

2024 West Oregon District Annual Report



District Forester Message

I'm excited to share the 2024 annual report for the West Oregon District. This report highlights the significant milestones, activities, and achievements of the year. Before diving into the details, I would like to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to the district staff for their dedicated efforts in compiling this information. A special thank you goes to Alli Kidd for her exceptional work in bringing the final report package together.

Fire Season 2024 was a year of record proportions. Mild spring weather gave way to very hot and dry conditions early in the season. This rapid switch in weather created a very dynamic and complex fire situation across the entire state with multiple large fires starting early in July. West Oregon District has a multitude of staff that help roster the Agency Incident Management Teams. From the initial deployment of an IMT in 2024, until mid-October, at least one IMT was assigned to an incident. Along with IMT members, dozens of other staff members answered the call and supported the historic statewide effort. While the statewide effort was daunting, locally we navigated a variety of challenges as well. This was the second year in a row with significant lightning activity. Overall, the district received three different rounds of lightning, resulting in multiple small fires. A huge shout-out goes to our landowners, cooperators and operators for contributing to the complete and coordinated system to minimize the overall impacts of these lightning events.

The State Forest program has continued its efforts in alignment with the district's current Implementation Plan. A key focus has been the management around threatened and endangered (T&E) species, which continues to present significant challenges for the district. Our State Forest's team is dedicated to ensuring that the long-term sustainability and ecological health of these areas are maintained while balancing the needs of all stakeholders. Despite the growing complexities each year, the team remains committed to providing the greatest permanent value across various ecological, social, and economic values.

With the PFA fully implemented, our Forest Resources staff continues to work on improving the implementation and delivery of the program. After the first full year, staff have assessed areas where we have opportunities to make improvements for the landowners and public that the PFA affects. Two of these areas include processes dealing with Road Condition Assessments (RCA) and Forest Roads Inventory Assessment (FRIA). This took a collaborative effort from our Stewardship Foresters and Unit Foresters to be successful. This collaboration was key to the success of the program locally.

I would like to take a moment to commend the district staff for their exceptional hard work and dedication throughout 2024. Their efforts to ensure the smooth completion of daily business have not gone unnoticed. I would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to their families for their unwavering support, especially during another challenging fire season. Your collective commitment is deeply appreciated.

Finally, the success of our district is deeply rooted in the strong partnerships we've built with the West Oregon Forest Protective Association, forest landowners, operators, and cooperators. I want to extend my sincere thanks to each of them for their unwavering dedication and support.

Matt Thomas – West Oregon District Forester

ADMINISTRATION

As the district business manager, I want to take this opportunity to thank the WOD administrative staff for the support they provide for their perspective units. I could not do it without them. The WOD team consists of:

- Kris Freeman – District Business Manager
- Debbi Weiler- Administrative Specialist in Philomath
- Stacy Gerding- Dispatch and Administrative Specialist in Philomath
- Alli Kidd – Administrative Specialist in Dallas
- Shirl Fredenburg – Administrative Specialist in Toledo

These hard-working folks offer exceptional customer service to our State Forests, Forest Resources, and Protection stakeholders. They assist with submitting NOAPs, working with contractors on Incident Resource Agreements (IRA's), accounts payables, smoke management, auditing payroll, and much more! Please take a minute to say “thanks” for all they do next time you walk by their office. Maybe even leave a piece of candy on their desk to say, “Thank you!”

Kris Freeman - West Oregon District Business Manager

PERSONNEL

In 2024, there were some fluctuations in our personnel as we bid adieu to Steven Irving, a Sale Prep Forester, as well as Trask Hodgson and Jake Ruhl, who were both Community Wildfire Foresters.



Dave Thompson (left) and Trask Hodgson (right)

Steven left to follow his explorative drive by furthering his career in wildland firefighting and spending several months hiking New Zealand.

Trask moved to Idaho and continued his career in forestry and community outreach with the Idaho Department of Lands.

Jake Ruhl moved to Alaska to be closer to family. There, he continued his forestry career with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.



