Northeast Oregon District
2021 Statistical Report

LA GRANDE UNIT
BAKER SUB UNIT
PENDLETON UNIT
WALLOWA UNIT

Cal Mukumoto
State Forester

Matt Howard
District Forester
Welcome to the 2021 Annual Statistical Report for the Northeast Oregon District.

2021 was again a very busy year for the district, in all our programs. The fire and forestry services that we provided focused on providing excellent customer service. District employees were up to the task and worked to ensure that we were successful in accomplishing our mission in a safe and efficient manner.

An early start to fire season was exacerbated by persistent drought intensified by extreme heat and lack of spring precipitation. Fire season started approximately two weeks earlier than average and was characterized by above average burning conditions for much of the summer with 47 days spent above the district’s large fire threshold. Several challenging individual fires and a couple of multiple fire days (lightning) put the district’s fire organization to the test. These fires required strong leadership and the right mix of resources and assistance from our interagency partners and industrial cooperators to successfully control. The Joseph Canyon Fire started on June 4th and burned a total of 7,610 acres across ODF, Vale BLM and WDNR jurisdictions. The fire exhibited extreme fire behavior and uncharacteristic fire growth for so early in the year. The Elbow Creek Fire initiated on July 15th and expanded rapidly across multiple jurisdictions burning 22,960 acres. In addition to our normal compliment of aircraft, the district worked cooperatively with the Wallowa-Whitman NF managing and utilizing the services of two Type 3 Helicopter and Helitack crew for 77 days. The Helitack platform flew a total of 30 fires for 121 hours and was instrumental in catching fires in several challenging locations in the district. Recon 018 was also active this past season flying 158 hours of recon over ODF and USFS jurisdiction.

Forestry is very active in the NEO District. Seven permanent foresters and three limited duration foresters handle the workload in forest practices, forestry assistance and the forest management of Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife lands. The Federal Forest Restoration Program implemented several Good Neighbor Authority projects across the District adding capacity to the pace and scale of forestry projects in the national forests. The Northern Blues All-Lands Partnership stayed active this year with support for several key projects. It is exciting to be a part of so many active forest management opportunities with our landowner community and federal partners.

The District Administrative staff continue to provide expertise supporting the work we do. Their efforts cannot be praised enough as their role is essential and critical in all aspects of fire suppression, fire finance and human resources.

The District employees continue to rise to the challenge, and I am proud of the work they do providing excellent customer service to our constituents. The assistance of our interagency partners, landowner community and industrial contractors again proved to be a vital part of our success.

Thank you for your efforts and continued support

Matt Howard
District Forester, Northeast Oregon District
NEO District Statistical Fire Summary
- 66 total statistical fires was below average
- 18,168 total acres burned was above average
- 37 lightning caused fires
  ⇒ 56% of total statistical fires
  ⇒ burned 3,830 acres; 21% of total acres
- 29 human caused fires
  ⇒ 44% of total statistical fires
  ⇒ burned 14,338 acres; 79% of total acres

NEO District Aircraft Summary
- 3NP (Type 2 Helicopter)
  ⇒ 157.9 flight hours
  ⇒ 22 incidents
- T-869 (Single Engine Airtanker)
  ⇒ 129.8 flight hours
  ⇒ 32 incident flights
  ⇒ 89,466 gallons of retardant delivered
- T-822 (Single Engine Airtanker)
  ⇒ 116.7 flight hours
  ⇒ 30 incident flights
  ⇒ 80,863 gallons of retardant delivered
- D-018 (Detection Plane)
  ⇒ 135.1 flight hours

