

# South Cascade District



## 2024 Annual Report

Welcome to the South Cascade District.

I am pleased to present the 2024 Annual Report for the South Cascade District. First off, I want to say thank you to the district staff who contributed to this report as well as Nakia Stafford and Callie Baker for compiling, editing, and finalizing this report. In December of 2023, Chris Cline accepted a job rotation as the Fire Protection Division Chief for ODF. While Chris was serving in Salem, I filled in for him, and Jerrin Robbins filled the Sweet Home Unit Forester role. My thanks go out to Jerrin for taking on new responsibilities.

2024 was a year filled with new opportunities and challenges across the district. Many folks were filling new roles as we had two retirements, and one employee transferred to another ODF District. These vacancies have created opportunities for others to step up and learn new skills.

The 2024 fire season was challenging for the district and our neighbors. We had more fires than normal, and we had multiple fires go into extended attack. The South Cascade District, landowners, and operators had to engage on multiple federal fires that threatened or burned on private property. By the end of fire season, there were 28 Incident Management Teams deployed on fires that impacted our protected lands in the South Cascade District. There were multiple times throughout fire season that every Incident Management Team in the United States were deployed. We had assistance from Florida and an entire team from North Carolina on the district. Many thanks go out to those who came from far away to help in our time of need.

As you will see in the following pages, we continue to implement many prevention programs and fuels reduction projects across the district. The FFR and GNA work continues to make positive impacts on federal ground around the district.

I want to mention the outstanding efforts of our employees and I also want to say thank you to their families for the support they give, especially through another challenging fire season.

The South Cascade District would not be successful without the partnerships we have with the Eastern Lane and Linn Forest Protective Associations, forest landowners, operators, neighboring districts, federal agencies, and fire department partners. I would like to thank each of them for their continued dedication and professionalism. I would say the complete and coordinated fire protection system is alive and well in the South Cascade District.

Craig Pettinger  
Interim District Forester



# PREVENTION



The South Cascade District Prevention Program kicked off 2024 by partnering with Smokey Bear and the Willamette National Forest (McKenzie Bridge & Middle Fork) in February. Over the next few months with the help of these partners, Smokey Bear successfully visited 34 different schools across the district, involving roughly 2,500 students in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. These students were taught Smokey's Five Rules of Wildfire Prevention, common causes of fire and explained the basics of the fire triangle. Many new agency faces were introduced to the program and became acquainted with the program, receiving great feedback from the schools who want this program to continue for many years to come. At the time of this writing, we have already been contacted by nearly a half dozen new schools who wish to be a participant in the future.

Prevention continued in June with Smokey Bear attending many community events involving parades, festivals, and safety fairs before things got busy across the district. Smokey attended events such as the Children's Safety Celebration Festival, Spirit of Bohemia Days, Cottage Grove Safety Fair, South Lane Rural Fire District movie nights, Jerry's Firefighter Appreciation Day, and the Sportsman's Holiday Parade. Additional events were planned across the district, unfortunately, due to the local fire load we were not able to attend.

Keep Oregon Green again proves to be instrumental in helping Smokey Bear deliver his message of Fire Prevention stating "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires". For the third year in a row we were able to distribute over 30,000 coffee sleeves to local coffee shops.

Although it is difficult to point to one specific thing, the prevention program within the South Cascade District has proven to be a success as it continues to grow. When comparing the number of crew responses where either a warning or citation was issued, as a district in 2024, we were down 15% from 2023; a testament to the hard work completed from our staff. Thank you to everyone who participated!



# PROTECTION

Fire season 2024 began July 1<sup>st</sup> for the South Cascade District. Shortly after, conditions escalated to that of late summer because of a long stretch of high temperatures and low humidities. This prompted several ODF IMT deployments around the state within the first half of July. The heat wave broke with abundant dry lightning throughout the district on July 17th, igniting many fires within the district and neighboring jurisdictions, as well as statewide. This set the stage for the remainder of fire season.

