

# Forests

## FOR OREGON

MAGAZINE OF THE OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

Winter 2016

*Happy  
New Year!*

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of the Gilchrist  
is an exciting  
addition to  
Oregon’s state  
forests.”

## Growth for the Gilchrist

**Abbey Driscoll,  
Public Affairs Specialist**

Oregon’s newest state forest, the Gilchrist, is growing.

In October, ODF purchased more than 20,000 acres of forestland in eastern Oregon, increasing the size of the Gilchrist State Forest by almost half. The now 63,000-acre Gilchrist State Forest, located about 45 miles south of Bend, Oregon, was initially acquired in 2010 after approval from the Oregon Legislature.

Expansion comes as part of an agreement with The Conservation Fund to purchase forestland adjacent to Gilchrist. These forestlands, totaling over 28,000 acres, were bought by The Conservation Fund with the intention that ODF would buy them within three to five years. Thanks to additional lottery funding, general bond funds, and a Forest Legacy federal grant, ODF has purchased more than 25,000 acres of this additional forestland to date.

In the face of threats of forestland fragmentation, the growth of the Gilchrist State Forest serves as an example of keeping Oregon’s forests intact and working. ODF will manage these lands under current management strategies to provide a broad range of benefits over the long term, including improving

wildlife habitat and forest health, ensuring public access, minimizing wildfire threats, and timber harvesting that will provide jobs and revenue for Klamath County. Forest managers are also excited to explore new forest products markets and expand recreational opportunities.

“The expansion of the Gilchrist is an exciting addition to Oregon’s state forests,” says State Forest Division Chief, Liz Dent. “Support from state and national partners has allowed ODF to make an important investment in nearby rural communities and the future of Oregon’s forests.” 🌲

◀ The 63,000-acre Gilchrist State Forest, left, consists primarily of young Ponderosa and lodgepole pine trees. The additional acreage provides a variety of economic and recreation opportunities for central Oregon communities.

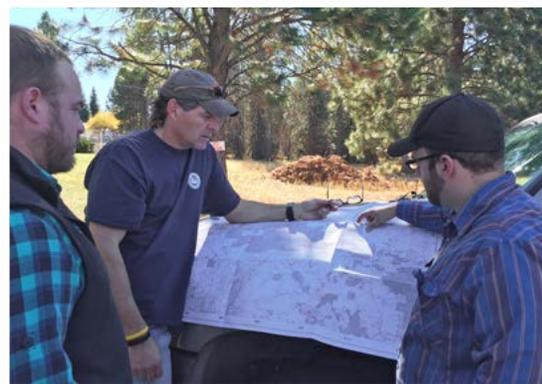


Photo by Abbey Driscoll, ODF



Photo by Abbey Driscoll, ODF

Winter Issue, 2016 Volume 86, No. 1

# Family forestland owners can enhance bird habitat

## Cynthia Orlando, Public Affairs Specialist

Millions of birds pass through Oregon each year on their north and south migrations; for many species, our region provides critical wintering and nesting habitat. According to the National Audubon Society, 54 of the bird species found in Oregon are either “globally threatened” or at risk of becoming so. Even common bird species like Barn swallows and American Goldfinches are seeing significant declines.

Bird-friendly forestlands and landscapes have never been more important - almost 80 percent of wildlife habitat in the U.S. is privately owned.

What are some practical measures owners of small forested parcels can take to help improve the outlook for birds? By ecotype, here's a few ideas.

Oak woodlands are characterized by an open canopy and Oregon white oak, and may also include ponderosa pine or Douglas-fir. Associated bird species are slender-billed nuthatch, Acorn woodpecker, chipping sparrow and Lewis' woodpecker. Oak woodlands have been impacted by other land uses including agriculture, development, invasive species, and vegetation changes stemming from fire suppression.

**Solution:** Landowners can help turn this trend around by maintaining oak stands and keeping a diversity of tree sizes and

ages in stands - particularly large oak and ponderosa pine trees. Also, create and maintain snags to provide birds with cavity habitat.

Large-structured pine habitat is diminishing in parts of the Blue Mountains, East Cascades and Klamath Mountain areas. This is due to factors such as uncharacteristically severe wildfire, conversion to rural residential uses and past timber harvest. This habitat is important to white-headed woodpeckers and the flammulated owl, gray jays, Clark's nutcrackers, red crossbills and evening grosbeaks.

**Solution:** Maintain large-structure ponderosa pine and plan replanting and reforestation to create corridors between habitat blocks. Following wildfire (if compatible with fire prevention), strive to maintain high snag densities and replant with native tree, shrub, grass, and forb species.

Riparian (streamside) areas provide important wintering habitat and travel corridors for songbirds and grouse. Throughout most of the state, streamside vegetation usually consists of deciduous trees and shrubs like alder, bigleaf maple, aspen, cottonwood, ash and willows. At higher elevations, spruce and pines may dominate. **Solution:** Landowners can manage these areas by retaining adequate streamside vegetation following management activities, minimizing impacts from roadbuilding, planting native plants and keeping livestock out of streamside areas.

Some birds, like woodpeckers and chestnut-backed chickadees, excavate cavities in dead tree trunks for nesting and roosting - cavities then used by other birds such as bluebirds, swallows and even some owls and ducks. Birds also need places to hide from predators and shelter from the weather, and prefer habitat with vegetation at varying heights. **Solution:** Maintain dense

◀ **A red breasted sapsucker near Hillsboro, Oregon.**



Photo courtesy Matt T. Lee

▲ **A white-breasted nuthatch, above, belonging to the slender-billed population, photographed at William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge near Corvallis. Oregon white oak and oak conifer woodlands are the preferred habitat of these birds.**

wooded areas, ground cover, logs or slash piles, and shrubs to provide shelter, and create layers of vegetation using shrubs and taller trees. Where natural cavities are hard to find, nest boxes offer these birds a place to raise their young.

