2018 TFC staff opened the doors on a snowy March 1st
Changes, Challenges, and Satisfactions
Starting off the year with two large projects—timber thinning and construction of the new Forest Education Pavilion—had TFC staff operating at an even busier pace than usual during the winter closure in December, January, and February. Staff and volunteers worked as a team to have everything ready to open for visitors by March 1. Core business for Visitor Services, Interpretation & Education, and Facilities combined with projects noted later in this report kept everyone working at top speed throughout the season. We have a number of satisfying achievements, including the major work done on the Forest Education Pavilion; our first outdoor art exhibit at the TFC; increases in visitors, sales, and volunteers; the second successful Tillamook Forest Heritage Trust Root Ball fundraiser; and the final approvals of the Trees to Sea Scenic Byway (Highway 6).

Staffing & Capacity

- Based on capacity needs during the TFC’s March-November season, the decision was made to shift the TFC organizational chart and change from two 6-month seasonal and two 3-month intern positions (18 months total) to two 9-month seasonal Interpretation and Education positions. The longer season helps retain high-performing seasonal employees, provides additional support for the permanent IE staff during the entire open season, and reduces staff time spent orienting and training new employees, resulting in better service to TFC visitors. In addition, with the high summer visitor volume, and the loss of TFC volunteer hosts mid-season, we hired a temporary employee in Visitor Services.

- The TFC’s summer schedule was again changed to reduce open-to-the-public days from six days a week to five days a week in the summer months. This created a consistent schedule of operations; Wednesday thru Sunday TFC open 5 days per week during the entire operating season. This reduced stress and workloads at the beginning of the week (there were fewer people available when the TFC was operating seven days a week). However, it did reduce visitor services by an extra day per week, and it meant closures on two major Holidays (Memorial Day and Labor Day) and over the two days prior to 4th of July.

- With the reduction in the number of seasonal positions, formal interpretive program offerings were reduced, with a focus on informal roving to better assist with information desk coverage and overall service to our visitors—see interpretation section below).

- **Permanent TFC Staff for 2018:** Fran McReynolds (Director); Denise Berkshire (Interpretation & Education (I&E) Coordinator); Luke Wahl (Interpretation & Education Specialist); Christian Hargrove, (Facilities Operations Coordinator); Jen Warren, (Visitor Services Coordinator); Megan Lacy (Visitor Services Assistant).

- **Seasonal staff for 2018:** Cam Amabile and Sara Fischer (I & E specialists); Facilities Assistant Seasonal and Temporary Workers (succession): Matthew Goolsby, Brittney Main, Izzy Tucker, Katrina Bielenberg, and Teresa Anderson. Visitor Services Temporary: M.J. Guidetti (see org. chart at end of report).

- Due to unexpected turnover in the Facilities Assistant position, a series of 5 people filled the position, requiring more training/orientation time and a steep learning curve during our busy season.
Volunteers

Number of volunteers in 2018: 18 total

11 reoccurring day volunteers, 1 virtual volunteer, 4 special project volunteers and one set of site hosts (2 people) and 28 people participated in one day events

Volunteer hours: 2654

Value to ODF: $66,000

✦ Group volunteer events - The center hosted two group volunteer events: the TFC Winter Cleaning Party to help us get ready to open and the PSU Public Center day, which provided mid-season help. In addition TFC partnered with Tillamook recreation staff in a SOLV cleanup which had 40 volunteers participate.

✦ 5 brand new day volunteers joined the team, including our first education assistant volunteer to help with education and interpretation programs/events as well as our first virtual volunteer to translate materials into Spanish.

✦ Enhanced volunteer recruitment included posting flyers in the TFC kiosks throughout the season, updating the website, modifying newsletter marketing and adding positions on Volunteer Match, Chamber of Commerce, and media outlets.

✦ Other factors that enhanced the volunteer program include establishing minimum requirements for volunteering to set expectations up front, reviewing and adjusting interview questions to better place potential applicants, processing applications as soon as possible to avoid lost interest, modifying orientation, creating a volunteer cubical for sense of belonging and making sure all volunteer photos were added to the break room photo wall ASAP.