Steven Irving - Out of State Assignment to New Mexico 2024

Isabelle Doan

In April, Isabelle Doan was welcomed to the district as a new Sale Prep Forester. Belle started her career with ODF in 2019 as a seasonal WFSS in North Cascade – Santiam Unit. She became a Disaster Consultant shortly after completing her education to assist with the 2020 Labor Day fire response and recovery. Once Beachie Creek cleanup was completed, Hurricane Ian led her to Florida to aid Sanibel Island’s recovery. Moving from Florida to Arizona, she resumed her forestry career preparing Northern Arizona’s timber for federal harvest. Returning home to Oregon, she rejoined North Cascade as a reforestation FMT in the winter of 2023. From North Cascade to West Oregon, Belle is excited to continue her involvement in Oregon’s State Forests.



Belle Doan

PERSONNEL CONT.

Jessica Breeding

Jessica fought fire for ODF during college, with one season on an engine out of Ukiah, OR, and three seasons on the statewide Severity Helitack crew. She graduated from Oregon State University in 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources/Wildfire Ecology and a minor in Forestry. After graduation, she worked in the private sector as a Silviculturist and Forest Engineering Specialist. She came back to ODF in 2024, starting in a Stewardship Forester developmental role before coming to the Dallas Unit as the Community Wildfire Forester. Jessica lives with her husband, Eddie, and two cats Manny and Millie at their home in South Salem. She enjoys powerlifting, painting, home-improvement projects, and outdoor recreation.



Jessica Breeding

DISTRICT STAFF



Toledo and Philomath Crewmembers
(from left to right)
Elise, Kendra, Eric, Cassandra, Thomas



District Crews and Protection Supervisors during RT-130



Jack Stout



Dallas Crew



Dallas Crewmembers
Jose (left) and Cole (right)



Aaron McEwen - Pile Burning on
Mahrvellous Unit



Dave Thompson - WOD
Chilli Cook-off Champ



White Elephant Gift Exchange During the District All Employee Meeting



FOREST RESOURCES

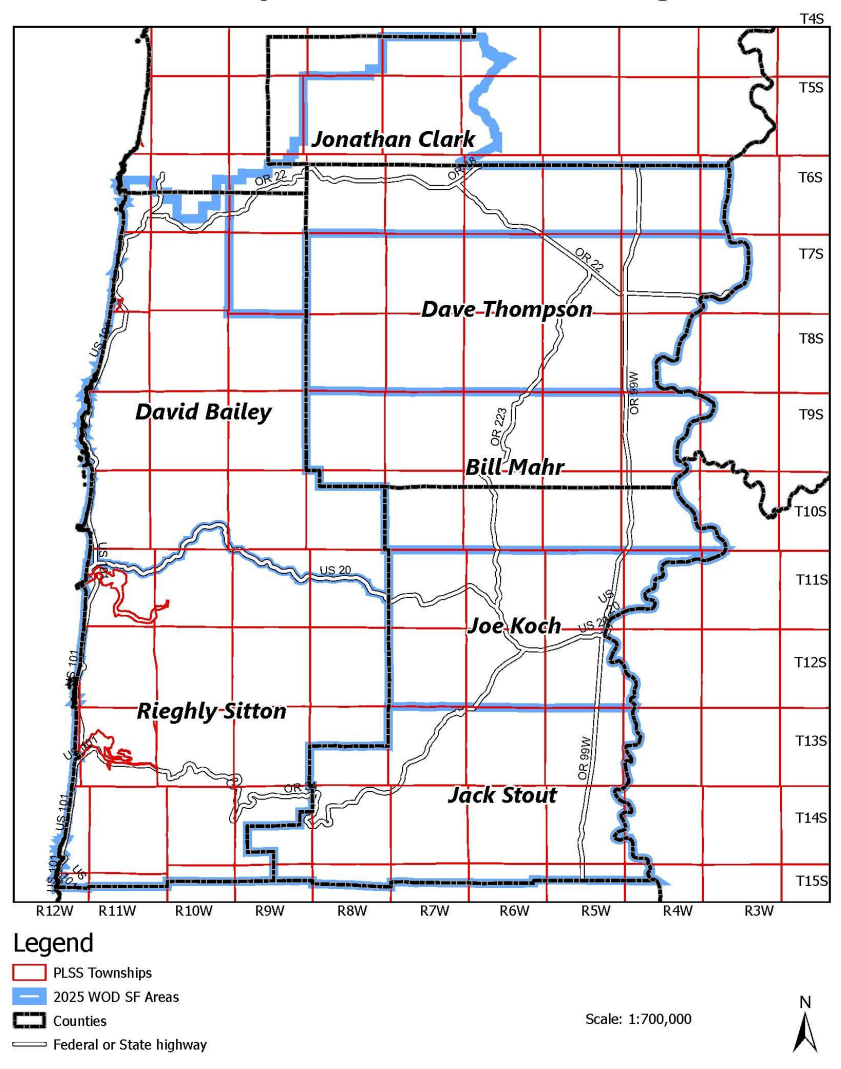
The West Oregon District has continued to serve the forest landowners of Benton, Polk, Lincoln, and southern Yamhill counties by protecting, managing, and promoting the stewardship of their forests. On January 1, 2024, all new rules adopted from the Private Forests Accord (PFA) were put into effect, including the new Small Forestland Owner (SFO) rules.

