus project funding provided opportunities to cross fund two of the displaced individuals. The lower timber harvest levels were reflected in the number of forest practice notification of operations received. During 2009 only 772 Forest Practice Notification of Operations were processed as compared to the 1106 notifications received in 2008 and 1627 in 2007. Stewardship Foresters responded to 28 complaints, compared to 26 complaints reported in 2008.

Administration

Scott Wilbrecht, State Forests Unit Forester, retired in June. Several layoffs and reassignments occurred on the District due to budget constraints. The Department on October 1st initiated the agency Forest Fire Classification Study that changed the classifications of eight permanent and 21 seasonal fire fighting positions on the district.

Protection from Fire Program - Fire Season 2009

The 2009 North Cascade District fire season was 105 days long, one week longer than 2008 fire season. There were a number of record-breaking days with temperatures over 90 degrees and in July temperatures exceeded 100 degrees. In August, fire danger fluctuated with a significant rain event from the 12th to the 14th. The trend continued through September, with a late spike in fire danger at the end of the month. October started with moisture, but fire indices rebounded, delaying the termination of fire season until October 14th.

2009 Fire Danger & Industrial Fire Precaution Levels

Fire Danger	Days	IFPL	Days
Low	1	IFPL 1	50
Moderate	41	IFPL 2	46
High	55	IFPL 3	9
Extreme	8		

During the 2009 fire season there were 73 statistical, 14 non-stat and 83 non-fire crew action fires for a total of 170 responses.

- Equipment (non-industrial) use fires increased slightly.
- Recreationist caused fires showed a significant increase, due to escaped campfires.
- Debris burning continues to be a concern. Fires rekindled due to lack of mop up activities.

The largest district fires this season were the fourteen acre Double Lane fire caused by smoldering burn reignited by wind and the two acre Boundary caused by illegal fireworks. District-wide, 98.6% of all statistical fires were controlled at 10 acres or less. The District managed a severity funded helicopter for Northwest Oregon Area response from September 21st through September 28th at the Mulino Airport.

2009 Fire Season Warnings and Citations - District fire personnel issued 62 warnings and 17 citations. Of these 40 warnings and 13 citations were issued for Failure to Comply with a Burn Permit, 20 warnings and 1 citation were issued for violation of Regulated Closure and 2 warnings were issued for Failure to Extinguish a camp fire. Three citations were issued for Unlawful Use of Fire.

Out of District Assignments - Twenty-six overhead spent 128 days out of district in support of other districts or agencies. Two trainees were assigned off district for a total of fourteen days. Two engines were out of district for a total of nine days.

Fire Cause	Molalla Multnomah & Clackamas Counties		Santiam Marion & Linn Counties		Total District 2009		10 Year Average	
	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres
Lightning	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.87
Railroad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment	12	1.86	5	1.39	17	3.25	11	2.37
Recreation	12	1.34	3	0.05	15	1.39	11	4.53
Smoking	2	0.3	1	0.01	3	0.31	3	0.87
Debris Burning	15	2.42	8	17.11	23	19.53	30	61.14
Arson	3	0.13	1	0.5	4	0.63	4	3.6
Juvenile	2	0.5	0	0	2	0.5	1	0.28
Miscellaneous	8	3.36	1	0.25	9	3.61	12	20.29
Total	54	9.91	19	19.31	73	29.22	74	93.95

Fire Prevention - District personnel provided prevention training or education to 1,500 individuals in addition to the 10,000 school children reached through the Smokey Bear programs, provided in conjunction with the US Forest Service and Prevention Co-op.

A biomass sort yard was for a second year open to the public in the Molalla area. Landowners were educated on the alternatives to burning debris. Woody materials were chipped and used as mulch at a local Christmas tree farm. The non-woody material was collected by Molalla Sanitary service to be used for compost. Clackamas County Soil and Water District and Molalla Sanitary Service partnered with the district to provide this service.

Fuel Reduction projects were accomplished across the Molalla Unit by Crew 58 supported by grant monies from Clackamas County Soil and Water District, Western States Fire Mangers and Title III funds through Clackamas County. Crew 58 worked on a total of 9 projects in Clackamas County and completed over 40 acres of fuel treatment. All projects were identified and prioritized within the framework of the Clackamas County Community Wildfire Prevention Plan.

Smoke Management – The Oregon Smoke Management Plan is administered on the North Cascade District through a joint effort between Protection Supervisors, permanent Forest Officers and Stewardship Foresters. The low harvest levels during 2009 resulted in a significant drop in the amount of burning on the District compared to the 155 units and 4,754 acres accomplished in 2008.

Smoke Management Accomplishments 2009					
	Molalla		Santiam		District Total
	Clackamas	Multnomah	Linn	Marion	
Units	72	8	5	12	50
Acres	2404	125	230	376	2172
Tons	11953	836	768	4252	11461

State Forests Program

The Santiam State Forest is managed consistent with the principles and strategies of the Northwest Oregon State Forest Management Plan (NWFMP). Recreation activities are developed and managed under the Santiam State Forest Recreation Management Plan that was adopted in September 2006.