✦ A volunteer/staff training and social was offered on June 2 for the first time to provide specific direction on challenging items, reiterate customer service and interpretive techniques, and also provide for networking of staff and volunteers.

✦ Volunteer recognition –This year the volunteer recognition included an Oscar star party theme. This was the first time to offer a recognition during the season, rather than during winter closure, so all volunteers could attend.

✦ Volunteer check-ins and exit interviews were conducted for feedback at the end of the season/volunteer term. These provided a good opportunity to find out what was working, what might need improvement and other insights from volunteers.
Visitor Services Highlights

2018 Visitors and Income

Visitors: 54,920
Door Donations: $19,669
Gift Shop Sales: $115,210
Net to FDF: ~$57,000

Despite being closed an additional day in the busy summer season, TFC visitor numbers increased by over 1000 from 2017. Door donations increased by $3688 and gift shop sales were again at a record high—up by over $10,000 compared to 2017.

- The TFC’s summer season is much like fire season is for ODF districts. We know that we need to be ready for large numbers of visitors, but we don’t know when they will arrive and what they will need when they get here. Visitors-per-day rates in summer 2018 were 33% higher than the 12-year average.

- Record visitors per day rates occurred in June, July, and August Overall, these months averaged 442 visitors per day in 2018, a 29% increase over June-August, 2017.

Visitor Services

Increases in visitor numbers

- When the TFC has over 300 visitors per day, at least 2 staff/volunteers are required to staff the information desk/gift shop. In June, July, and August 2018, 83% of days that the TFC was open had over 300 visitors. The top number of visitors per day (ever) was July 22, with 825 visitors. A temporary visitor services assistant was hired to assist in August and September, after site hosts had to leave due to health concerns.

- Growing awareness of the TFC and the Tillamook State Forest in general, as well as, repeat visitation appear to be on the rise. In addition, the closure of many recreation sites in the Columbia River Gorge due to the Eagle Creek

Fire, the opening of the new Tillamook Creamery Visitor Center, crowding in national forests with proximity to the Portland metro area, and warm, dry weather had a positive impact on TFC visitation levels for the year. Increased visitation was observed at the recreation sites local to the center placing pressure on recreation infrastructure, parking, and forest resources (see off-site roving below).
Gift Shop

❖ **13,293 individual items** were purchased in 2018. This is a 75% increase over the average (7,603 items) and an. The two Visitor Services staff members are responsible for ordering and restocking all items.

❖ **7243 individual transactions** were processed through the gift shop during 2018. This is the highest since 2007 when the center was open year-round. There has been a steady increase in transactions since a low of 4722 in 2009 during the economic downturn.

❖ The **average transaction price was $15.91.** This is the highest average transaction price ever.

Interpretation and education highlights
Interpretive contacts = 8,177 | Education contacts = 5,722
Revenue: $10,571

Interpretation—programs, events, roving, exhibits

❖ **Revenue from Interpretive and Education Programs and Group Fees**

- Beginning on September 1, 2018 fees went into effect for organized groups of 10 or (more excluding families) in an effort to ensure a pleasant experience for all visitors.

- All interpretive programs include a message to support the TFC through donations or purchasing items in the gift shop (funds go to Forest Development Fund). Often times, events and programs result in large sales in the gift shop. While some interpretive programs are easy to correlate revenue with registration fees, others are indirect and more difficult to track (e.g. visitor inspired by an item used in a program or motivated from messaging). 2018 revenue resulted from interpretive programs, group fees, and trainings. At least twenty additional programs / events generated sales resulting in several days of $1,000+ in sales (e.g. Holiday Wreath Making event). In the first three months of charging group fees $2889 was generated.