### 2021 Significant Fires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fire</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>ODF Acres</th>
<th>Total Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Canyon</td>
<td>6/4</td>
<td>3,602</td>
<td>7,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone Canyon</td>
<td>6/14</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbow Creek</td>
<td>7/15</td>
<td>14,551</td>
<td>22,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wise</td>
<td>8/5</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During Spring of 2021 fire season looked to be setting up for one of the more challenging seasons in recent memory on lands within the Northeast Oregon District (NEO). A dry winter followed by a substantial period without measurable precipitation led to multiple fires across the district in April. Going into late May and early June 1000 hour fuel moistures were at levels typically not seen until August. On June 4th the district had its first significant fire of the 2021 season when the lightning caused Joseph Canyon fire burned 7,610 acres, including 3,602 acres protected by NEO, in Wallowa County. In response to this large fire on the landscape and the abnormal fuel conditions fire season was declared on June 9th. Before June turned into July the district was impacted by another lightning caused fire in difficult ground along the North Fork of the John Day River on the Pendleton Unit. The Bone Canyon fire burned 68 acres of BLM ground protected by NEO. Due to rapid response from ODF and our partners that included engines, hand crews, helitack and aircraft the footprint of this fire was minimized. As conditions continued to cause concern into late June NEO implemented Regulated Use phase 1 on June 23rd. July continued to prove concerning regarding fire danger. From June 23rd through July 14th the district set new 10-year maximum ERC values daily. Regulated Use Phase 2 and additional industrial restrictions were implemented in response to these unprecedented conditions. During the height of these conditions the Elbow Creek fire started in the Grande Ronde River drainage. This fire quickly grew and impacted thousands of acres of private land within the Wallowa Unit. While resources were already stretched thin due to ongoing fires nationwide, a major response during initial attack was aided by local landowners and the lending of resources from neighboring large fires in Southeast Washington. Even with this robust response the decision was made to order ODF IMT 3 to take over the fire. When it was all said and done the Elbow Creek fire burned 22,960 acres including 14,551 acres of ground protected by NEO. Around the first week of August conditions slowly started to moderate across NEO. Multiple thunderstorms crossed over the district but many of them brought with them wetting rains. However, due to conditions present in larger fuels these storms still ignited multiple new fires across the landscape. Many of these new incidents were stopped at initial attack but due to the numbers of new starts and lack of available resources some grew into larger incidents. The largest of these was the Wise fire on the Wallowa Unit that burned a total of 132 acres. For the remainder of the season fire danger stayed within the historic normal range across the district. In total the 2021 fire season lasted 135 days and produced 66 statistical fires across Northeast Oregon. While 66 statistical fires is near average for Northeast Oregon we were well above our average of 8,148 acres burned at 18,168 acres.
• 482 FPA inspections were completed
• 72 Fire inspections were completed
• No FPA citations were issued
• No unsatisfactory conditions were issue
• 2 warnings were issued

ODFW
Wenaha Beetle Sale
2.6 MBF of sawlogs

Forestry Assistance Funding Source

Wallowa Unit
*Wallowa County Fuels Mitigation CA Grant
*Wallowa County Firewise Community Fuels Reduction Project WSFM Grant
*Wallowa County Read, Set, Go! Program & Lake Basin Fuels Reduction Project WSFM Grant
*Wallowa North NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Project
*Wallowa Front Fuel Reduction NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Project

Pendleton Unit
*Umatilla South County Fuel Mitigation CA Grant
*Umatilla McKay Fuels WSFM Grant
*JDU Basin Forest Resiliency NRCS Conservation Implementation Strategy
*Walla Walla Mill Creek Fuels Reduction NRCS Conservation Implementation Strategy

La Grande Unit
*Mt. Emily Collaborative Fuel Breaks and Hazard Fuels Reduction CA Grant
*East La Grande Strategic Fuels Treatment WSFM Grant
*West Valley Forest Management NRCS Conservation Implementation Strategy

Baker Sub-Unit
*Baker/Union Strategic WUI Fuel Break WSFM Grant
*Spring Creek Firewise Fuels Reduction and Fire Prevention CA Grant
*Burnt River Range NRCS Conservation Implementation Strategy
*Baker Watershed Forest Health Partnership NRCS Conservation Implementation Strategy

District-Wide
*East Oregon Forest Restoration NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Project

$5 million East Oregon Forest Restoration RCPP was awarded with the NEO District as the lead partner

Forestry Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NRCS EQIP Inventories</th>
<th>5,588 Acres</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NRCS EQIP Layouts</td>
<td>4,049 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRCS EQIP Certifications</td>
<td>2,149 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bark Beetle Management</td>
<td>60 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship Plans</td>
<td>2 Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Forest Management Plan (Under the AFF Agreement)</td>
<td>22 Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLFN (Distributed)</td>
<td>21,500 Seedlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLFN (Stored for Hancock Forest Mgt.)</td>
<td>1.4 million Seedlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLFN (Stored for Green Diamond)</td>
<td>27,000 seedlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Board Thinning</td>
<td>502 Acres</td>
</tr>
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</table>

