



# Northeast Oregon District 2014 Statistical Report



LA GRANDE UNIT  
BAKER SUB UNIT  
PENDLETON UNIT  
WALLOWA UNIT



**Doug Decker**  
State Forester

John Buckman  
District Forester



## District Forester's Comments



Welcome! This report summarizes and highlights both the Northeast Oregon District and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) activities in 2014.

Fire Season 2014 has been coined 'the Endless' season for ODF. Fire activity was active during the Winter and Spring months in Western Oregon and began in earnest with the dispatch of an ODF Incident Management Team (IMT) on June 7<sup>th</sup> to the Two Bulls fire northwest of Bend, Oregon. By the time the season came to an end in October, a record 12 ODF IMTs had been deployed, 54,000 acres of ODF protected lands had burned and suppression cost for large fires topped \$75 million dollars. When 2014 is coupled with 2013, this timeframe represents the most significant back to back seasons in recent memory.

Northeast Oregon District avoided headline fires in 2014 in spite of a very active fire season. In total, the district fire starts were 130% of our 10-year average and these fires burned 58% of the 10-year average for acres burned. These results are the reflection of a host of factors which include the great efforts and solid decision-making of district firefighters and fire managers, contributions from valuable cooperators, engaged and supportive landowners, favorable weather at a couple of critical junctures during the fire season and lastly the ODF Severity resources (type 2 helicopter and two single engine air tankers) hosted by the District.

The Blue Mountain Pilot Project for the National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy (CWS) continues to serve as a high-quality example of interagency coordination and is producing very good results. Notable interagency activities to-date include close coordination with rural fire departments to improve wildfire response, engagement in a large scale interagency cross-boundary forest management and fuels reduction project which will eventually treat 6,000 acres of private lands and will initiate forest management on ODFW grounds by ODF foresters and lastly developing comprehensive Community Wildfire Protection Plans that incorporate the three goals of the CWS.

With improving markets and a steady flow of fuels treatment dollars, the Private Forest Program is hopping. The district's field foresters are busy working with forest operators and landowners implementing the Oregon Forest Practices Act and several cost-share grants that aid the landowners in meeting their forest management objectives.

Whether it is hiring and training new firefighters or the managers seeking out new employees to fill permanent vacancies, change is a constant in the workforce. A couple notable personnel changes in 2014 include the promotion of Mike Shaw to the Assistant Eastern Oregon Director position and the selection of Matt Howard to fill the Wallowa Unit Forester vacancy. Tricia Price was also hired as the La Grande Unit Office Specialist.

Northeast Oregon District is a special place. Our co-workers, all who support us at home, the landowners we serve, and the multitude of partnerships we have, all create the relationships that make it special. If you are reading this annual report you are part of our mission and part of a successful equation that produces the high-quality outcomes that are highlighted in this report.

Thanks for another great year!