❖ **ODF Division messaging** - All interpretive offerings (formal programs, roving conversations, special events etc.) include ODF messaging across all divisions. In 2018, the following agency messages and information was shared with school groups and the general public:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ODF Division messaging*</th>
<th># of programs / school contacts</th>
<th># of offerings / public contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**State Forests</td>
<td>Message**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Based Management</td>
<td>13 / 474</td>
<td>59 / 770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatest Permanent Value</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 / 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave No Trace</td>
<td>8 / 393</td>
<td>19 / 385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Forest Products</td>
<td></td>
<td>21 / 633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation/Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td>60 / 879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**State &amp; Private Forest</td>
<td>Message**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State &amp; Private Forest</td>
<td>Riparian Management / FPA</td>
<td>5 / 1153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State &amp; Private Forest</td>
<td>Reforestation / FPA (Arbor Day CXL due to wind)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State &amp; Private Forest</td>
<td>Cultural Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Fire Division</td>
<td>Message**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire prevention and protection</td>
<td>17 / 1103</td>
<td>33 / 1146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This does not include contacts at the information desk or phone calls

- Due to a **reduction of two student interns** during peak season, and the need to continue to support the recreation staff with off-site roving at Jones Creek and the Smith Homestead DUA, and the information desk staff with increased visitation, the amount of **formal interpretive programs offered was reduced**. However, **informal roving opportunities were increased**. This provides visitors with a variety of options for engagement, and the trend in the field of interpretation is focusing on shorter dialogic interpretation rather than formal programs/talks. Visitors can choose how much/long they want to be involved based on their schedules and interest.

- **Overall interpretive opportunities** - up by 1038 with 19 less offerings

- **Formal Interpretive Programs** - Through 2018, **111 formal interpretive programs were offered**, which were attended by **1593 people**. This is down from 2017 by 19 programs and 796 people due to the above reasons.

- **Informal Interpretive Opportunities (Roving at TFC)** - Informal roving opportunities were increased to offset the reduction of formal program offerings. Total informal interpretation contacts = 5454 up 2541 from 2017.

- **Informal Interpretive Opportunities (Roving along the river Jones Creek – Smith Homestead Day Uses Area)** –

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**Tillamook Forest Center**

2018 Annual Report

06/09/19
Beginning in 2017 the TFC staff began providing off-site roving along the Wilson River to assist recreation staff and educate the public on Leave No Trace ethics, fire regulations and safety messages (e.g. jumping from the bridge).

This is one small section along the Wilson River corridor with high use. On days of 90 degrees or higher the entire Highway 6 is overflowing with visitors and staff struggle to keep up with garbage, parking, fire and safety issues while maintaining services. 2018 broke the record with 30 days over 90 degrees in the Portland Metropolitan Area.

In 2018 less days scheduled to rove and recorded, but there were nearly the same amount of days with more than 300 people in a 1/2 mile stretch of river. On July 15th, there were 1,030 people in the same area surpassing the highest number of 623 in 2017!

While there were 14 less days for off-site roving in 2018, there was also 170 gallons* of less trash collected and 30 more garbage bags given out. Staff reported seeing a significant reduction in the amount of litter from 2017 to 2018. This most likely is a direct result of staff presence along the river/trails asking users to pick up after themselves.

*trash recorded in gallons as it is collected in a five gallon bucket

Special Events/Guest Presenters

- **Arbor Day Tree Plant** - Was cancelled due to high winds

- **Wildfire Awareness** – Staff used the tablets funded by the TFHT for a new interactive wildfire awareness display to be displayed for the month of May. Information included videos on Wildfire Awareness Community Preparedness Day from Keep Oregon Green. This season the live burn table demonstration returned and we continued to have Smokey Bear visits with 115 participants in the activities.

- **Rain Festival** – The fall fish release was expanded into an event for the weekend to offer returning visitors something different and to encourage visitation in the rainy shoulder season. 212 participants in all events.

- **Celebrate Route 6 Sketch Crawl** – In conjunction with Highway 6’s recent designation as the Trees to Sea Oregon Scenic Byway, the center is partnered with the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum and the Art Accelerated Gallery for a yearlong celebration of Route 6.

- **Special Requests** –
• TFC collaborated with the recreation program and Viva NW to more effectively reach Latino audiences in surrounding areas. A video was created to communicate important ODF messaging, a guided hike was offered along the Wilson River Trail, a volunteer service learning trail building day was offered, and Viva NW came to the TFC to offer a presentation on understanding and effectively communicating with Latinos.

• Staff also hosted 60 people from the American Loggers Association and 39 Swedish Foresters.

