



## Oregon Department of Forestry Northwest Oregon Area

# 2022 West Oregon District

### Message from the District Forester

I am pleased to bring you the 2022 annual report for the West Oregon District. Before I get started with the summary of the year's activities, I want to say thank you to the district staff who helped compile this report as well as Debbi Weiler for putting the final package together.

Changes to staffing continue to be the new normal even in 2022. The district saw the retirements of two longstanding employees, Gail Culbertson and Evelyn Hukari with a combined 62 years of service to the state of Oregon. These two will be greatly missed by not only the agency but our partners and cooperators as well. They both dedicated their careers to public service and were instrumental to the district and ODF for many years. For the rest of the changes in personnel, the full list is in the administration section. For all the staff that have been promoted and/or transferred into another position within the agency, I would like to thank you for your time spent in the district. At the same time, I am looking forward to working with all the new staff we have gained and to continuing the great work people have done before them.

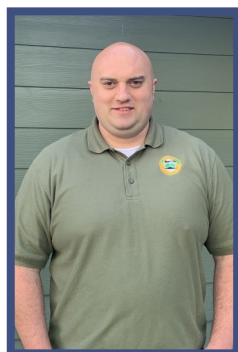
State offices were finally able to officially open in May from the COVID pandemic. It was a welcome sight to get back into the swing of normal operations at our facilities again. I want to commend all the staff for their flexibility in maintaining high quality customer service as we navigated the re-opening.

The 2022 fire season had a slow start as we did not officially go into fire season until after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Higher than average moisture in May and June dampened the fire season severity for us for most of the summer. Wetting rains in the fall were late to arrive and we did not go out of fire season until October 29<sup>th</sup>. Acres burned were well below our 10-year average with 47 acres. Unfortunately, statewide was a different story and as always, we provided numerous staff with over 700 days spent off-district to contribute to the complete and coordinated effort.

The state forest program continued with its work as outlined in the district's current Implementation Plan. Management for and around some of the T&E species continued to be a challenge for the district. The forest resources program saw activity remain steady for much of the year. Work commenced in 2022 to put the new Private Forest Accord agreement into rule. More information on this will follow in 2023 as the rules get finalized and begin to be implemented.

I would like to commend the staff for all the hard work they have put in during 2022 to ensure daily business was completed. I also want to say thank you to their families for the support they give, especially through another challenging fire season statewide.

Finally, the district would not be successful without the strong partnerships we have with the West Oregon Forest Protective Association, forest landowners, operators, and our many other partners and cooperators. I would like to thank each of them for their continued dedication and professionalism.



Thank you all - *Michael Curran*

#### Inside the Annual Report

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#### Special Points of Interest

- Forest Resources Division and State Forests accomplishments
- Fire Season Review
- Service awards / Retirement
- Lots of photos



# State Forests



*Evelyn passing the "Torch" to Cody*

## Personnel

2022 was an eventful year regarding personnel changes for State Forests. Long time District employee and Unit Forester Evelyn Hukari retired after 32 years with ODF. Cody Valencia promoted into the Unit Forester in the fall and is excited for all the new challenges. Aaron McEwen received his 10-year service award and Zane Sandborg completed a 6-month developmental stewardship forester assignment in Dallas where he learned more about the FPA and fostered relationships with local landowners and operators. We also accepted two new additions to our team. So please join me as we welcome Jacob Bergstrom and Olivia Jones to the ODF family!



Jacob Bergstrom was selected as our new NRS1 Sale Prep Forester on November 21<sup>st</sup>. Jacob started with ODF in 2021 as a seasonal Wildland Fire Suppression Specialist for the Philomath Unit. He has now earned his Bachelor's degree in Forest Management and a GIS certificate from Oregon State University. While attending college Jacob served as a resident volunteer for the Philomath Fire department, while also working for Aklin Vegetation Management as a Forestry Technician.

Olivia Jones joined us as a seasonal Forestry Tech at the tail end of the year on Dec 12th. She comes to us all the way from Grand Junction, Colorado where she earned her bachelor's in environmental science at Colorado Mesa University. Before being hired with us she worked as a seasonal hydrology technician for Weyerhaeuser. During her free time, she enjoys hiking with her dog and exploring this beautiful state that we call home.