Sincerely,  
*John Buckman*  
Northeast Oregon District Forester

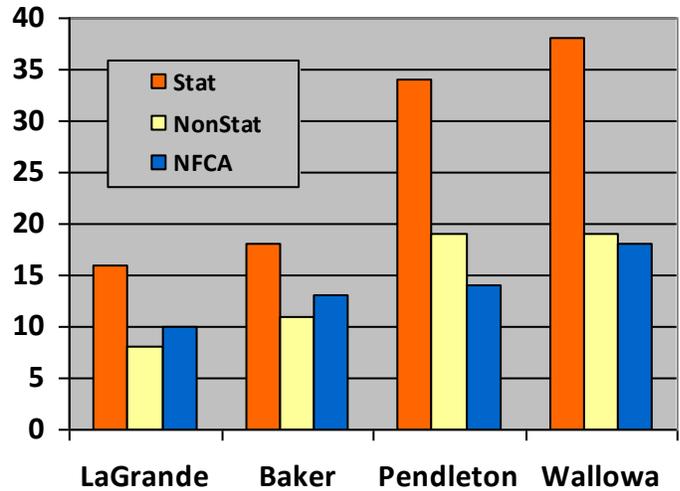


# Protection From Fire



## Fires by Unit

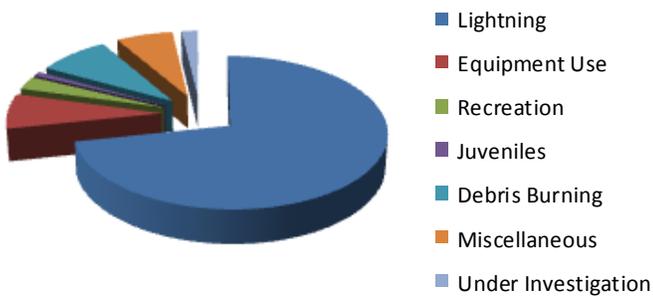
Year	Number of Fires	Acreage
2014	106	1,038
2013	107	265
2012	50	4,143
2011	65	909
2010	67	145
2009	82	672
2008	69	588
2007	113	9,936
2006	86	3,311
2005	68	2,057
<b>Average</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>2,306</b>



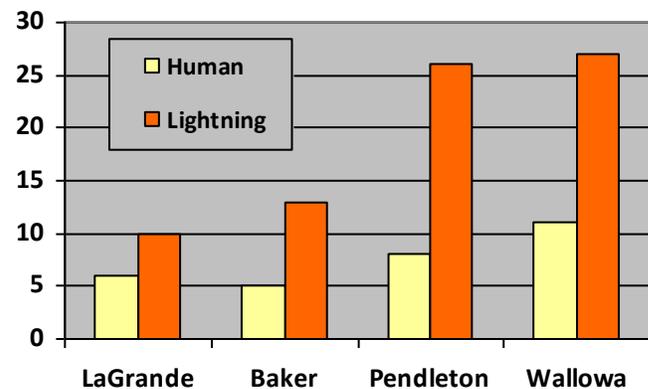
## Significant Fires

Fire	Date	Acres
5 Mile	8/3	389
Mt. Harris 14	10/4	162
Somers	8/3	120
Gulch	8/16	45
Eden	7/22	42
Bear Claw 2	7/14	27
Cayuse	6/21	23
Lincton	8/10	23