❖ Exhibits
  – The IE team created a 3 panel display on the pavilion and TFC onsite thinning updates for the lobby.
  – Celebrating Renewal: Visions in the Forest | June 13 – September 2
    indoor and outdoor exhibit was showcased throughout the exhibit hall and along the River View Trail. Over 430 visitors participated in the “vote for your favorite fish contest”, and many people came out just to see the art exhibit! Four fish were sold, and $220 was donated as a result of art sales.
  – Unnoticed Treasures | Ceramics and Watercolors by Adrienne Stacey and her grandson Bruno was on display from September 12 – November 25, 2018 with an opening reception on September 16th. This was the second art exhibit this year where the art was created specifically for the TFC.

Education—schools and groups

❖ Implementation of group fees started on September 1, 2018. The decision to implement this was an effort to reduce impacts on general visitors, manage unruly groups that are not following expectations while visiting, attempting to reduce last minute cancellations, and to finalize the notification to teachers that fees were coming over the last two years.

❖ Total revenue (Sept. 1 – Nov) - $3500 with $1225 awarded in scholarship funds.

❖ 60 guided education programs were offered in 2018 and they were attended by 2989 students and 946 adults.

❖ There were 60 self-guided visits (scheduled and drop-ins) in 2018. This included 894 kids and 424 adults came on self-guided visits from summer camp groups, youth tour groups and scout groups.

❖ Comparing fiscal year numbers is a better reflection of education program numbers as it reflects the school year. FY18 we hosted 6,275 students and this marks the first year we have hosted over 6,000 students since 2010.
Forest Education Pavilion – IE Staff spent time adjusting logistical items to account for the pavilion construction and thinning that occurred onsite over the winter. Updates to the education program lesson plans, agendas and booklets were made to reflect the closed construction area and more accurately reflect current teaching practices. Beginning in September, the TFC team began hosting groups in the new Forest Education Pavilion.

Projects and Other Core Business

- Total Facebook reach for the calendar operational year was **357,215** with highest reach in the months of August at 70,063 and November at 51,232. The month of November reached nearly the *entire 2018 in-person visitation at the TFC*.
- Online Reservations System Upgrade – Work on replacing the original 2005 online reservations system was delayed due to capacity and funding, but remains a high priority.
- TSF Map/Guide – Work continues on replacing the Tillamook State Forest Map Guide as capacity allows and funding sources are explored.

Facilities

Selected 2018 Facilities Projects

Three large projects dominated TFC facilities staff’s time. Construction of the new Forest Education Pavilion began in January and was mostly completed by September, although there is still some ongoing finishing work. While Salem facilities staff members provided project supervision and administration, the facilities coordinator was the on-site contact/oversight person for the pavilion construction, with over a quarter of his time devoted to the project. The beautiful new education pavilion is a great addition and we are using it daily for school groups and interpretive programs.

The second project was a **timber sale**, led by the Tillamook District in January and February to manage forest health at the TFC.

Thanks to South Fork Work Camp and several ODF retirees, the project of replacing the decomposing logs that support the TFC **steam donkey** went very smoothly. South Fork crews harvested the massive logs, which were trucked to a pressure treatment facility and then returned to the TFC during the summer. The actual log replacement in December involved TFC staff working with volunteers and assistance from South Fork crews. The team jacked up the several-ton steam donkey, removed the old logs and then maneuvered the new logs into position.
Maintenance Highlights
In addition to the projects listed above and routine building maintenance, TFC facilities staff accomplished numerous repairs and overhauls of aging building systems. The water filtration system was updated (increased production by 400%, decreased waste by 460%). The complex boiler and HVAC systems were refurbished and repaired, including the main control, which failed entirely.

Also, facilities staff oversaw driveway and parking lot seal coating, worked with fire crew members (on temporary assignment from the Forest Grove District) to replace damaged bridge boards, and completed numerous other maintenance items with the help of inmates from South Fork Camp.

The Salem facilities electrician installed a whole-facility surge protector to help prevent the damage to sensitive electronics caused when power outages occur. They also added wiring and floor outlets to make the exhibit hall space more usable and flexible.

Other 2018 Accomplishments
Fire Support
The I & E Coordinator spent 19 days on fire assignments as Food Unit Leader. The Facilities Coordinator spent 15 days on fire assignments, working in logistics.

