

Oregon Department of Forestry Northwest Oregon Area 2023 West Oregon District

Message from the District Forester

I am pleased to bring you the 2023 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.

2023 was a unique year where we got to add two new positions to the district through the Private Forest Accord (PFA). This helped us restore a sixth Stewardship Forester position which we lost back in the 2009 economic downturn as well as a SFO Forester to help administer rules specific to small forestland owners. We continued to see additional movement within our org chart throughout the year. 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.

The 2023 fire season was busier than normal for the district in terms of number of stat fires and a longer season than our ten-year average. We had multiple fires go into extended attack which served as good training grounds for the new staff that have got in place across the district the past two years. One event was the dry lightning storm that occurred on August 25th which in turn started 12 fires across the district. This proved to be one of the largest lightning events the district has dealt with in its history. Thanks to our dedicated staff and well proven partnerships with our landowners, operators, federal counterparts, and local fire departments, we were able to minimize the acres burned to 44 during this event which included the district heavily assisting the Siuslaw National Forest on the Rock Creek fire which was threatening ODF protection.

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. Our state forests team continues to work hard at providing greatest permanent value across all spectrums given these increasing challenges each year.

The PFA was fully implemented in 2023 requiring several training courses for agency staff, and landowner workshops to provide for seamless implementation of new rules in the Forest Practices Act. This took a large undertaking from our Stewardship Foresters and Unit Foresters to be successful. I want to give them a shout-out for the hard work and dedication they all showed in making this a success locally.

I would like to commend the district staff for all the hard work they have put in during 2023 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.

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.



Sincerely - Michael Curran

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- State Forests
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- Protection
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- WOFPA Membership List
- Org Chart & Contact Info

Special Points of Interest

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

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Lots of photos



Personnel

This year the State Forests team saw several personnel changes. Jeff Kuust was

welcomed to the district as the new Operations Forester early in the year. Steven Irving came back to the district in August as a Sale Prep Forester. State Forests also hired two new FMTs, Thomas Williams and Brandyn Brownfield. These two are both familiar faces to the district; with Thomas having been on the fire crew in Philomath since 2021, and Brandyn having his first year on the crew this summer. Lastly, we said goodbye to Zane Sandborg at the end of the year as he transitioned to his new role with the North Cascade District after 4.5 years in the district.



<u>Jeff Kuust</u>

Jeff started his career on the West Oregon District as firefighter and forester trainee before becoming the timber and roads manager for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. Jeff brings over 30 years of forestry experience and is excited to be back with the West Oregon District.

Steven Irving

Steven started with ODF in 2020 as a seasonal Wildland Fire Suppression Specialist for the West Oregon District – Dallas Unit. Steven earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry with a focus in forest management and a focus in forest restoration and fire from Oregon State University. Steven has also worked on a commercial fishing vessel in Alaska, Plumas Hotshots in California, and most recently with Lone Rock Resources before coming back to the district.



Road Maintenance

\$18,465 was used for a work order road maintenance contract in the Salmon Forks and Baber Ridge Road areas. This included 6.6 miles of road maintenance and included roadside brushing, sod removal, spot rock, grading, and removal of bank slough.

Sold Timber Sales

This year four new timber sales were sold, totaling an estimated harvest of Douglas-fir of 8.4 million board feet and 0.47 million board feet of red alder. This volume will come from 133 acres of modified clearcuts, and 332 acres of commercial thinning. Together this makes for an estimated net revenue of around \$4.3 million.





Timber Sales Cont.

	2023 Volume (MMBF)							
	Acres	Туре	Douglas-fir	Red Alder	Estimated Net Revenue	Road Improvement (Miles)	Road Construction(Miles)	
Mahrvelous	83	Modified Clearcut	3.67	0.4	\$ 2,325,692	19.4	0.2	
Thin Men	106	Thinning	0.94	0	\$ 185,332	8.7	0.09	
Doe a Deer	50	Modified Clearcut	2.31	0.07	\$ 1,413,686	6.8	0.25	
All is Well Thin	216	Thinning	1.45	0	\$ 418,211	4.4	0.29	
	Modified							
Total	Clearcut (acres)	133	8.37	0.47	\$ 4,342,921	39.3	0.83	
	Thinning (acres)	332						

*Portions of these sales were harvested during 2022 or were continued into 2023.