## General Cause

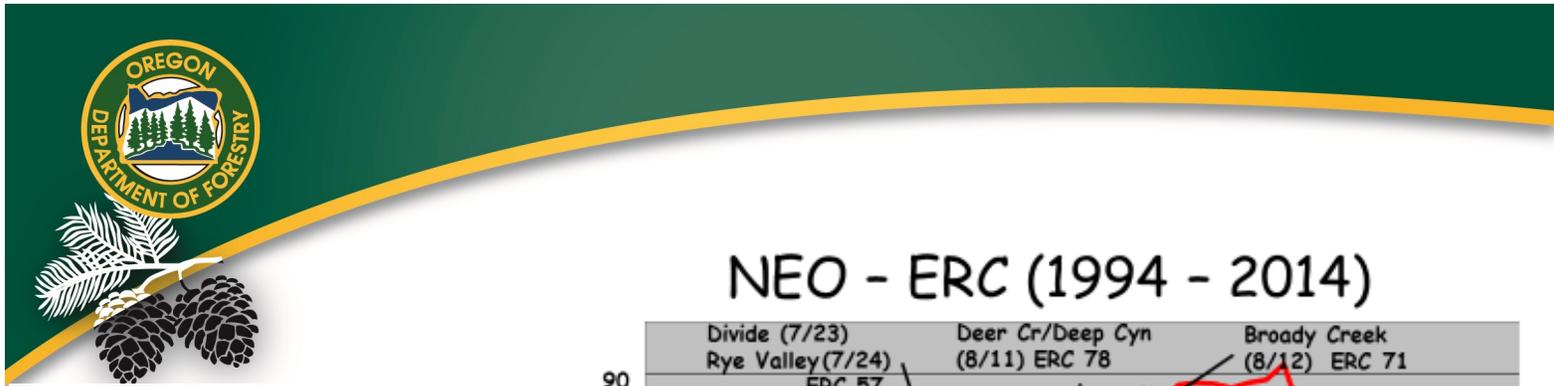


## Fires by Cause

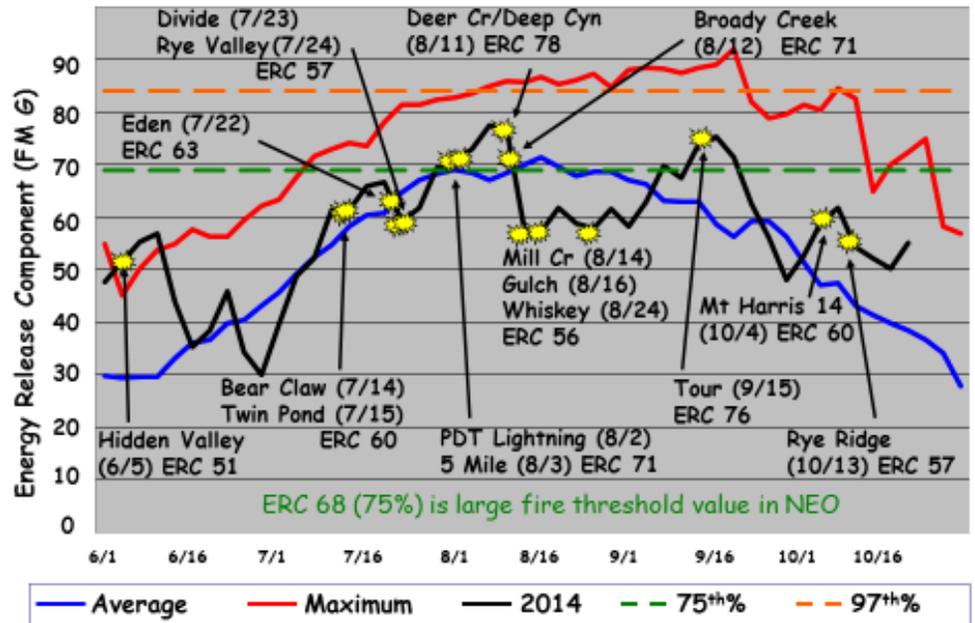


- The number of statistical fires was the third highest in the last 10 years
- The acres burned was the fifth lowest in the last 10 years

- 76 lightning caused fires (72% of the total statistical fires) burned 744 acres (72% of the total acres)
- 30 human caused fires (28% of the total statistical fires) burned 294 acres (28% of the total acres)



## NEO - ERC (1994 - 2014)



The 2014 Fire Season was significant and challenging in NEO District for a variety of reasons including a longer than normal fire season, a higher number of fires than normal, and extensive support of large fire efforts outside of the district. Large and costly wildfires throughout Oregon were not the exception through the summer of 2014. District personnel faced numerous multiple fire days and several fires on consecutive days. There were an abnormal number of lightning starts deep in the canyon country that pushed the capabilities of our firefighters. Due to good resource utilization and nighttime firefighting, these were caught at initial and extended attack. NEO District worked arduously to minimize cost plus loss on district protected forestland, and by all accounts were very successful.

Six new maximum ERC's were set during the period of June 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>. The early elevated fire danger resulted in the declaration of Fire Season on June 11<sup>th</sup> – the earliest start to Fire Season since 1992. Regulated Use Closure was declared on July 15 and terminated October 14. Fire Season terminated on October 23 and will go on record as the longest Fire Season (135 days long) since 1992.

The district suppressed 105 statistical fires, which is 26 fires above the 10-year average and the third highest in the last 10 years. Due to the high amount of lightning the district received on dry fuels, lightning accounted for 76 fires (72% of the total statistical fires) which accounts for 160% of the 10-year average. Human caused fires (29 in total) were 94% of the 10-year average, which is reflective of the district's commitment to active and targeted fire prevention activities. Although the number of fires was higher than normal, the 1,038 acres burned on the district was the fifth lowest in the last 10 years. 62% of the acres burned were in the Wallowa Unit.