National Fire Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units within Northeast Oregon District</th>
<th>Acres Thinned (2021)</th>
<th>Acres Thinned (2002 To 2021)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baker Sub-Unit (Baker County)</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>7,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Grande Unit (Union County)</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>5,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pendleton Unit (Umatilla County)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallowa Unit (Wallowa County)</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>8,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>28,029</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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In 2013, the Oregon Legislature took an innovative step to fund the Federal Forest Restoration Program (FFRP), with the explicit intent of increasing the amount of active restoration actions on our federal forests and supporting job creation and economic recovery in rural economies. In 2014 congress authorized the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) which allows the use of federal funds to support state agency work on federal forest projects. In 2021, NEO personnel completed and/or initiated layout and prepping of two GNA timber sales, and which are located on the following Forests and Districts:

- Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Whitman District, South Catherine GNA Deck, Layout Complete.
- Umatilla National Forest, North Fork of the John Day District, Davis GNA, Layout Complete.

In addition, NEO FFR personnel have administered the following timber sale contracts in the course of being logged in 2021:

- Umatilla National Forest, North Fork of the John Day District, Four Corners GNA, Logging Complete.
- Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Wallowa Mountains District, Divide WUI GNA, Logging Initiated.
- Wallowa-Whitman, Whitman District, Sparta GNA, Logging Initiated.
- Wallowa-Whitman, La Grande District, South Catherine WUI GNA, Logging Complete.

ODF sold South Catherine WUI GNA in January 2021. Once sold, utilizing an ODF Timber Sale Contract, ODF personnel will administer the contracts, and timber receipts will reimburse ODF for expenses related to sale prep and administration. Remaining receipts will be applied to work on upcoming timber sales.

FFRP performed timber related duties on GNA projects for combined acreage totals as follows:

*For the 2021-23 biennium, FFRP also committed $90,000 towards a botany survey contract on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Forest</th>
<th>Ranger District</th>
<th>Sale Acres</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Sale GNA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umatilla</td>
<td>NFJD</td>
<td>785</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wallowa-Whitman</td>
<td>La Grande</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale Admin GNA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umatilla</td>
<td>NFJD</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallowa-Whitman</td>
<td>La Grande</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallowa-Whitman</td>
<td>Wallowa Mountains</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallowa-Whitman</td>
<td>Whitman</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,496</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The National Fire Protection Association’s "Firewise USA" recognition program is designed to teach people how to live with wildfire and increase their home and property's chance of survival through proactive actions, while encouraging neighbors to work together to reduce losses and damage.

**Eagleton and Pine Valley**
Baker County
2021
South Wallowa Lake
Wallowa County
2021

**2021 Northeast Oregon District Personnel Changes**

Joe Hessel — Joe retired as the District Forester after 38 years of service with the Oregon Department of Forestry. Joe’s leadership and commitment to ODF’s mission over the years has not only contributed to the success of NEO District but to the entire state.

Mitch Williams — Mitch retired with about 3 decades of fires under is boots. There was not a landowner or cooperator he did not know. We can’t replace his experience but wish him a happy retirement.

Matt Hoehna — Congratulations to Matt on his transfer to Assistant District Forester. Matt has been with the agency for over 20 years. Prior to the ADF, Matt serviced as the AUF and Unit Forester on the Pendleton Unit.

**Cooperative Work Program**

The District seeks out and utilizes a variety of work opportunities with private, State and Federal Cooperators which provide cross-training opportunities for permanent employees, and additional employment for many of our seasonals. In 2021, several employees worked for the Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Hancock Forest Management, and other private landowners.
2021 Northeast Oregon District Budget Committee Members

Chris Heffernan, Union County, Forest Landowner and NEO Budget Committee Chairman; EOFPA Member
Bob Messinger, Union County, Forest Landowner
Jered Schwabauer, Harvest Operations Manager for Hancock Forest Management; EOFPA President
Clint Johnson, Baker County, Forest Landowner and Rancher
Pat Sullivan, Baker County, Forest Landowner & Rancher
Elwayne Henderson, Wallowa County, Forest Landowner & Forest Operator
Chris Cunningham, Wallowa County, Forest Landowner & Rancher
Hank Howard, Umatilla County, Forest & Rangeland Manager for Pacific Northwest Tree Farm
Bobby Corey, Umatilla County, Forest Landowner & Rancher Representing Pendleton Ranches/Cunningham Sheep Co; EOFPA member

EOFPA = East Oregon Forest Protective Association