Timber Harvest

Over the course of 2023, only three timber sales were active with harvesting, one additional sale had project work that generated merchantable timber. In total, these sales generated 2.35 million board feet of Douglas-fir sawlogs, and minor amounts of other species. This harvest is down a fair bit from past years as many purchasers and operators were busy on

private lands, the district expects to see a busy harvest year in 2024 with multiple contracts that are set to expire in 2024.

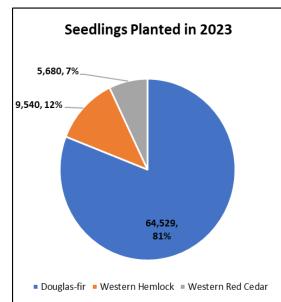
Reforestation and Young Stand Management

		2023 Total		
Sale	Purchaser	MBF	Tons	
Eastern Yaq Combo	Interfor US	1323.1	0	
Grouse Bully Thin	B & G Logging	703.7	6765.0	
Harlan Hangover	Murphy Company	304.2	0.0	
Long John	Sierra Pacific Industries	19.4	0.0	
	District Total	2350.4	6765.0	

In 2023, State Forests had 199 acres of initial planting, and 4 acres of interplanting. In total, this came to around 80,000 trees. In addition to planting, there was a variety of other young stand management projects. Bud capping occurred on 66 acres, boomer trapping on 20 acres, and around 3000 western redcedar were tubed and staked. Much of this work was performed by Adults in Custody from the Santiam Correctional Institution. A pre-commercial thinning contract was also executed, on a total of around 201 acres. Finally, 160 acres of slash was treated, totaling 435 tons.



New pallet and rack organization system for seedlings in the tree cooler.





Recreation

Both the Mt Baber ATV Club and the Black Rock Mountain Bike Association (BRMBA) held organized events this year. There were no new additions to either trail systems, though significant planning towards constructing a new parking area for the Black Rock Mountain Bike Area took place, with the 1st stage of construction being planned for the spring and summer of 2024.

Special Forest Products

Special forest product permit sales were similar to years past, Overall, personal use firewood was the most common permit sold with 56 permits assigned. A regular number of salal permits were sold and continued to be the highest source of revenue of all special forest products. Finally, there were three permits sold for commercial mushroom picking. In total, 101 permits generated \$7,820 for the district, and allowed for the harvest of 112 cords of firewood, and nearly 120,000 pounds of other forest products to be harvested.

2023 Special Forest Products Permits					
	Permits issued Income		Quantity		
Firewood					
(Personal Use)	56	\$	1,120	112 Cords	
Mushrooms	3	\$	900	2,250 lbs	
Salal	42	\$	5,800	116,000 lbs	
Total	101	\$	7,820		



Culvert being installed at Low Incline Timber Sale.





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. West Oregon saw significant change to their stewardship forester ranks this year. With the adoption of the Private Forest Accord (more on that later), West Oregon received 1 new position, the Small Forest Landowner Stewardship Forester, and also saw the restoration of the 2nd Stewardship Forester position in Philomath. This brought the West Oregon District's Forest Resources Program as close to full strength as it has been since the budget cuts of 2009, with each unit now staffed with 2 Stewardship Foresters, and the Small Forest Landowner position being District-wide, based out of Philomath.

The Small Forest Landowner Stewardship Forester position was filled by Joe Koch, in a lateral transfer from his Stewardship Forester position in Toledo. This position will deal exclusively with the small forest landowners across the district from each of the 3 units. With Joe's transition to his new duties, this left 1 Stewardship Forester position open in each unit. Joining Bill Mahr in Philomath, Jackson Stout was hired in March 2023 for the 2nd Stewardship Forester position in Philomath. Jack's position is a split-funded position, with 1/8th of his funding coming from State Lands. Toledo hired Reighly Sitton in April of 2023 to assist David Bailey with his Stewardship duties, and Dallas welcomed Jon Clark in January to help Dave Thompson manage the Forest Resources program in Dallas.