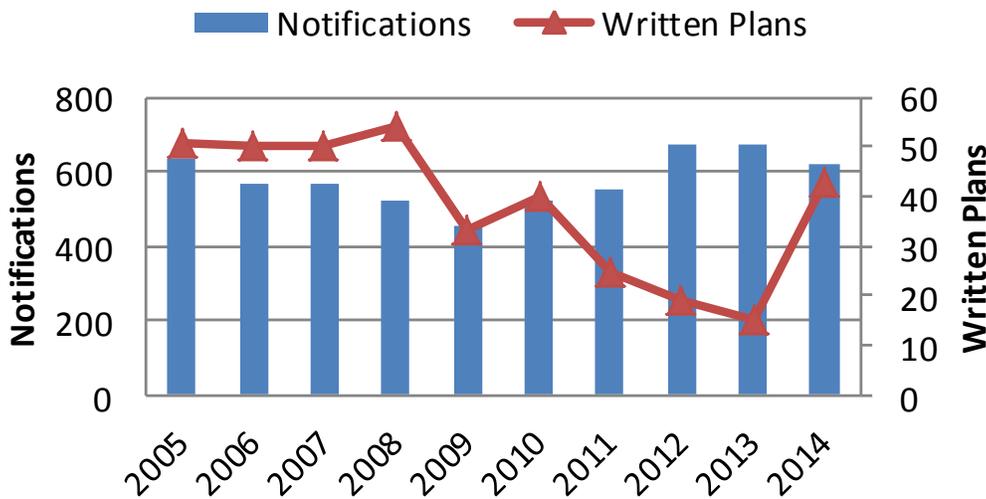
The most significant fires of the year occurred in the Wallowa and La Grande units. The 5-Mile fire in the Wallowa Unit started on August 3 in the Imnaha River canyon, a couple miles south of the town of Imnaha and burned 389 acres of district protection. The district worked tirelessly for two burning periods mitigating the threat to district protected lands and the community of Imnaha until transition occurred with Oregon Team 3. The Mt. Harris 14 fire started on October 4 on agricultural land inside the district and quickly spread into wildland fuels. Due to aggressive initial and extended attack on this incident, coupled with timely mutual aid response, only 162 acres of district protection was burned. In addition to these two fires, the district worked closely with Vale BLM who hosted ODF Fire Team 3 on the Rye Valley fire in Southern Baker County. District personnel also provided valuable assistance on numerous non-statistical fires that threatened ODF protection.

# Private Forest Programs



## Forest Practices Act Administration

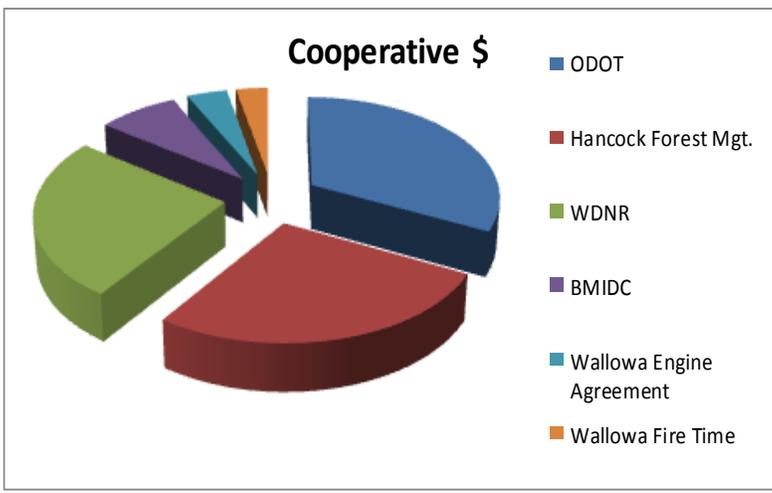
### FPA 10 Year Comparison



- No Forest Practices Act citations or Statements of Unsatisfactory Conditions were issued in 2014
- 220 FPA Inspections were completed
- 172 Notification Renewals were submitted