The PFA required ODF to establish the SFO Office in Salem. The mission of the SFO Office is to help landowners achieve their economic, ecological and stewardship goals through compassionate, responsible and transparent assistance. The PFA provided ODF with new resources in both personnel and programs to better serve small forestland owners. The SFO Office priorities are to connect small forestland owners with resources and support compliance with the Forest Practices Act through education, local field support and timely assistance.

Our local SFO Forester, Joe Koch, was tasked with serving SFOs across the entire district. This new role as well as the new rules was a challenge not only due to the number of new rules and programs, but also because of significant travel time to each corner of the district. After a careful assessment of how the district was implementing the SFO program, it was decided on December 1st to absorb the SFO forester position (held by Joe Koch) into a seventh Stewardship Forester. This required changes in forester service areas.

Please see our new forester service area map.

2025 Stewardship Forester Areas - West Oregon District





FOREST RESOURCES CONT.

2024 NOTIFICATIONS

535

PHILOMATH UNIT

460

DALLAS UNIT

397

TOLEDO UNIT

1392

TOTAL



Completed Oak Restoration Project

NRCS WORK COMPLETED

New Clients: 16

Inventories Completed: 45 covering **742 acres**

Job Sheets and Short FMPs: 135 impacting **1,491 acres**

Certifications Issued: 14 across **180 acres**

Technical Assists Provided: 14

Deliverables Submitted: 22

Total Acreage Impacted: **2,487.3 acres**

2024 FIRE SEASON REVIEW

Fire Season 2024 started with fire runs in March, April and May mostly due to escaped debris burns. During this time, we also helped our cooperators with the Rock Creek Fire in Yamhill.

Most of the seasonal crews started on Monday, June 17, 2024. We participated in the Mid-Willamette Valley Fire School in Sweet Home from June 24-28. In addition, we sent an engine to New Mexico and one overhead position to Alaska.

The West Oregon District declared both fire season and public use restrictions in effect on July 1, 2024. July was active in the West Oregon District for fire responses. On July 10th the Toledo Unit had a catalytic converter fire that started one mile of roadside on fire. During Initial attack several houses were threatened. A robust response from all Lincoln County Cooperators rendered an unlikely outcome of zero structures lost and containment at 2.5 acres. On July 16-17 the district had our first lightning event starting the Yew Creek Fire, East Tower Fire and Evergreen Ridge fire on the Philomath Unit. On July 21st Philomath had three more: Green Peak, Henderson Road and Wagon Wheel Fires and helped our federal neighbors with initial attack on Rock Creek 2 and Franklin Ridge. That same day, the Dallas Unit had five starts from lightning: Cedar Creek Tree, Gilliam Road, Silver Falls, Callahan Lightning, and Fishback. This lightning event tested firefighters and caused some long hours, but all fires were caught within reasonable timeframes saving time and money through aggressive initial attack. We sent resources out in July to Forest Grove, Medford, Burns, John Day, The Dalles, Ukiah, Pendleton, Oakridge, South Cascade and Wallowa for a total of 300 person-days of effort during what became a record setting fire season in Oregon.