Jack Stout is a Stewardship Forester for the Philomath Unit heading into his 9th Fire Season. After graduating from Oregon State University in Environmental Engineering, Jack moved out to Toledo where he worked with Georgia-Pacific for a handful of years. After 2020's devastating fire season, Jack decided to return to the fire industry. At the beginning of 2023, Jack took his current role as a Stewardship Forester. Jack's personal interests are flying small single prop planes, baking sourdough, playing bass in his band, and spending as much time as possible by the river. He enjoys camping, fishing, hunting, hiking and most of all traveling. Reighly Sitton started with ODF in 2014 as a seasonal firefighter for the South Cascade District at the Holeman Guard Station. I then worked as a WFSS for West Oregon out of the Toledo office during the 2016 & 2017 seasons. Most recently on the John Day Helitack crew from 2018-2022. While in Central Oregon I earned 2 associate degrees from COCC in Wildland Fire Management and Forest Resource Tech. Once finished with school, I spent a few winters working on a commercial crab boat out of Newport while traveling back to John Day for the fire seasons. In my free time I enjoy hunting, fishing and anything else that gets me outdoors!

Jon Clark grew up in Florida and started his forestry career in 2014 working at Blackwater River State Forest while also going to school at a University of Florida extension campus in Pensacola. Three years ago, Jon moved to Oregon to fulfill his dream of being a forester in the PNW. He lives in Portland with his dog and cat.





In June 2020, the Oregon Legislature held a special session and passed Senate Bill 1602. The law required mediated talks between timber and conservation groups, which led to the Private Forests Accord Report. The Private Forest Accord is an agreement between timber and conservation groups to recommend changes to the Forest Practices Act (FPA) and was presented to the legislature in October of 2021. The recommendations led to a significant revision of the FPA. Most of the provisions of the revised FPA were to take effect January 1 of 2024, so much of 2023 was spent on training of the Stewardship Foresters and trying to determine how the new provisions of the FPA would affect their daily routines. Even with the amount of time spent on training and learning the new rules, the Stewardship Foresters of the West Oregon District still managed to do their jobs enforcing the current FPA rule set, assisting landowners with questions about managing their timber stands, and assist as needed for wildfire suppression.

The number of new Notifications of Operations processed District-wide was about average, with Philomath processing 576 new Notifications, Dallas 554, and Toledo 475.

Dallas continues their partnership with the local Polk County Natural Resource Conservation Support (NRCS) office, in which the Stewardship Foresters provide professional forestry assistance in the layout, administration, and certification of forest restoration programs. Dave and Jon had a tremendous workload with the NRCS partnership in 2023, delivering 81 products covering 772 acres of forest restoration work on non-industrial forestland throughout Polk and southern Yamhill counties.



State Geotechnical specialists walking the debris flow track help give perspective to the size of the debris flow.

Road Washout of the 100 Rd



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The atmospheric river event of December 2023 produced a few debris flow events throughout the District, though not as bad in frequency as in past events. One of the most significant debris flows travelled for over 1 mile in length and took out a road crossing on the main access to the Valley of Giants, effectively closing the popular recreation site for the foreseeable future.



ODF/NRCS Partnership Project

Before Treatment

After Treatment



These pictures help show the benefits of the NRCS/ODF partnership to assist small forestland owners with their forest restoration projects. Many of these projects would not be accomplished without the funding provided by NRCS and the forestry expertise provided by ODF.





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

The current Community Wildfire Foresters, Trask Hodgson and Jacob Ruhl continue to write plans, engage with community members, and submit grants for additional fuels reduction across the district. They are both involved in a Fire Planners group with others across the state in similar positions. Trask and Jacob are also working closely with Community Services Consortium (CSC) to aid as subject matter experts to provide written plans, job talks, and other assistance as needed for their fuels reduction crews working within the West Oregon District.