## Bird habitat in urban areas

For urban dwellers, reducing or eliminating the amount of lawn in your yard or garden is one step you can take to enhance ecosystem values of your landscape. Try leaving some areas “wild,” where grass and native, non-invasive weeds can grow undisturbed. Provide a reliable food source in the form of native plants or trees, one or more bird feeders containing black oil sunflower seeds and offer hummingbirds the standard mixture of four parts water to one part sugar. Also, planting native plants, shrubs and trees is the easiest way to provide foliage; native plants also require less watering.

**Continued on Page 4**



Photo by Matthew Olson

# Western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*)

Western redcedar is a large to very large conifer with a droopy leader and dense, aromatic frondlike branches. It's found from Alaska to northern California and from the Pacific Ocean to Montana.

This Oregon native with attractive lacy foliage can reach 180-200 feet in height. The bark is red to gray, and shreds off into soft reddish fibers. The foliage forms flat sprays that are green above and have whitish stomatal bands below.

Northwest Indians used western redcedar's inner bark to make mats and baskets, and the wood to make bowls, spoons, handles and intricate carved totem poles. Its wood is also used in shingles and siding, poles, posts and outdoor decks.

Western redcedar is shade-tolerant and grows in a variety of soil types, is long-lived and can reach hundreds of years in age. To grow this tree, select a large site with plenty of surrounding and overhead room, and plant in full sun to light shade. Mulch after planting. While this tree is fairly low-maintenance, it needs water at least weekly during its first growing season.

Western redcedar is an important wildlife tree and provides habitat for yellow-bellied sapsuckers, hairy woodpeckers, squirrels, tree swallows, chestnut backed chickadees, towhees and hummingbirds. 🐦

► **Western redcedar, an Oregon native, features soft red-to grey bark and lacy sprays of foliage. Beneficial to birds and wildlife, plant where it has ample room to grow to maturity.**



Above photo by Cynthia Orlando, ODF  
Right photo courtesy Charles A. Brun, Ph.D., Washington State University

## news briefs

### Federal surplus fire equipment transfers to Madras

The Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) is transferring ownership of two pieces of federal surplus heavy equipment to central Oregon to aid in fighting wildland and structural fires. An aircraft crash and structural firefighting truck was put in service by Jefferson County Fire District No. 1 for use at the Madras Airport in the event of an airplane-related fire. Also, a D7G bulldozer has been in service with ODF's Central Oregon District to bolster its wildfire suppression capability. This D7G model is used in wildland firefighting to build fire line and perform other tasks.

ODF obtained the specialized fire engine and bulldozer from the



Photo by Christie Shaw, ODF

U.S. Forest Service-administered Firefighter Property Program (FFP). The Firefighter Property Program is managed by the U.S. Forest Service with cooperation from state forestry agencies. ODF has been involved in FFP since 2010. 🐦

### Inmate firefighters post big numbers in severe season

Oregon's inmate firefighters posted some big numbers this summer in the battle against wildfires: Some 330 inmates from 10 Oregon Department of Corrections institutions logged 1,187 crew days at 40 fires around the state. Trained by the Oregon Department of Forestry and its partner wildland fire agencies, the carefully screened inmates worked fires ranging from one day to more than a month in duration during the severe 2015 fire season. The State of Oregon saved an estimated \$2.2 million through this longstanding collaboration. 🐦

▼ **Inmate Firefighters from the South Fork Camp.**



Photo: ODF archives

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## Forests for Oregon

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## Family forestland owners can enhance bird habitat (continued)

### Water

The sound of moving water attracts birds; they see and hear the water from great distances and many curious species may come to investigate. Ponds, small streams, rain gardens, “bubblers” and birdbaths are all helpful water sources for birds.

If you own forested property in the urban-interface (the area where developed areas meet forestland), you'll want to create as diverse a forest structure as possible to provide better nesting opportunities for birds. Different tree

species, tree heights and spacing are all important. A standing dead tree – as long as it doesn't pose a safety hazard to people – is a haven for cavity nesters like woodpeckers. Control invasive species on your property such as English ivy, non-native blackberry and Japanese knotweed, and whenever possible, use a native grass mix alongside any road projects.

### Other tips

Become familiar with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Conservation Strategy, [www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy).

► **The Acorn woodpecker is one of many bird species requiring oak woodlands to meet habitat needs.**



Photo by Keith Kohi, ODFW

Lastly, private forest landowners can receive technical (and sometimes financial) assistance from their local Natural Resources Conservation Service, extension office or the Oregon Department of Forestry. 🐿

## From the State Forester



**Doug Decker**  
State Forester

As another part in our ongoing conversation about the increase in the severity and frequency of wildfire activity in Oregon and our efforts to attack the problem, I am pleased to report on the inaugural meeting of the Fire Program Review Steering Committee.

Recently, wildfires have stretched our fire protection system beyond a sustainable capacity. In response to this challenge, the Steering Committee held its first meeting Dec. 1 to begin work on policy and funding solutions to ensure we are prepared for whatever the future holds for us and our vital forest resources.

The committee is comprised of forest landowners, wildland fire professionals, the Governor's Office, elected officials and other stakeholders, with an objective of providing recommendations for long-term wildfire management.

The committee tasked three working groups with discussing organizational, funding and policy solutions. It will meet again Jan. 21 to discuss working group findings, refine key issues and provide further guidance.

I encourage you to learn more about this important work by visiting our web site dedicated to this effort, at: [www.oregon.gov/ODF/Board/Pages/FireProgramReview.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Board/Pages/FireProgramReview.aspx).

Here's wishing you a safe and happy new year. 🐿