### Cooperative Work Program

The cooperative work programs in Northeast Oregon continue to employ and provide training opportunities for our employees. In 2014, employees worked for the Oregon Department of Transportation, United States Forest Service, Hancock Forest Management, and other miscellaneous private landowners. This program enables NEO District to offset personnel costs by retaining highly qualified workers while assisting landowners with land management projects as well as providing qualified employees to other agencies during times when they need extra help. These projects included snowplowing, dispatching, pile burning, prescribed burning, and pre-commercial thinning, along with fire fighting.



## NEO Personnel Changes

### Tricia Price

Tricia was hired as the new La Grande Unit Office Specialist 2 in October. Tricia grew up in the Unity area of Southern Baker County in a family closely connected with the forest industry and ranching community, and still calls Baker County home today. With her husband Paul, Tricia is raising 3 daughters and spends as much time in the outdoors and specifically the mountains of Eastern Oregon, as she can. Prior to coming to work for ODF Tricia was the office manager for a local CPA firm.



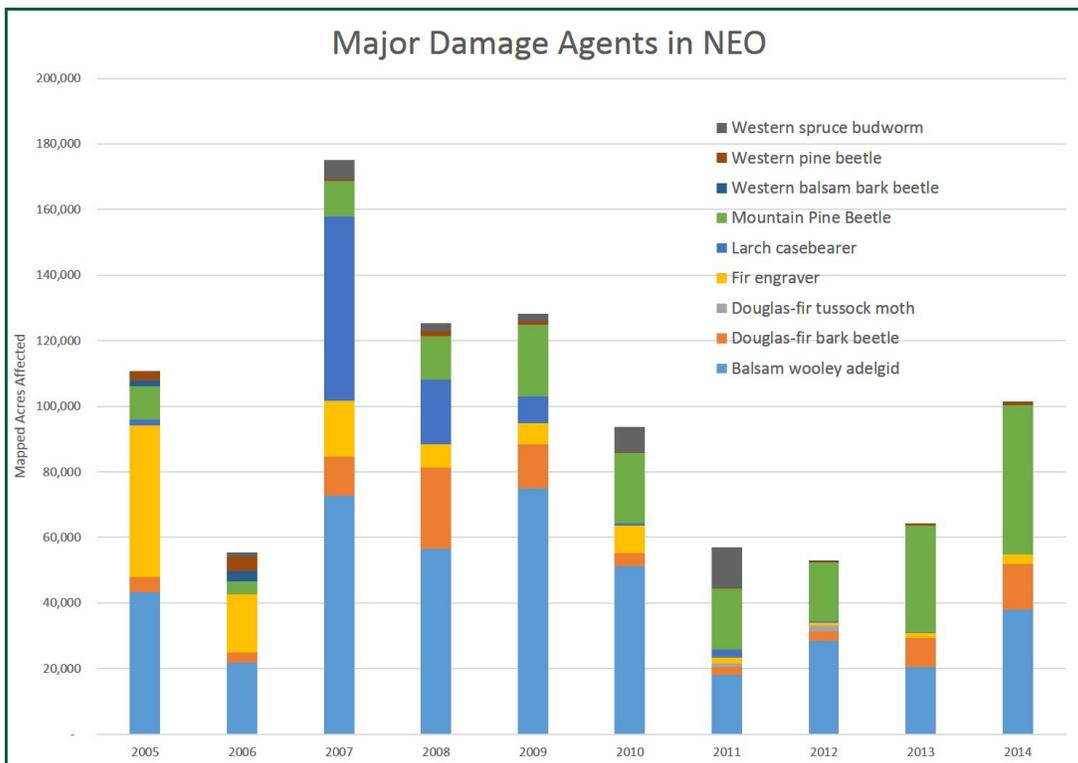
## Forestry Assistance

Bark Beetle	25.5 Acres
EQIP Inventories	5,009 Acres
EQIP Contracts	3,081 Acres
EQIP Certifications	856 Acres
Stewardship Plans	3 Plans
Tree Farm Inspections	8 Inspections