## Wildfire Season



*Cody Valencia watching a helicopter perform bucket drops near a structure in Texas.*

State Forests Staff assisted protection with several off-district and out-of-state assignments. With a total of 39 working days clocked in for 2022, Evelyn Hukari, Cody Valencia, Aaron McEwen and Zane Sandborg rose to the challenge.



*Mike Loewen and Cody Valencia on their way to Texas to assist in the 2022 Wildfire season.*

## Timber Sales

2022 Timber Sales Sold				Timber Sales Harvested		
Timber Sales	Number Sold	Sold Volume (MMBF)	Estimated Net Revenue	Timber Sales	Volume (MMBF)*	Net Revenue during 2022
Clearcut	2	5.6	\$ 3,411,772	Clearcut	7.4	\$ 4,228,989
Thinning	2	4.4	\$ 1,675,300	Thinning	1.7	\$ 435,263
Combo (CC/Thin)	2	5.8	\$ 3,789,654	Combo (CC/Thin)	3.4	\$ 1,141,340
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>\$ 8,876,726</b>	Post Storm Cleanup	0.2	\$ 89,420
				<b>Totals</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>\$ 5,895,012</b>

\*Portions of these sales were harvested during 2021 or were continued into

## Reforestation and Resource Enhancement

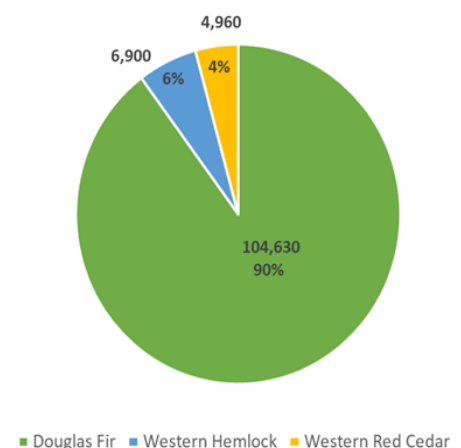
**Silviculture:** For the 7<sup>th</sup> year in a row, the district worked with the Western Lane District to implement a joint tree planting contract. On the West Oregon District, 277 acres (111,410 seedlings) were initial-planted under this contract, and 39 acres (5,330 seedlings) were inter-planted by a contract crew, with a total of approximately 116,740 total seedlings planted. Site preparation through pile burning was successful across approximately 100 acres in the Fall into Winter. Precommercial thinning was also accomplished on 183 acres using a contract crew.

**Santiam Crews:** The Santiam crews cleared storm damage debris from 10 miles worth of roadways and installed tubes on 3,400 WRC seedlings. Brian Beck and Mario Lara's crews have been instrumental through the years in completing critical work for the district. The sudden loss of Mario is still felt by his coworkers and friends on the West Oregon District.



*Evelyn and Ted's last bag of trees they unloaded before retirement.*

Number of Seedlings Planted in 2022





# State Forests

## Wolf Creek Stream Enhancement



*One of Eleven Sites Where Log Placement Occurred.*

As an additional note, 2022 was also significant due to the progress made on the Wolf Stream Enhancement project. Both Cody Valencia and Zane Sandborg were instrumental in establishing aquatic fish habitat on Wolf Creek by introducing logs as downed woody debris.

On this site, coho, steelhead, and cutthroat trout are native to the stream. But the creek banks are dominated by alder trees, which deteriorate faster than conifers like Douglas-fir and Western redcedar and aren't as suitable for creating lasting conditions fish need to thrive. The successful project involved careful placement of conifer logs, which can last 70-80 years in the aquatic environment.



*Cody and Zane inspecting log placement.*

Woody debris in streams creates opportunities for fish to eat, hide from predators and escape high water flows. When nature can't produce enough debris into a stream, stream restoration projects like this one can bridge the gap. So please join me in thanking our staff as well as our partners at ODFW for contributing to this important ecological project which will enhance aquatic habitat for generations to come.