On the district, we were largely successful through early detection and aggressive initial attack, effectively keeping most fires under 5 acres, although there were areas of challenge. The fires in the South end of the district, (Lane 1, Clark 900, and multiple other starts across the nearby Umpqua National Forest) saw multiple IMT rotations and ultimately were wrapped into Lane 1, burning over 25,000 acres.

In addition to fire responses on ODF protected land, South Cascade was engaged tactically and administratively on other large fires throughout the season, tallying 28 in-briefs through various IMT rotations. These fires include Blue 190, Pyramid, Horse Heaven, and Willamette Complex North and South. Several of these fires ended up burning state protected acres such as Horse Heaven, 208-MF, Little Cowhorn and the Pyramid fire, which all required significant ODF engagement throughout the summer. This engagement extended well beyond just fire protection staff. IRA and LRB participation on both state and federal incidents was immense. This added a tremendous additional workload to our district admin staff during an already all hands-on deck fire season.

Despite the conditions and fire load, the district was successful in day-to-day operations through maintaining readiness, perseverance and coordination between units, neighboring districts and cooperators. After the intense conditions in July, the weather moderated, leading to a relatively mild August and September indices-wise. However, the landscape still had numerous well established fires. There were plenty of training and learning opportunities for seasonal firefighters and permanent staff alike. The district also maintained an excellent safety record throughout the summer. Fire season ended on October 21st, for a total of 112 days.

South Cascade Statistical Fires			
Cause	2023 Fires	2024 Fires	2024 ODF Acres Burned
Lightning	12	21	4039.72
Railroad	0	0	0
Equipment Use	15	15	10.27
Recreation	9	4	.88
Smoking	2	0	0
Debris Burning	14	22	18.46
Arson	1	0	0
Juveniles	1	0	0
Miscellaneous	7	5	20.63
Under Investigation	2	1	9.20
Totals	63	68	4099.16



Lane 1



SCAS engine in Texas



# MID WILLAMETTE VALLEY INTERAGENCY FIRE SCHOOL

In June of 2024, the Sweet Home Unit hosted the Mid-Willamette Valley Interagency Fire School. Over 200 students attended courses throughout the week and participated in field exercises. The last day of training consisted of live fire and certifications for new and returning firefighters to begin their journey with The Oregon Department of Forestry. Thank you to Cascade Timber Consulting for providing the field site.



## SMOKE MANAGEMENT



Slash burning in Linn County

2024 fall burning started in November and continued through the end of the year. The weather was favorable with plenty of rain and snow that helped our landowners complete their treatment of slash projects with little interruptions and good consumption. In East Lane, ten-month Forest Officers helped in slash rating, data entry, and burn permitting. Weyerhaeuser Springfield completed burning on 7 units from the 2024 ice storm off of Deerhorn Road. Our ODF fuels crew and overhead, as well as a contract crew assisted with the burn. The general public in the Wal-

terville area enjoyed the burn show. We are happy to report there were no smoke intrusions.

South Cascade	2023	2024
Registered Tonnage	82,976	66,808
Accomplished Tonnage	87,278	57,249
Registered Acres	16,668	12,190
Accomplished Acres	15,962	9,571



Slash burning in Lane County



# FNRL CDE PROGRAM

Future Natural Resource Leaders is a student leadership organization and career technical education program dedicated to training and supporting teachers and students in forestry and natural resources. 2024 was the 8th year that ODF South Cascade Sweet Home Unit has partnered with the FNRL. Camp Tadmor, located outside of Sweet Home, hosted over 100 students from throughout the state to attend the 3-day event. During this event the students gain valuable experience while learning skills and working with the forest industry. Students learn different activities such as hose lay, fire line construction, fire suppression, fire line construction and first aid as well as many safety techniques. The groups then compete to strengthen the skills they have learned and build crew cohesion. Through programs such as this we can help the younger generation understand the opportunities and benefits of working in the timber industry.