The economic down turn, decline in wood product demand and drop in timber stumpage value caused the Department of Forestry to reduce State Forests operating costs by approximately 40% from 2008 levels. The North Cascade State Forests Program eliminated funding for four permanent positions, deferred routine road maintenance and timber management activities for the short term, curtailed all development of new recreation trails and campsites, and eliminated forest education programs.

The current Santiam State Forests Unit is comprised of 7 permanent positions. Jay Sandmann filled the Management Unit Forester vacancy by the retirement of Scott Wilbrecht in June.

Forest Product Sales - In calendar year 2009, the district sold 8 timber sales containing a estimated 16.5 million board feet of timber. Bids were received from perspective purchasers located in the Santiam Canyon, Eugene/Springfield, Molalla, Philomath, Willamina and Banks.

Forest Products	Total	Estimated Volume (MMBF)	Estimated Revenue
Timber Sales	8	16.5	\$4,036,405
Timber Harvested (2009)	--	16.4	\$5,123,085
Misc. Forest Products	0	0	0
Wood Cutting Permits	135		\$1350
Commercial Woodcutting Sales	0	0	0

The Department of Corrections' Mill Creek Inmate Crew located in Salem provided labor to complete both recreation and reforestation activities on the Santiam State Forest, and also is trained and available to respond to local fires during fire season.

Management Activities	Units	Acres	Miles
Tree Planting (121,000 Seedlings)			
Contract	0	0	--
Inmates	8	264	--
Volunteers	0	0	--
Pre-Commercial Thinning	1	24	0
Fall Foliar Site Prep	2	168	0
Noxious Weed Control	0	20	100
Pile Burning	2	168	0

Private Forests Program

The North Cascade District eliminated the funding for three of the six stewardship forester positions, effective on October 1, as a result of the difficult policy choice made by the Oregon Legislature to reduce General Fund allocated to the Private Forests Program. Two fully funded and two partially funded stewardship foresters ensured continued compliance with the Forest Practices Rules, provided forest landowner technical assistance and education, provided industrial fire inspections during fire season, and filled both district and statewide fire suppression assignments on a frequent basis.

The workload priorities and geographic areas of responsibility were adjusted to the remaining four funded stewardship foresters. They participated in educational and public relations events at Clackamas County Tree School, AOL Loggers Workshops, and Tree City USA award presentations. Kristin Cotugno took a promotion in March to Prineville as the Assistant District Forester. Fortunately, other funding allowed the remaining Stewardship Foresters to stay on the district. One was partially funded to work on the Clackamas County Reducing Forest Fragmentation in Interface Forest Landscape Grant and one was partially funded to provide GIS work in the State Forests Program. The third was funded in the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) forest health project on State Forest lands.

2009 Statistics	Molalla	Santiam	Total
NOAPS	428	344	772
Renewals	87	114	201
Citations	8	0	8
Written Plans	80	22	102
Written Statements	6	1	7
Complaints	28	0	28
Tree Farm Inspections	0	3	3
Stewardship Plans	1	1	2
Stewardship Plans (acres)	38	213	251
Oregon Reforestation Tax Credit (acres)	68	10	78
FLEP: Forest Land Enhancement Program (acres)	0	0	0
FRT: Forest Resource Trust (new planting)	28	0	28
FRT: Forest Resource Trust (site preparation, release)	38	0	38
In-Stream Enhancement Projects	2	0	2
CREP: Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (acres)	21	224	245

Equipment Pool Program

The North Cascade District manages a vehicle fleet of 4 passenger vehicles, 14 pickups, 11 engines and service vehicles, 1 grader, 1 dump truck, 1 tractor and 3 trailers. The heavy equipment mechanic is stationed at the Molalla Unit office and is partially funded in the Protection from Fire program. This position works on a variety of projects during 2009.

Projects and Assignments

Protection Engine Construction (5864)	321 hours of construction time
Protection Slip-on Construction (5860)	180.25 hours
State Forests Service Truck	86.5 hours
State Forests ATV Grant (Gate)	8 hours
Protection Water Tender 58	84 hours
Fire assignments	145.5 hours
Training	31.25 hours
Protection Aviation Assignment (SPA)	43.0 hours
Federal Excess Property Program Forklifts	Turned in 2, 1 replacement
Mark 3 Pump Rebuild	

Motor Pool

Preventative Maintenance	68 inspections
Lube, Oil Filter changes	63
New Tires	47
Recalls / Warranty related	9
Body repairs	2
Wipers replaced	13 sets
Batteries	8
Drive train Related	3
Electrical Related	8
Clutch Related	2 (1 new and 1 adjustment)
Windshields	3
Brakes	4
PCM updates	21
Alignments	2