## Recreation

The Black Rock Mountain Bike Association (BRMBA) and the Mt. Baber ATV Club continue to hold organized events this year, with BRMBA contributing substantial additions to their trails. Below is an example of such an addition, where BRMBA volunteers are installing an extensive bike ramp made from locally sourced timber.



*Replacement Feature on the Sickter Gnar Trail*



## Special Forest Products

Personal use firewood permit sales were average compared to the previous two years while other special forest products such as Salal and mushrooms also stayed consistent. Personal firewood permit sales proved to be our most common permit type issued while salal harvesting permits generated the greatest amount of revenue. Commercial Firewood permit sales were exceptionally rare this year, with our only one being issued for 6 cords to a local firewood business. All of this together indicates that we can continue to expect a consistent and steady demand for the special forest products that our state lands provide for the public.



*Crystal Clear Timber Sale*

2022 Miscellaneous Forest Products Permits—Commercial		
Product	Number permits	Income
Salal	40	\$7,800
Chanterelle Mushrooms	6	\$2,100
Commercial Firewood	1	\$120
Personal Firewood	57	\$1,140
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>\$11,160</b>



*Harlan Hangover Timber Sale*

# Forest Resources Division

The West Oregon District has continued to serve the forest landowners of Benton, Polk, Lincoln and Southern Yamhill Counties by protecting, managing, and promoting stewardship of their forests. Our stewardship foresters are Bill Mahr in Philomath covering Benton County. Joe Koch and David Bailey in Toledo covering Lincoln County. And finally, Dave Thompson in Dallas covering Polk County.

The 2022 fire season was slower than the past few years within the district. There were two operator fires. One occurred just two days prior to the start of the season declaration in the Luckiamute River drainage west of Kings Valley Highway. Though some log decks were destroyed, the fire was contained at 1 acre in size. The other occurred shortly before fire season ended, in the Boulder Springs area during the operations fire watch. The operator constructed the fire lines and it was contained that evening.

This summer we saw the return of our in-person operator meetings that we traditionally hold prior to the start of fire season to inform folks about the industrial fire protection rules as well as any rule changes or updates. The meetings in our Dallas and Philomath offices were well attended and it was great to get everyone back together for a BBQ and discussion. As fire season 2022 ended, we had performed 111 total fire inspections, issued 2 official warnings for deficiencies, and did not issue any citations. Overall, we had good compliance from operators this year.

## Toledo Unit

Though the employees had to say farewell to Leo, we hired David Bailey as the new Stewardship Forester in Toledo. David was already working on the District in the Philomath office for our State Forests Program. The Toledo office received 535 Notifications of Operations while 284 of those included a written plan.



This art installment is located at the Otis Fire Station and is made up of items that were lost/donated by landowners who lost everything in the Echo Mountain Fire.

The Echo Mountain Fire scar that remained after the 2020 Labor Day Fire event has begun to heal as the salvage operations have been completed for most landowners. These units have been successfully replanted and the Salmon River Highway is back on track to serving as one of Oregon's beautiful Scenic Highways. Joe Koch has assisted landowners in the fire area with guidance in signing up for the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP).



## Philomath Unit

There were some exciting changes this year in the West Oregon District. Leo Williamson became the Unit Forester in Philomath overseeing the stewardship foresters as well as overseeing the fire program. In the 2022 calendar Philomath received 476 Notifications of Operations while 128 of those included a written plan.

Bill Mahr has continued to support our district as a fire investigator. He has also continued to support landowners through the Farm Service Agency's CREP program which provides landowners funding for native landscape prescription strategies to establish and enhance environmentally sensitive land.



Slide – Originated on Starker ground, first reported March 6 has impacted the Harris Creek drainage and is currently estimated to be approximately 3 acres in size.

## Dallas Unit

Our Dallas Unit office also saw some changes over the year with Jennifer Erdman promoting to the NWOA FFR Field Coordinator in the Salem Office. While the search is on to fill the stewardship forester vacancy, Zane Sandborg and Andrew Bird have been covering Polk County with help from Dave Thompson. The Dallas office received 549 Notifications of Operations while 232 of those included a written plan.

Culvert – Manulife replacing an old, failing 6' culvert with an 18' x 120' round culvert. The new culvert is being placed immediately downstream of the existing culvert, allowing traffic to use the road while the new culvert is installed. Old existing culvert can be seen in the old fill. 7,600, ¾" bolts were used to construct the culvert in place.