## OUT OF STATE ASSIGNMENTS



ALASKA Nick Case



TEXAS  
Isaak Post  
Jackson  
Wojdylak  
Larry Jackson  
Justin White  
Justin Wolfe  
Jay Feldman



NORTH CAROLINA Nick Case





# FOREST RESOURCES

2024 was a busy year for the Forest Resources Program, with the district receiving 2,037 new notifications. These notifications were reviewed and inspected for compliance with the forest practices rules. The Forest Resources Program also saw the full implementation of revised forest practices rules brought by the Private Forest Accord. Staff assisted landowners with technical assistance and education, administered the industrial fire program with inspections and waivers, added to the protection programs capabilities in various roles, and worked with other cooperators to implement many programs.

In January 2024, a severe ice storm caused widespread damage to Lane and Linn County forests, resulting in downed trees, power outages, and disruptions to critical services. The storm damage caused over 250 salvage notifications for the South Cascade District.

The 2024 fire season was very busy, with staff assisting the fire program both within the district and helping to support other districts.

Steve Kendall retired from his role as Stewardship Forester in October 2024. Steve worked in many ODF offices and districts throughout his 34-year career, with the last 12-years spent working in the Sweet Home Unit as a Stewardship Forester. Justin Wolfe served as a developmental Stewardship Forester in 2024 behind Jerrin Robbins until September. Jerrin Robins spent 2024 serving as the Interim Sweet Home Unit Forester. In September, Justin Wolfe began a new position with the Sweet Home Fire Department - Wildland Fire Division. Brian Dally transferred within ODF from the Eastern Lane Unit to the Lakeview Unit in October. Brian continues to work as a Stewardship Forester assisting landowners in Lake County. Justin White transitioned from the Small Forestland Owner Forester role to a Stewardship Forester in the Sweet Home Office, taking the place of Steve Kendall.



No citations of the forest practices rules were issued in 2024, while several written statements of unsatisfactory condition were issued.



2024 ice storm damage.

2024 NOAPS	South Cascade District
New Notifications	2,037



Suspension foot bridge constructed<sup>7</sup>  
for loggers to cross a stream.

# ADMIN & DISPATCH

South Cascade's administrative staff consists of our District Business Manager Renae Meyer, Administrative Specialist Nakia Stafford in the Sweet Home Unit, and Administrative Specialists Callie Baker and Tyler Church in the East Lane Unit. The dispatching positions were held by first year seasonal Kallie Maas in the Sweet Home Unit and second year seasonal Elijah Woodward as well as all admin staff covering dispatch in East Lane and Sweet Home.

The 2024 fire season proved to be a challenge for South Cascade's admin and dispatch staff. On July 17<sup>th</sup> 2024, our district received the first round of lightning which started multiple fires throughout the district. Admin and dispatch were working around the clock for multiple weeks, primarily handling the Lane 1 fire, which consisted of 8 fires in the Eastern Lane Unit along with the Pyramid fire and Tally 230 in the Sweet Home Unit.

Multiple rounds of lighting throughout July and August also caused many USFS fires which threatened ODF protected lands. The South Cascade admin staff processed over \$8,634,000 to our IRA resources on the Willamette Complex fires which consisted of 208-MF, Moss Mountain, Coffee Pot, and Pyramid.

Due to the complexity of the Lane 1 fire, a payment team was organized and started on September 3<sup>rd</sup> which consisted of District Business Managers and Administrative staff from multiple districts. The payment team worked well into November submitting over \$46,000,000 into OR Buys for payment. We would like to thank everyone who dedicated their time to making the Lane 1 payment team a huge success!



Nakia Stafford & Elijah Woodward



Kallie Maas



Callie Baker, Tyler Church, & Renae Meyer



# INDUSTRIAL FIRE

The Industrial Fire program in the South Cascade District consists of Stewardship Foresters and Forest Officers working under the direction of their respective Unit Foresters.