Scenic Byway Designation
TFC staff members have been working since 2012 on a proposal for the Trees to Sea Scenic Byway, which links the cultural and natural richness of the Willamette Valley with the Tillamook State Forest and the Tillamook Coast via highways 6, 101, and 131. In collaboration with Visit Tillamook Coast and the Washington County Visitors Association, TFC staff presented the proposal for approval by the Oregon Department of Transportation, the Oregon Transportation Commission, and the Oregon Travel Commission. The Trees to Sea Scenic Byway was
officially designated in April 2018. Trees to Sea Scenic Byway is listed in the Oregon Scenic Byways Guide. Route signs are expected to be installed by ODOT in the summer of 2019.

**Root Ball Fundraiser**

In collaboration with the Tillamook Forest Heritage Trust, TFC staff hosted the second Root Ball fundraiser to help raise funds to furnish the new Forest Education Pavilion. With an old-fashioned-picnic theme, guests were invited to assist with homemade ice cream, create fern garlands, and have their photograph taken in period-appropriate attire. A delicious chef-prepared meal was served on the beautifully-decorated bridge. Dessert along with silent and live auctions in the pavilion rounded out the evening.

Thanks to the 78 attendees, plus staff and volunteers, the event raised over $18,000. Guests very much enjoyed the attention to detail that shaped the atmosphere. It would not have been possible without incredibly creative and dedicated staff who went above and beyond expectations.

**Trainings, Outreach, & Collaboration**

- The Director and I&E Coordinator facilitated the National Association for Interpretation’s 2-day Certified Interpretive Host training to 12 employees and volunteers at Pittock Mansion in Portland.

- The I&E Coordinator, in collaboration with OPRD, facilitated the National Association for Interpretation’s 4-day Certified Interpretive Guide training at Tryon Creek State Park in Portland.

- The Director, in collaboration with OFRI and OSU, facilitated a 1-day training workshop for natural resources professionals who work with outdoor schools.

- The Director was a training facilitator for two 7 Habits of Highly Effective People for ODF employees in October and November. The November course was hosted at the TFC.
- TFC staff participated in:
  - Oregon Environmental Literacy Project all-team meeting
  - Forest Educators Networking Group meeting at Oregon Gardens.
  - Governor’s Roadmap to the Outdoors Symposium
  - Oregon Tribal Education Cluster meeting
  - Cultural competence training facilitated by Vive Northwest
Tillamook Forest Center Organizational Chart 2018 (Nov. 2018)
FY 2018 Budget: $1,075,087
FY 2019 Budget: $1,223,140

**Center Operations**
- Open to the public: March – November
- Operation: Wed – Sun | 10 am 4/5 pm
- Exhibits, theater, lookout tower, trails
- Gift shop and information desk
- Center closed to public: December - February

**Programming Emphasis**
Inspiring people to connect with the Tillamook State Forest.
- Spring (Mar – May) | School programs – TFC
- Summer (Jun – Aug) | Public interpretive programs
- Fall (Sep – Nov) | School programs – TFC
- Winter (Dec – Feb) | Planning

**Fran McReynolds**
Center Director
X7006 SR31X 4673

**Christian Hargrove**
Facilities Coordinator
C4014 SR24 4863

**Denise Berkshire**
Interpretation & Education Coord.
C8503 SR27 551

**Jen Warren**
Visitor Services Coord.
C0801 SR17 3726

**Katrina Bielenberg**
Facilities Assistant
C4116 SR12 0976

**Luke Wahl**
Interp & Ed Spec
C8501 SR21 3891

**Cam Amable**
Interp & Ed Spec
C8501 SR21 3724

**Sara Fischer**
Interp & Ed Spec
C8501 SR21 4674

**Visitor Services Volunteers**

**Leilani Buchanan**
Bianca Bermejo-Gonzalez
Pacific University Work Study
(spring/fall 4 days/week)

**Megan Lacy**
Visitor Serv. Assist.
C0103 SR12 3879

**Facilities Volunteers**

Legend:
- Management Service
- Permanent Full Time
- Limited Duration
- 9-month Seasonal Position
- OPRD Funded 9-month Seasonal
- Pacific University Funded--not ODF employees
- Volunteers