Along with this work, two new Firewise communities were established in 2023. Soap Creek Valley and Five Rivers. This addition brings the total number of Firewise communities in the district to 12. We are very excited to continue providing best practices, education, and assistance to these areas in the upcoming year.



Before and after pictures are from a project in the Monroe/Fishback grant area. Multiple fir trees were removed to select for Oak habitat in this area of the property. Other treatments prescribed on the property include mowing/mastication, limbing, and defensible space.



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. That goal has been exceeded and the project was officially closed out at the end of March in 2023. In total, 217 acres of fuels reduction and defensible space treatments were completed with \$94,650.

Monroe/Fishback: The project began in October of 2019 with the goal of completing 165 acres of fuels reduction/defensible space on private forestland. As of December 31st, 2023, 166 acres (101%) of our goal has been accomplished through 64 projects. In 2023, 43 acres of the 165-acre goal were treated through 16 projects. Currently another 11.5 acres of fuels reduction and defensible space treatments have been allocated through an additional 9 projects for the remainder of the funding period. It is set to expire at the end of May 2024.

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 31st, 2023, 24 acres (16%) of our goal has been accomplished through 8 projects. Currently, another 38 acres of fuels reduction and defensible space treatments have been allocated through an additional 13 projects. A modification was submitted and approved to increase the total dollar amount per acre and allow us to use a contractor in the Panther Creek area.

Liberty: This project began December 2022 with the goal of completing 150 acres of fuels reduction treatment on private forestland. As of December 31st, 2023, 3 acres (2%) of our goal has been completed through 1 project. Currently, another 7 acres of fuels reduction and defensible space treatments have been allocated through an additional 2 projects.

2023 Projects by the Numbers						
Grant	Fuels Reduction Acres	Defensible Space Acres	Total Acres	Landowner Investment Hours		
SB 762 SFG	74	1	75	628		
Wren / Grand Ronde	64	7	71	680		
Monroe / Fishback	35	8	43	66		
Panther Creek/Eckman	24	0	24	0		
Liberty	3	0	3	0		
Kings Valley	0	0	0	0		
District Totals	200	16	216	1374		

Kings Valley: This project began December 2023 with the goal of completing 104 acres of fuels reduction treatment on private forestland. Community outreach has begun, and site assessments are ongoing.

Senate Bill 762 Small Forestland Projects: March 2022 to June 30th 2023

Duesterhoeft Wildfire Mitigation: Completed 55 acres of heavy/moderate fuels reduction through 50/50 mix of contracted mastication & landowner mowing, removal/lop and scatter of dead and down/storm damage, limbing and the collection of 30+ cord firewood. No spraying or burning was used on this project. Landowner labor was used for 25% match.

PJ Fisher Forest Wildfire Prevention: Completed 80 acres of light to moderate fuels reduction through primarily landowner labor. Combination of extensive 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 was also completed through a contractor. Landowner labor was used for 25% match.



Protection

The summer of 2023 began very early with fire runs in all 3 units starting in April due to escaped backyard burns and the early onset of warm and dry weather. With the increase in activity, the District decided to hire a few returning fire crew members early to handle our 30+ calls with 13 being stat fires. Along with our own fires we helped our ODF neighbors with a few fires in early June with engine assignments to Mercer Lake, 7k, and Reuben Leigh.

West Oregon District declared both fire season and public use Restrictions in effect on June 9th. The bulk of the crew members started June 19th and participated in the Mid-Valley Fire school which was held at its historic location at Sweet Home High School for the first time since 2019. This year we had a fair rate of turnover with 14 of the 30 seasonals new to the district, with 8 having little experience in fire.