Silver Falls Fire



Hidden Valley Fire



Dallas Engine on the Falls Fire

113

Days in Fire Season

55

Days in High Fire Danger

64.63

Acres Burned

43

STAT Fires

2024 FIRE SEASON REVIEW CONT.

August was a challenge, continuing the demanding pattern of the 2024 fire season. We sent resources out to help in Pendleton, Forest Grove, South Cascade, Prineville, Crescent, Roseburg, Ukiah and Salem accounting for a total of 287 person-days of effort in August. Meanwhile, back in the district we suppressed 43 Stat Fires, helped cooperators with mutual aid, and responded to NFCA calls.

September kept us even busier with support of the statewide effort during the record fire season with four engine assignments and 16 overhead assignments for a total of 301 person-days of effort. In the district we had six stat fires and four non-stat fires along with numerous NFCA calls. The Hidden Valley Fire on the Toledo Unit wrapped up the month's efforts and provided some training opportunities.

October brought a downturn in activity with three stat fires and four non-stat fires. We had one engine still on Battle Mountain Fire for rehab and sent Johnathon Clark to North Carolina to help with Tropical Storm Helene.

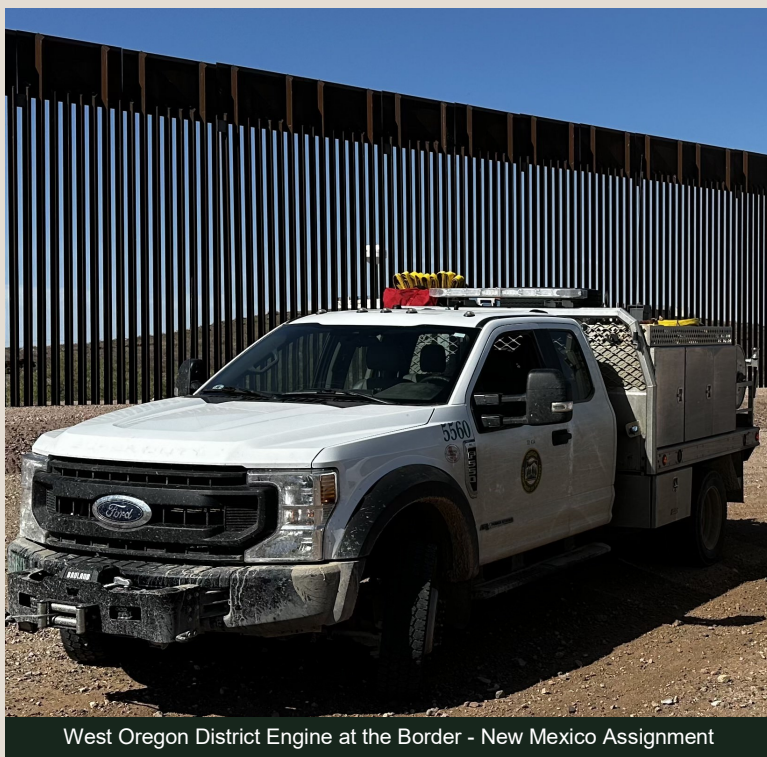
We finally got enough rain to terminate fire season at noon on October 21, 2024. For a total of 113 days in Fire Season. Just a short time later we were on to a robust Slash burning effort throughout the district to reduce the fuel load for next year.