An important part of the Industrial Fire program is the summer industrial fire inspections. Both landowners and operators are encouraged to reach out to their local ODF office to receive a pre-season inspection of their equipment to ensure fire readiness once fire season arrives.

In June of 2024, Cascade Timber Consulting held their annual fire truck inspection in Sweet Home. For over 26 years contractors have participated in this inspection event. With the help from The Oregon Department of Forestry, the trucks were inspected to make sure the equipment is ready and meets the required standards.

IFPL	# Days
IFPL 1	36
IFPL 2	38
IFPL 3	38
IFPL 4	0
TOTAL	112



Local operators having their equipment inspected at the annual Cascade Timber Consulting inspection event.

## SMOKE DETECTION CAMERAS

During the summer of 2024, work was finalized at the Big Rock site, formerly known as Green Mountain. The camera went active in July of 2024, and was the third SB 762 (partially) funded camera site for South Cascade District. It offers a great look at the Wiley Creek and Calapooia drainages to the West, and the Willamette National Forest to the East. Scott Mountain is the last remaining site for a camera to be installed.



# FUELS REDUCTION PROGRAMS

The Community Wildfire program has been a longstanding community outreach and assistance program designed to support private landowners with fuels reduction efforts in addition to promoting wildfire education throughout the Eastern Lane Unit. The program utilizes grant funding from Western States, community assistance and local partnerships to implement fuels treatments ranging from defensible space projects to larger, strategically located shaded fuels breaks, promoting widespread community protection. Implementation of these projects relies largely on off-season firefighters filling positions on the Eastern Lane fuels crew.

Throughout 2023, the program treated nearly 130 acres and attended 8 community events providing community members with educational materials promoting defensible space, wildfire awareness, and Firewise USA. The program continues to receive an overwhelming response from community members requesting guidance to better prepare for wildfire and inquiries related to the fuels reduction program.



BEFORE



Cole Sampson, Isaac Wildman, Christopher Jones,  
Colton Anderson, Brian Dally Jr, Tanner Sherwood



AFTER

## Fuels Reduction – Sweet Home

Fuels reduction in the Sweet Home unit is a joint venture between the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Linn County Juvenile Department. The purpose of the program is to identify, contact, and educate landowners about the benefit of adequate defensible space for homes and structures in the occurrence of wildfire.

The Oregon Department of Forestry provides a Fire Planning Forester to contact landowners. We provide technical assistance, identify and plan work projects, and coordinate the completion of the projects. The Linn County Juvenile Department offers a juvenile work crew and leadership to manage the crew on site at eligible Linn County locations.

Work projects around homes and structures include pruning, thinning, brush cutting, and chipping of vegetation and debris at the site. Juvenile crews complete up to nine sites and removing over 1,200 cubic yards of wildland fuels annually.

BEFORE



AFTER





## GOOD NEIGHBOR AUTHORITY & THE FEDERAL FOREST RESTORATION PROGRAM

Throughout 2024, the FFR program continued to balance timber sale and service project objectives for federal partners of the Eastern Lane Unit. Field staff worked to administer ongoing contracts, prepare future sales for the USFS, and contribute to the growing NW BLM partnership. Last summer, Twins GNA timber sale closed out, marking the end to a significant project on the Middle Fork Ranger District. The purchaser worked diligently throughout the life of the sale to meet harvest and road deliverables, despite several fire closures. GM GNA timber sale also neared the end of its contract, extending into the current fiscal year to complete final road maintenance. This sale will close out by the end of 2025. Even while balancing a heavy workload, all FFR staff were able to go off district and contribute to the 2024 fire season!