# Community Wildfire Program

Currently, the district manages four fuels reduction grants. These programs allow us to provide communities within our district much needed fuels reduction and education on defensible wildfire practices. Financial assistance is also provided to areas throughout Lincoln, Benton, Polk, and Yamhill counties for these defensible space & fuels reduction treatments.

Trask has done a wonderful job keeping this program up and running for the district for the last year and a half. He has submitted multiple grant applications to secure more funding for the community members we serve. At the beginning of the year, Jacob Ruhl was hired to fill the vacant Community Wildfire Forester position out of the Philomath office. He has been hard at work assisting Benton Counties Firewise communities, setting up projects in current grant areas, and writing his first grant.

## Monroe /Fishback NRCS Project

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Fuels reduction project from the Monroe/Fishback grant area. The landowner did two acres of mastication to eventually plant understory conifers, along with native shrubs and flowers.

### Current WSFM & CA projects being administered:

**Wren/Grand Ronde:** This project began in October of 2018 with the goal of completing 165 acres of fuels reduction and defensible space treatments. Close to 82% of the acreage has been completed, with an additional 74 acres to be completed in the early part of 2023. This grant is on track to be expended and closed out by the end of March 2023.





**Monroe/Fishback:** This project began in October of 2019 with the goal of completing 165 acres of fuels reduction/defensible space. As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, 96 acres were accomplished through 48 projects. So far in 2023, another 46 acres will be accomplished through 20 projects.

**Panther Creek/Eckman:** This project began August 2021 with the goal of completing 150 acres of fuels reduction treatment on private forestlands. As of Dec 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, 3 projects totaling 5 acres of fuels reduction are underway. 300+ mailers have been sent to landowners.

**Liberty:** This project began December 2022 with the goal of completing 150 acres of fuels reduction treatment on private forestland. Mailers will begin spring 2023.

**Senate Bill 762 Small Forestland Projects: March 2022 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Duesterhoeft Wildfire Mitigation:** has completed 25+ acres of heavy fuels reduction through 50/50 mix of contracted mastication & landowner mowing, removal/lop and scatter of dead and down, limbing and thinning and the collection of 20 cord firewood. No spraying or burning used on this project.

**PJ Fisher Forest Wildfire Prevention:** has completed 50+ acres of light to moderate fuels reduction through primarily landowner labor. Mowing, Limbing of tree's, removal of storm damage, spot spraying/pulling of invasive species, chipping, burning, and firewood utilization. A few acres of property line mastication by a contractor has also been completed.

2022 Projects by the Numbers				
Grant	Fuels Reduction Acres	Defensible Space Acres	Total Acres	Landowner Investment Hours
E-Board	75+	0	75+	0
Wren / Grand Ronde	29.5	10	39.5	272
Monroe / Fishback	9	51.5	60.5	888.5
Panther Creek/Eckman	0	0	0	0
Liberty	0	0	0	0
District Totals	113.5+	61.5	175	1160.5





# Protection

The 2022 Fire Season in West Oregon was refreshingly mild compared to the 2020 Fire Season. The number of human caused starts were down nearly 20% from the previous 10 year average and 97% of the 128 incidents within the district were held to under one acre in size. This success was attributed to the wetter than normal spring and aggressive initial attack from ODF resources, our Local Fire Districts, and Land owners providing additional resources.

The seasonal fire crews came on June 13<sup>th</sup> this season. Fire School was held at DPSST in Salem and was a collaboration between all the Northwest Oregon Area Districts. This was the first unified Fire School since 2019 due to COVID. Just before the declaration of fire season, the Luckiamute Fire was reported on the evening of July 4<sup>th</sup>. Engines from Philomath, Dallas, and Toledo responded as well as VFD Engines from Pedee and Polk 1 Stations. South Fork Crews were utilized on July 5<sup>th</sup> for mop-up operations. The fire was caused by a forestry operation and required 4 shifts to contain and fully extinguish.