Andrew Bird - Battle Mountain Complex



Jon Clark - North Carolina Out-of-State Assignment



West Oregon District Engine at the Border - New Mexico Assignment



Jon Clark - New Mexico Out-of-State Assignment

2024 CREWS



PHILOMATH UNIT



TOLEDO UNIT



DALLAS UNIT



DISPATCH

Our dispatcher, Stacy Gerding, had a busy summer with a total of 138 fires dispatched throughout the district. Of those fires, 43 were classified as Stat 1 and 14 were caused by lightning but that didn't keep Stacy from getting our resources to and from fire situations throughout the 113 days of the fire season. She was also able to assist the Eastern Lane Unit as an EDRC for the Lane 1 Fire.

Pre-season planning with landowners, operators, neighboring ODF districts, fire departments and dispatch centers is what makes Stacy successful when the heat of the season is upon us. Building those relationships has made for a quick response and kept the burned acres at a minimum.

Off-season training opportunities have allowed Stacy to strengthen her dispatching skills with aviation and forest law. West Oregon District implemented the use of the FireWeb program this last year for dispatching and fire reporting. The program has proven to be an efficient way to chronicle dispatched fires and store related documents. The district will continue the use of FireWeb and utilize its many features to provide a seamless dispatching and fire resource tracking system.



STATE FORESTS



SPECIAL FOREST PRODUCTS

65 Forest Product Permits Sold

💰 Revenue Generated: \$5,300

🌿 72,000 lbs of Salal

🔥 60 cords of Firewood

🍄 2,750 lbs of Fungi

TIMBER SALES & THEIR PREPARATION

In 2024, six timber sales were sold; Lone Steere Thin, Thin Bear, Salmon Forks Combo, Wolf of Haul Street, All Terrain and Bark Beetle Bailey, selling an approximate 10 million board feet of Douglas-fir and Red Alder. These sales will bring in an estimated net revenue of \$4.6 million.

Timber Sales Sold				Timber Sales Harvested		
Timber Sales	Number Sold	Sold Volume	Estimated Net Revenue	Timber Sales	Volume (MMBF)	Net Revenue
Clearcut	3	6.9	\$ 2,728,052.31	8	10.7	\$ 5,318,389.79
Thinning	2	1.1	\$ 670,339.21	6	1.8	\$ 798,317.60
Combo (CC/Thin)	1	2	\$ 209,127.52	3	2.6	\$ 946,877.91
Totals	6	10	\$ 3,607,519.04	17	15.1	\$ 7,062,585.30

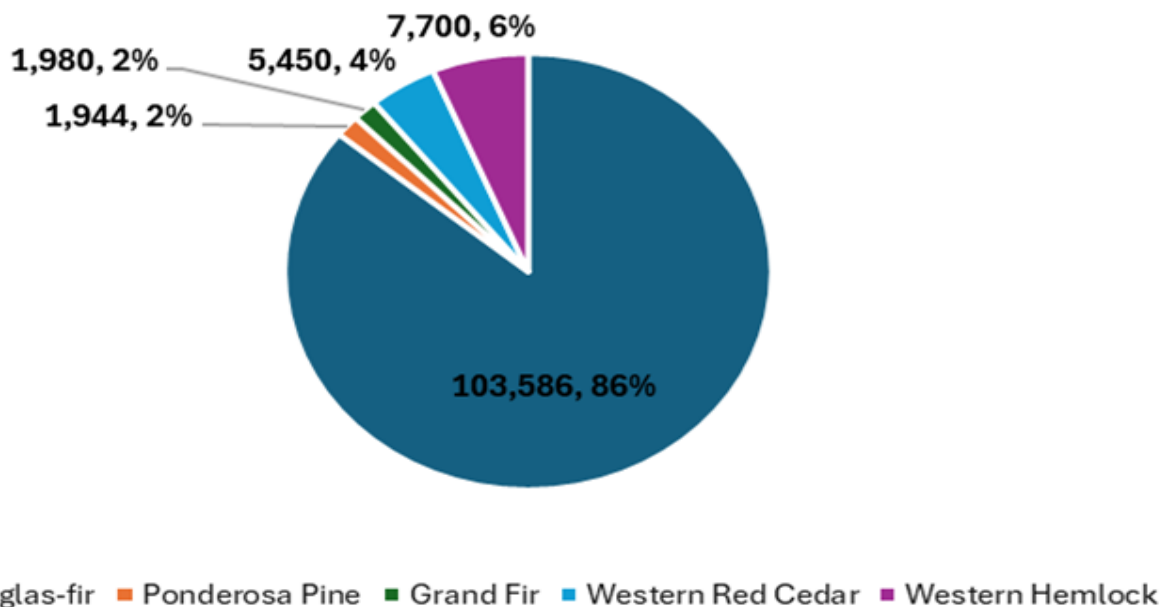
STATE FORESTS CONT.