## National Fire Plan Implementation

Units within North-east Oregon District	Acres Thinned (2014)	Acres Thinned (2002 To 2014)
Baker Sub-Unit (Baker County)	292	7,127
La Grande Unit (Union County)	194	4,567
Pendleton Unit (Umatilla County)	508	4,925
Wallowa Unit (Wallowa County)	188	6,837
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>23,456</b>

## 2014 Forest Health Condition



Pine Beetle Infestation South of Unity



# Northern Blue Mountains Cohesive Wildfire Strategy Project



Project partners in NE Oregon and SE Washington have developed a comprehensive and detailed Action Plan based on the three goals of the Cohesive Strategy; 1) improve wildfire response, 2) create fire adapted communities and 3) restore resilient landscapes. Representatives of local governments, state and federal resource agencies, and private landowners are collectively implementing the Action Plan and Cohesive Strategy goals. Current initiatives underway include:

## Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Template

A new comprehensive CWPP template was developed that will help implement the goals of the national Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. The first prototype plan is near completion.

## Improve economics of forest restoration

A local forest biomass working group seeks to offset the high cost of forest management and restoration work through innovative uses of the byproduct and forest biomass. The project has awarded grants to spur local biomass development opportunities. Local and regional entrepreneurs are proposing new value-added uses for the restoration by-products which could benefit local job creation and business development opportunities.

## Partnering for firefighting efficiency

Partners have increased coordination to make better use of available resources. Examples include:

- County rural fire districts assisting in initial attack on wildfires on ODF and USFS jurisdictions during periods of high to extreme fire severity.
- Use of one agency's fire crews to staff fire engines of another.
- Sharing housing for initial-attack crews.

## East Face Forest Restoration Project

A project is underway to restore forest health to the East Face of the Elkhorn Mountains; an area which encompasses federal, state and private forestlands. Activities to date include:

- Partnership formed with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and ODF to complete thinning and fuels reduction on private land.
- ODF is assisting the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODF&W) in management of their lands with a timber sale planned in the coming year. This project will serve as a springboard to management of ODFW's other lands in NE Oregon.

## Wildfire simulation template

An integrated wildfire simulation template designed to educate and exercise traditional and non-traditional emergency management partners to the challenges of a rapidly escalating fire situation is being developed. A timeline has been established to conduct county-by-county exercises in the geo-region.

## Forest Landowner outreach project

"My Blue Mountain Woodlands," a campaign that targets landowners and the public, has been initiated by several partners' in a joint effort with the American Forest Foundation. The goal is to increase awareness and offer assistance to non-industrial forest landowners, especially previously unengaged landowners on forest management and restoration activities.



East Face Project "Before"



East Face Project "After"