Due to the unusually cool temperatures, West Oregon went into Fire Season and Regulated Use Closures later than usual on July 11<sup>th</sup>. At the end of July, fire activity increased with the rise in temperatures. Small, human caused fires were keeping the crews engaged while minimizing acres burned.

August started the first string of lightning storms to impact the West Oregon district. Multiple strikes were detected but only a few small fires resulted from the lightning event. On August 17<sup>th</sup> the Philomath Unit responded to the Norton East Fire. The fire was caused by a grinder cutting a steel cable that had been caught up in farm equipment. The wind and dry, light fuels was a contributing factor to the fire spreading to 18 acres. Crews utilized a riparian area and pump and roll tactics to contain the fire.

The start of September saw the driest and hottest conditions of the season with Red Flag Warnings being issued for the entire NWOA. Two Fire Boss Planes, (Single Engine Airtankers), and a Type 2 Helicopter were staged in Salem to assist firefighting efforts. Crews, Tenders, and Heavy Equipment were staged in-district for the Red Flag event. The most significant fire start from this event was outside of the district with the Vitae Springs Fire south of Salem. ODF provided a Task Force Leader to assist Salem Fire managing resources on the incident.

October started off very dry with no significant rain during the tail end of September. On the evening of October 18<sup>th</sup> a fire was called in by an operator during their fire watch. The Summer Camp Fire was caused by a feller buncher in downed timber and started to spread just over an hour after logging operations ceased for the day. The operator used his equipment to construct fire line and engines from Dallas, Philomath, Toledo and Falls City FD helped to contain the fire that night. The fire was turned over to the Landowner and Private Crews were utilized for mop-up. Significant wetting rains were recorded on October 21-22<sup>nd</sup> and marked the end of West Oregon's Fire season on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Slash Burning commenced at the end of October and into November. A brief east wind event broadcasted pile burns on the Toledo and Dallas Units. This increased the total acres burned for the 2022 Fire Year substantially but caused minimal resource loss on the West Oregon District.



## Dallas Cruisers Fire Crew 2022



## Philomath Aerobats Fire Crew 2022

## Toledo Machos Fire Crew 2022



# Off District

West Oregon District continued their active role in the complete and coordinated system by assisting other districts around the state. In the spring, we had the opportunity to dispatch engines and overhead to Texas and Arizona. Once fire season activity picked up back in Oregon we supported numerous lightning move-ups across EOA and SOA while supporting the Rum Creek, Van Meter, and Nakia Creek fires. The district continued to assist the statewide helitack program in sending personnel to cover rotations as we have for the past 5 years. This continues to be a valuable training program and allows us to bolster our own aviation qualified personnel.



# Smoke

## 2022 Slash Burning & Smoke Management

District Smoke Stats	Registered Acres	Registered Tons	Accomplished Acres	Accomplished Tons
Philomath	3,855	39,684	3,066	38,898
Dallas	4,690	49,284	4,261	37,934
Toledo	4,666	37,051	2,983	22,047
<b>District</b>	<b>13,211</b>	<b>126,019</b>	<b>10,310</b>	<b>98,879</b>



## Fire Season 2022

	WO-1	WO-2	WO-3
IFPL I	106	84	45
IFPL II	4	26	61
IFPL III	0	0	4
IFPL IV	0	0	0
Length: 110 days			

**IFPL/ Fire Season**



# Administration

A huge shout-out goes to Shirl Fredenburg, Alli Kidd, Debbi Weiler, Stacy Gerding, and Jamee Millard for continuing to do an outstanding job of supporting the staff across the West Oregon District. Their continued dedication to assisting all the programs the district administers and ensuring our customers' needs are met is on full display each day. This is amid ever evolving administrative programs and policies. Their ability to adapt to all the changes recently while still providing top notch support has been invaluable.