REFORESTATION AND YOUNG STAND MANAGEMENT

In 2024, State Forests had 298 acres of initial planting and 10 acres of interplanting, totaling 121,728 trees planted. Aaron was also busy with preparation needed for planting, this included hacking 130 acres and spring releasing 169 acres, and an overall spray site prep of 276 acres. A total of 1,700 tons of material were burned across all three counties (Lincoln, Benton, Polk) from slash treatment on state timber sales.



Seedlings Planted 2024

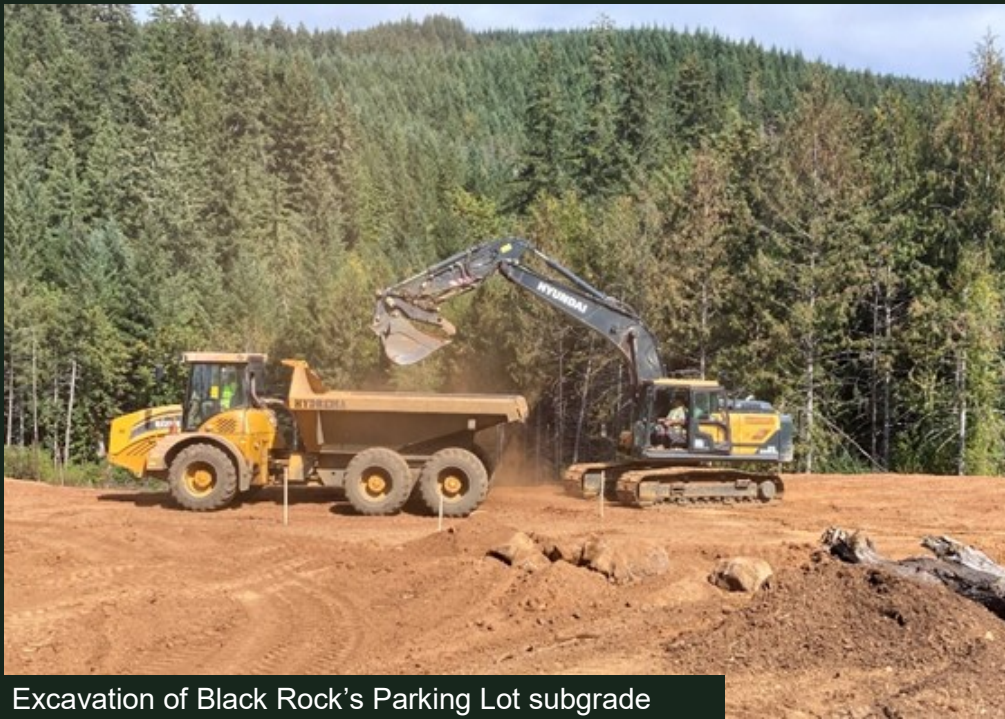


Beaver Believer Thin Timber Sale – Unthinned vs. Thinned



STATE FORESTS CONT.

RECREATION



Excavation of Black Rock's Parking Lot subgrade

Improvements to our future Black Rock Mountain Biking Area Trailhead were made this year, with the establishment of a subgrade for the parking area. While it will be a few more years before this project is fully finished, we were able to leverage an agreement with a contractor who was working on another project in the area to get this subgrade built at no cost to ODF.

