The Oregon Forest Practices Act reflects Oregonians’ desires to use and enjoy Oregon’s forests and protect its natural resources. It was the first law of its kind in the U.S. when the state Legislature passed it in 1971, and the Act and its rules have been changed many times in response to new scientific findings and evolving public needs and interests.

In a process that incorporates public input, the Board of Forestry – a seven-member citizen board appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state Senate – approves detailed rules to implement the Act’s requirements. Here is a list of significant changes in the Act and its rules, which regulate forestry on private and state-owned lands.

- Sept. 2017: Revised bald eagle rules to match science and their successful recovery!
- July 2017: Increased buffers around many salmon, steelhead, and bull trout streams.
- Jan. 2016: Set no-spray buffers for aerial pesticide use around homes and schools.
- Mar. 2015: Enhanced wildlife habitat by allowing people to make small open areas in forests to grow food for wildlife.
- July 2014: Set rules to help connect landowners and people wanting to harvest special forest products, like truffles, Christmas trees, or boughs.
- Sept. 2013: Changed written plan requirements for streams and wetlands.
- Mar. 2012: Revised rules for tree planting along state roads to improve safety and traffic visibility.
2010

Oct. 2007  Changed rules to allow foresters to use more information, rather than only fish-counting results, to better determine if fish are present in particular streams, enhancing protection of fish and their habitat.

Oct. 2006  Required strategic distribution of trees left along streams, to reduce erosion and improve fish habitat.

Sept. 2006  Enhanced rules to allow artificially obstructed fish-passage streams to be designated “fish” streams, to protect water quality and fish habitat.


July 2002  Strengthened forest-road and timber-harvest rules, to protect water quality.

2000

Sept. 1996  Enhanced rules for applying pesticides after forest operations.

July 1995  Bolstered civil penalty and enforcement rules.

Jan. 1995  Revised rules to quickly replace trees recently harvested and ensure that replanted forests thrive; also required reasonable, site-specific and science-based solutions for successfully growing new forests.


Jan. 1993  Clarified definitions of spacing and size requirements for clearcuts. Updated rules for listing scientifically and ecologically significant biological sites.

May 1992  Strengthened criminal and civil penalty enforcement rules for tree retention, clearcutting, stream protection and scenic view violations.


July 1991  Increased stream protection, modernized limits on clearcut size and increased the number of standing trees after harvest, based on new scientific findings.
June 1991  Created northern spotted owl protection rules.

May 1991  Enhanced rules for listing sites of endangered and threatened species. Set rules to protect great blue heron.


July 1990  Adopted rules for listing sensitive bird nesting, roosting and watering sites.

Sept. 1989  Established processes for operators to appeal regulatory orders, and for the public to appeal operating plans.

Sept. 1988  Set operating plan reporting requirements for work near wildlife habitat, wetlands and streams.

Aug. 1988  Improved civil penalty enforcement and procedures.

May 1988  Simplified public access to operating notices and plans. Clarified roles of Regional Forest Practices Committees to improve rule development and public involvement.

July 1987  Increased protections for endangered species; sensitive bird nesting, roosting and watering sites; wetlands; and ecologically and scientifically significant biological sites. Reduced Board of Forestry from 12 to seven members and required that at least four be non-industry members.

April 1987  Implemented major updates to streamside protection, harvest and road construction rules to reflect land-use planning, forestry, fish and wildlife needs. Increased requirements for leaving streamside trees.

June 1985  Reinforced erosion prevention and operating plan rules, to protect water quality and fish habitat.


Jan. 1980  Shifted responsibility to replant after harvest from operators to landowners.
1970

- Increased restrictions on use of two herbicides.
- Enhanced water quality protection rules to, at minimum, comply with the Federal Clean Water Act.
- Required operators to notify the Department of Forestry 15 days before starting forestry work. Enhanced stream channel protections.
- Increased pre-harvest operating plan reporting requirements. Strengthened rock and quarry surface-mining rules, to better protect water quality.
- Strengthened rules to reduce erosion, prevent runoff, limit forest impacts from mechanical equipment and protect water resources.
- Created the Act’s first rules on tree replanting, road construction and maintenance, and stream protection.

Legislature adopted the Forest Practices Act, setting standards for building and maintaining roads, harvesting, applying pesticides and replacing harvested trees, to balance the needs for responsible forestry and protecting natural resources.

1971

1972

1974

1975

1978

Sept. 1978  Increased restrictions on use of two herbicides.


Jan. 1978  Required operators to notify the Department of Forestry 15 days before starting forestry work. Enhanced stream channel protections.

July 1975  Increased pre-harvest operating plan reporting requirements. Strengthened rock and quarry surface-mining rules, to better protect water quality.

July 1974  Strengthened rules to reduce erosion, prevent runoff, limit forest impacts from mechanical equipment and protect water resources.

July 1972  Created the Act’s first rules on tree replanting, road construction and maintenance, and stream protection.

1980

For more information about the Oregon Forest Practices Act, contact the Oregon Department of Forestry, 2600 State St., Salem, OR 97310; 503-945-7200; www.oregon.gov/odf.