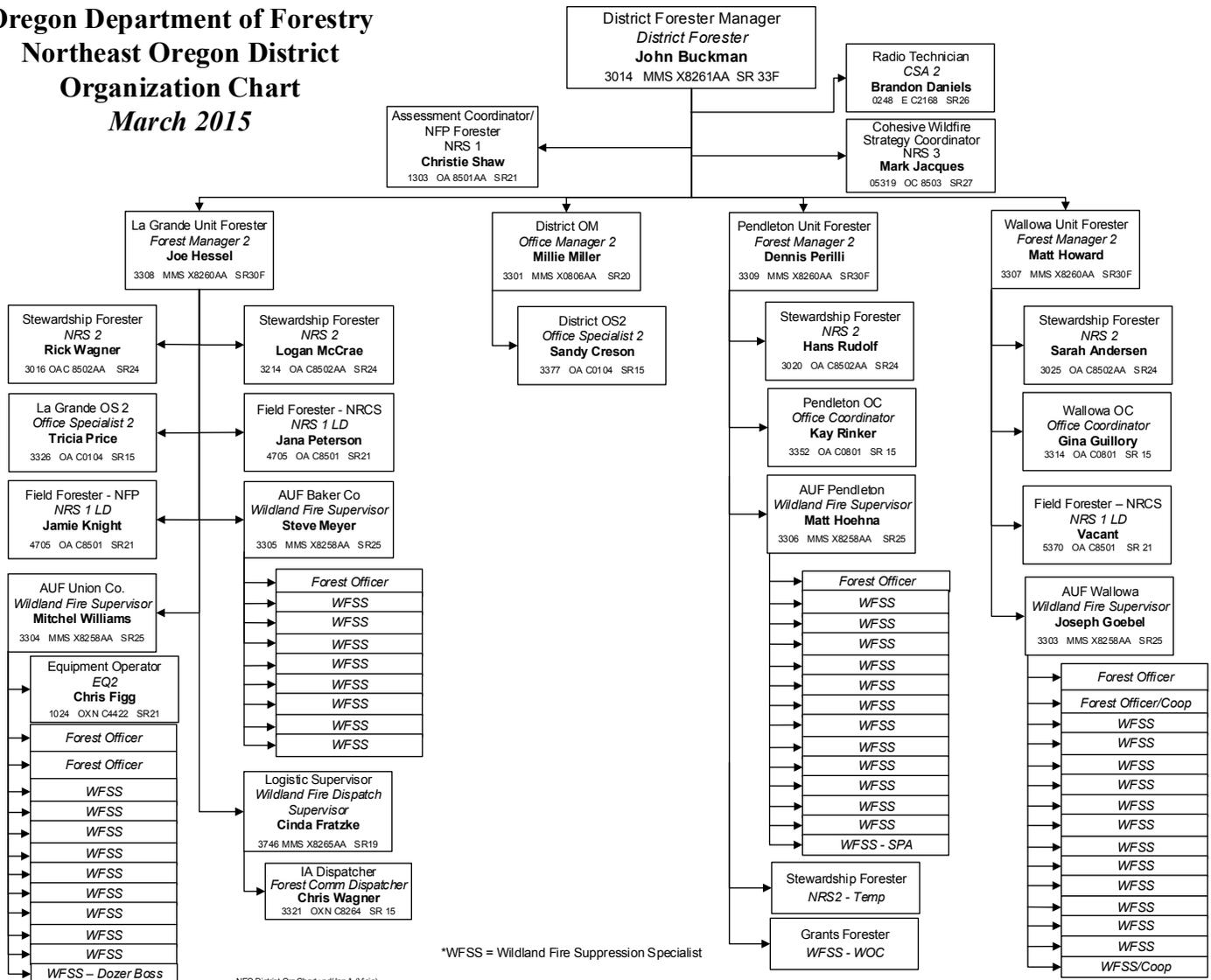


## Budget Committee Members

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

- Chris Heffernan**, Union County, Budget Committee Chair, East Oregon Forest Protective Association (EOFPA) member and private forest landowner and rancher.
- Bob Messinger**, Union County, forest landowner.
- Joe Justice**, Union County, Northeast Oregon Region Manager for Hancock Timber Resource Group, EOFPA member.
- Lyle Defrees**, Baker County, EOFPA Director, forest landowner and rancher.
- Bill Shumway**, Baker County, EOFPA Director, forest landowner and rancher.
- Pat Sullivan**, Baker County, forest landowner and rancher.
- Elwayne Henderson**, Wallowa County, forest landowner and forest operator.
- Mack Birkmaier**, Wallowa County, forest landowner and rancher.
- Hank Howard**, Umatilla County, forest and rangeland manager for Pacific Northwest Tree Farm.
- Bobby Corey**, Umatilla County, forest landowner and rancher for Pendleton Ranches and Cunningham Sheep Co.

### Oregon Department of Forestry Northeast Oregon District Organization Chart March 2015



\*WFSS = Wildland Fire Suppression Specialist