## Personnel Departures

### **Philomath**

State Forests Unit Forester: Evelyn Hukari (retired)

State Forests Sale Prep Forester: David Bailey (promoted to Stewardship Forester in Toledo)

Forest Officer: Elliot Lowry (Moved to Tennessee)

### **Dallas**

Wildland Fire Supervisor: Jason Rayburn (promoted to Rangeland Specialist in EOA)

Office Coordinator: Gail Culbertson (retired)

Stewardship Forester: Jennifer Erdmann (promoted to NWOA FFR Coordinator in Salem)

### **Toledo**

Stewardship Forester: Leo Williamson (promoted to Protection Unit Forester in Philomath)

## Personnel Additions

### **Philomath**

Protection Unit Forester: Leo Williamson

State Forests Unit Forester: Cody Valencia

State Forests Sale Prep Forester: Jacob Bergstrom

Dispatcher: Stacy Gerding

Community Wildfire Forester: Jake Ruhl

### **Dallas**

Wildland Fire Supervisor: Andrew Bird

Office Coordinator: Alli Kidd

Stewardship Forester: Jonathan Clark

### **Toledo**

Stewardship Forester: David Bailey

# Service Awards

## Recognized Service Awards in 2022

Leo Hardy-Williamson – 10 year

Elliott Lowry – 5 year

Aaron McEwen – 10 year

Charlie Redheffer – 35 year

# Retirements

Over 2020 and 2021, the district experienced retirements of long-time staff members Mike Totey and Ted Erdmann. The trend continued in 2022 with two more staff deciding it is time after long careers. Gail Culbertson retired as the Office Coordinator in Dallas in June after 29 years of service to the state. She did a wonderful job in supporting the staff in Dallas throughout her career and is already missed by the local landowners and operators as her strawberry shortcake was a common staple at the annual operators meeting. Gail was an active participant on the fire front as she assisted on numerous project fires in a variety of capacities including a stint on ODF IMT3 as their Food Unit Leader. Evelyn Hukari retired as the State Forests Unit Forester in October after 32 years with ODF. Evelyn was invaluable in the management of state forests in West Oregon and providing GPV. She did an outstanding job in passing along her varied skillset to the staff still in the district which shows today. Throughout her career she was an active member of ODFs IMTs as well. She was the Logistics Section Chief for ODF IMT1 up into her last day with the agency.





# This is the Life 2022



This is what I call  
having a personal  
trainer!





# West Oregon

## Forest Protective Association

### Board of Directors

Dale Claassen, Hampton Lumber, President  
Luke Bergey, Miami Corporation, Vice President  
Jeff DeRoss, Hancock Forest Mgmt., Treasurer  
Kristi Freeman, Secretary  
Lee Miller, Miller Land and Timber  
Nic Dahl, Nicholas & Megan Dahl LLC  
Randy Hereford, Starker Forests, Inc.  
Ed Easterling, Crestmont Farm  
Mari Kramer, Confederated Tribes of Siletz

### District Forester

Michael Curran

### Unit Forester

Leo Williamson, Philomath  
Matt Thomas, Toledo  
Jeff Classen, Dallas

### Advisory Directors

Andy White, ODF  
Kyle Williams, OFIC  
Kristin Babbs, KOG  
Nancy Taylor, ODFW  
Dan Eddy, USFS/BLM