Fall and winter brought the return of our NW BLM reforestation contract. Our foresters and technicians helped prepare and scout planting units, complete first and third-year stocking surveys, and perform planting inspections. Additionally, FFR staff contributed to USFS reforestation initiatives, working on stocking surveys and inspecting planters on the McKenzie River Ranger District. Our Stayton counterparts busied themselves preparing two categorical exclusion commercial harvests on the Detroit Ranger District (Kinney and Humbug GNA). Springfield field staff assisted in laying out and cruising these sales, which will go to auction this spring.

While the USFS has worked to reframe their timber targets within the context of fires and other parameters, our office has been hard at work engaging in timber focused work that will support future sales. Last fall, our staff completed stand exams on a FY26 USFS sale, providing silvicultural data. Several additional sets of stand exams for the Callo-way EA, as well as a layout for USFS sales will keep our field staff busy this year while foresters plan targets for FY26 and FY27. Potential future sales include Beargrass GNA (Middle Fork), SP GNA (Sweet Home), and several parcels from the Calloway and Tie EAs (McKenzie River). This summer, our contract administration shop will be busy overseeing operations on Bits GNA, EFR GNA, and Chuckee GNA. As our program continues to grow, we are excited for the part we are able to play in the management and restoration of Oregon's national forests!



Matthew Stueve, Connor Reardon,

Matthew Luciani, Ace Driver, Kolton Vickers

## GIUSTINA RESOURCES CO-OP

Through an agreement with Giustina Resources, we are able to hire seasonal firefighters to help with planting inspections, slash treatment, timber cruising, and a large workload of stocking surveys. This has been a great way to provide practical learning experiences to seasonal fire staff who have an interest in Forestry/Silviculture, as well as provide off-season work and help with seasonal retention.

# STAFFING UPDATES

South Cascade District continued through 2024 with Craig Pettinger as Acting District Forester, and Jerrin Robbins as Acting Unit Forester for the Sweet Home Unit.

Bob Millam retired in August, 2024 from his position as East Lane's mechanic and dozer operator after 27 years with ODF.

Steve Kendall retired in October, 2024 from his Stewardship Forester position in Sweet Home after 34 years with ODF.

Connor Devore's position as a Fire Planning Forester became permanent from a limited duration position in July, 2024.

Brian Dally transferred within ODF from the Eastern Lane Unit to the Lakeview Unit in October, 2024 as a Stewardship Forester.

Easton McVeigh-Walker left his position as a Forest Management Technician with the GNA program in October 2024 to pursue a career with the Eugene Police Department.



Bob Millam's retirement celebration.



Steve Kendall with his 30 year service award.

# SERVICE AWARDS

Nakia Stafford

Sweet Home Unit

AS 1

5 years



David Batten

Sweet Home Unit

Mechanic

5 years





# DISTRICT STAFF





## Eastern Lane Forest Protection Association (ELFPA) Board of Directors

Founded 1913, Incorporated 6/24/1938

President -Ted Reiss, Giustina Land & Timber Co.

Vice President - Chase Kinion, Campbell Global

Secretary -Mark Willhite, Sierra Pacific Industries

Treasurer -Dylan Johnson, Weyerhaeuser Co.

Kenny Rose, Giustina Resources

Susan Fricke, Eugene Water and Electric Board

Will Hansen, RDK Land & Timber, LLC



## Linn Forest Protective Association (LFPA) Board of Directors

Founded 1911, Incorporated 7/31/1936

President - Caleb Brown, Frank Timber Resources Inc.

Vice President - Jill Bell, Weyerhaeuser Co.

Secretary/Treasurer - Megan Thornton, Campbell Global

Milt Moran, CTC South Santiam Tree Farm

Scott Melcher, Shadow Lane Timberlands, LLC

Stacey Whaley, Linn County Parks Department

Christy Tye, Udell Family

Randy Hereford, Starker Forests Inc.

Marty Suing, Small Woodland Owner

Bruce Gibeau, Giustina Resources, Giustina Woodlands

McKenzie Bredemeyer, Sierra Pacific Industries





# SOUTH CASCADE DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART—2024