WILDLIFE ON STATE LANDS



PILE BURNING



COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROGRAM

As of 2024, the District manages four fuels reduction grant programs across Polk, Lincoln, Benton, and Yamhill Counties. These programs enable ODF to provide financial relief to landowners seeking to create defensible space around their homes and reduce fuels within their properties. Grant dollars further allow us to educate communities on wildfire and home preparedness and provide us with the resources to aid Firewise Communities across West Oregon.

The Community Wildfire Program underwent a complete staff turnover in 2024. In July, Jacob Ruhl left ODF to continue his career in Alaska. Many months prior, Trask Hodgson had departed the agency to begin a new opportunity in Idaho. Jessica Breeding was hired as the Community Wildfire Forester in the Dallas Unit in July 2024. In January 2025, the Philomath Unit hired their new Community Wildfire Forester, Brentley Hartman.

CURRENT GRANT WORK

Small Forestland Grant (SFG)

The SFG grant has been the foremost focus of our efforts. This grant is intended for Firewise communities, and so far, we have initiated project work in five of our district's Firewise locations. A total of 21 projects are underway. Navigating the unique direct-to-contractor nature of this grant has not been without its challenges, from multiple iterations of contract writing to juggling weather and timeline constraints. Yet, we remain excited to get the work done and close-out the grant in June with grant dollars well spent.

Panther Creek/Eckman

Beginning 08/25/2021, this grant received a two-year extension and will close out in August 24 of 2025. A total of 34 projects impacting 92 acres are expected to be completed.

Kings Valley

The Kings Valley grant began in July 2023 and will end on 01/31/2027. The goal of this grant is to complete 105 acres for 50-80 residents within the Kings Valley area. Currently, 7.5 acres of fuels treatment on 5 separate residences have been completed, with an additional 11 acres of project work active.

Liberty

The Liberty project began in December 2022 with the goal of completing 150 acres of fuels reduction treatment on 100 primary residences northwest of Dallas. At present, 10 acres have been completed, and 16 acres are in progress across ten homes.

SMALL FORESTLAND GRANT (SFG)

South Benton Firewise Project, December 2025
7 Acres Total protecting 6 Homes

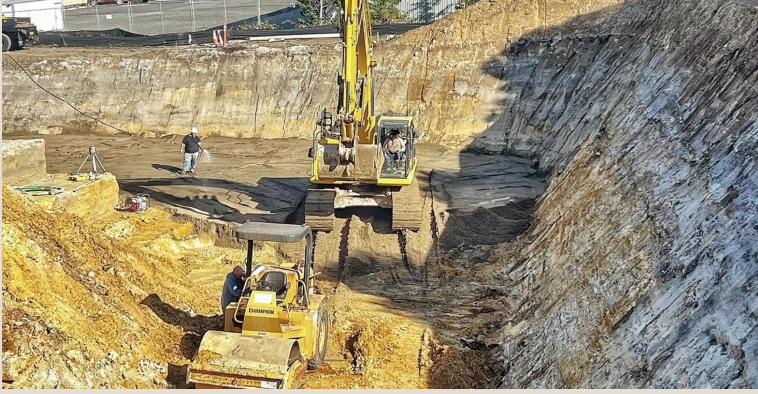
BEFORE



AFTER



NEWPORT UNIT OFFICE CONSTRUCTION



In August of 2024, the Toledo Unit and the ODF Facilities team broke ground on the new Newport Unit Office just north of town. This has been a project in the making for almost a decade. The new facility will house the Unit fire staff, Forest Resources staff, and administrative functions. This facility will also be shared in partnership with the City of Newport and Newport Fire Department. The Fire Department will have room for two apparatus, an office, and living quarters. We are excited to partner with NFD and look forward to continuing to build on the strong relationship that we have with the department. Currently, the project is scheduled for a fall 2025 completion date. Once the building is finished, we will begin the process of moving. The disposal of the current Toledo facility will work through our State process for disposition of property.

A huge thank you goes out to Joe Pfau (Construction Project Manager) and Dustin Capri (Architect) for their continued dedication to this project. Their efforts have been essential in ensuring the project continues to move in the right direction for the agency.

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West Oregon District July 2024