Shroeder and O'Neil

### WOFPA Members

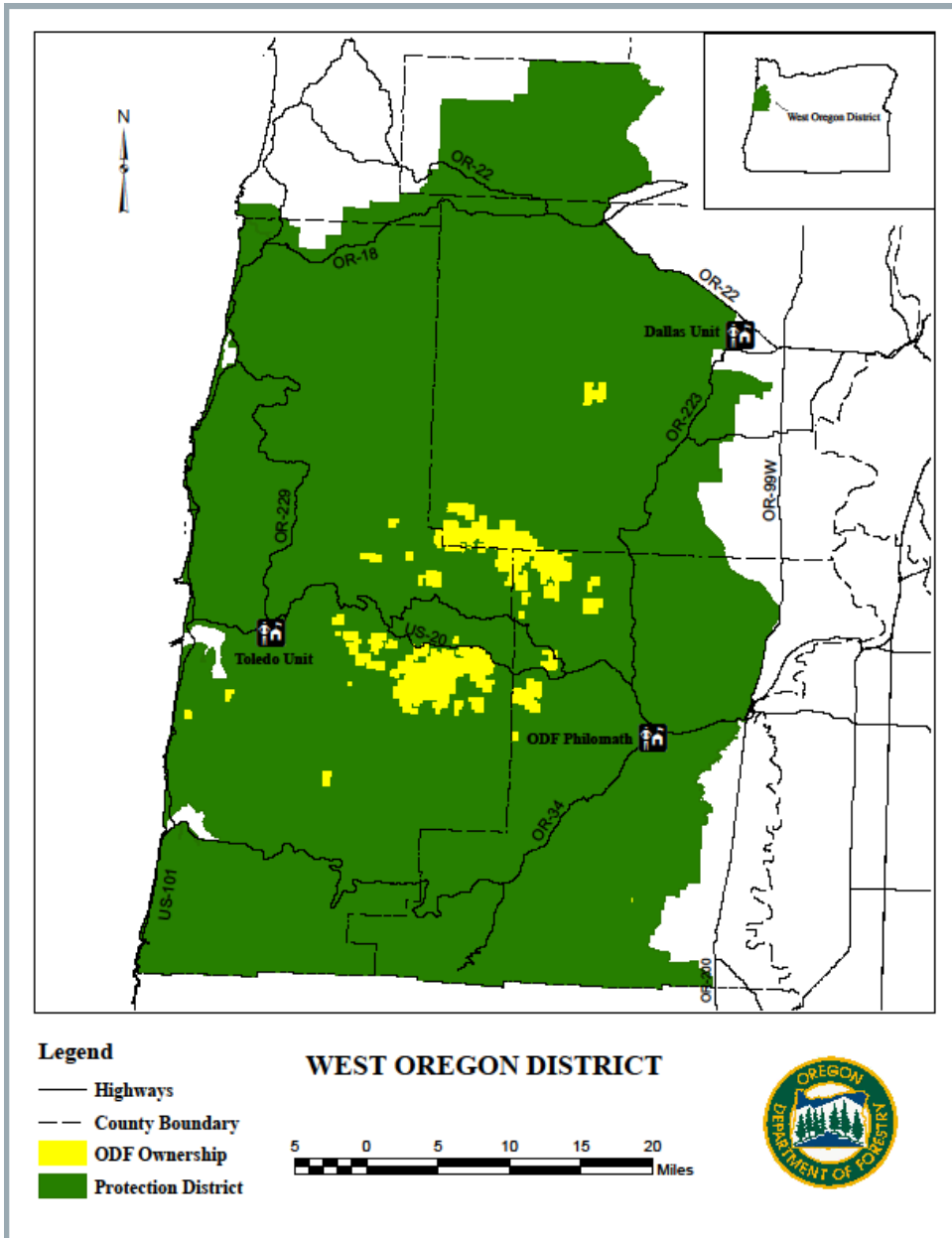
Barclay Family Trust  
Bureau of Land Mgmt.  
Campbell Global  
Carr Forest Resources  
Cafferata Family Forest, LLC  
Confed. Tribes of Grand Ronde  
Confed. Tribes of Siletz  
Crestmont Farm  
Freres Lumber Co. Inc.  
Giustina Land & Timber  
Giustina Resources

Hampton Lumber  
Hukari Family Forests, LLC  
Hull-Oakes Lumber Co.  
Manulife Forest Mgmt.  
Miami Corp. Mgmt., LLC  
Miller Land and Timber  
Nicholas & Megan Dahl LLC  
Jeralyn N O'Brien Living Trust  
OR State Univ. Research Forests  
Rose Esbenshade

Sierra Pacific Industries  
Smith Hill Properties, Inc  
Springer Tree Farm  
Starker Forests, Inc.  
Stimson Lumber Company  
Lance Stein  
Thompson Tree Farm  
Wakefield Farms, LLC  
Weyerhaeuser Timber Holdings, Inc



# West Oregon District Map



## West Oregon District

### Philomath Unit

24533 Alsea Hwy  
Philomath, OR 97370  
P:(541) 929-3266 F:(541) 929-5549

### Toledo Unit

763 NW Forestry Road  
Toledo, OR 97391  
P:(541) 336-2273 F:(541) 336-5261

### Dallas Unit

825 Oak Villa Road  
Dallas, OR 97338  
P:(503) 934-8146 F:(503) 623-9034

# West Oregon Organizational Chart