With the weather warm and dry and public use at "high" on the valley side of the district, we staffed 2 engines at each office for the 4th of July, most of the day was quiet in the district, however Philomath had a mutual aid request from Corvallis Fire Department for a large field fire East of Corvallis outside the district. Then, the next day on July 5th the Fir Grove fire started at 1230 in the afternoon. With temps in the 90's and RH in the 20's the fire quickly grew to 8 acres. With the help of a helicopter, cooperators equipment, and multiple fire depts, the fire was contained by late in the evening of the 5th and fully wrapped up after a few days of mop up. On July 11th the Callahan Cr. Fire was reported burning in a reprod unit 8 miles SW of Falls City in the Dallas Unit. Crews arrived at a 5-acre fire at about midnight and were able to get a dozer line around the top of the fire by morning when additional resources arrived. Our first off district engine orders came on July 17th when we sent out Dallas and Toledo engines to the 224 fire in North Cascade District, and 2 days later Philomath sent an engine to Haight Cr in Western Lane. For the rest of the summer, we consistently had 2-3 engines out.

On July 26th the Toledo Unit was dispatched to the Sams Creek fire 6 miles West of Toledo on Hwy 20, crews arrived at a 1-acre fire moving quickly up a steep ridge. With temps near 100 and RH in the low 30's, a helicopter was ordered to help knock down the fire while crews could start building fire line. Crews were able to dig a line around the fire by the next morning.

With the summer's heat, August saw more than average fires but most were kept under a quarter of an acre due to aggressive initial attack by District staff and our cooperators. Then on the night of the 25th with a forecast of dry lightning, West Oregon was hit with multiple strikes that kicked off a historic lightning fire event. Starting at 1230am, calls started coming in with fires from Alsea Valley. The first fire was caught at a 1\10 acre and just when that was contained the next call came in for a fire in Kings Valley. Engines responded to that incident as well as another fire call in Alsea. In all, the District had 11 fires ranging from 0.25-11.5 acres and helped with a 12-acre fire on USFS. The 3 biggest fires- South Mtn., Hatchery Fall Cr, and Starr Cr were all over the 10-acre size. Very steep terrain and heavy fuel made mop-up tough. We housed a small type 3 camp at the Philomath office with engines and crews from the local area. The rest of the summer moderated and we saw a return to an average level of fire response in the district. The last off-district engine returned to the district on the 24th of September and the end of fire season was the 9th of October. Overall, we were in Fire season for 123 days with 150 fire runs, 50 stat fires, 16 non-stat and 84 NFCAs.

Dallas Stars Fire Crew 2023





Philomath Acrobat*s* Fire Crew 2023

Toledo Boomer/ Fire Crew 2023





West Oregon District continued their active role in the complete and coordinated system by assisting other districts around the state. We had 162 days off district with engines and 172 days off-district with overhead. In the fall, we had the opportunity to dispatch overhead to Kentucky and North Carolina. 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



2023 Slash Burning & Smoke Management						
District Smoke Stats	Registered Acres	Registered Tons	Accomplished Acres	Accomplished Tons		
Benton	2,882	34,442	2,481	31,304		
Polk	3,721	49,284	1,271	9,145		
Yamhill	1,136	12,927	344	4,436		
Lincoln	5,503	30,109	2,748	11,802		
District Totals	13,242	100,982	6,844	56,687		



	Fire Season 2023					
	WO-1	WO-2	WO-3			
IFPL I	105	46	39			
IFPL II	18	60	66			
IFPL III	0	17	18			
IFPL IV	0	0	0			
en:	Length: 123 days					

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IFPL/ Fire Season





A huge shout-out goes to the administration staff for continuing to do an outstanding job of providing excellent customer service and for supporting staff across the West Oregon District. Led by Kris Freeman, administration is staffed with Debbi Weiler (Philomath), Stacy Gerding (Philomath/Dispatch), Alli Kidd (Dallas) and Shirl Fredenburg (Toledo). Their continued dedication to assisting all programs and ensuring our customers' needs are met is on full display each day. Their hard work, dedication, and ability to adapt amid ever-evolving administrative programs and policies, while still providing top notch support, has been invaluable.

Personnel Updates

Departures

Philomath

District Business Manager: Jamee Millard (transferred to District Operations Manager in Santiam)

State Forests Sale Prep Forester: Zane Sandborg (promoted to Operation Forester in Santiam)

State Forests Sales Prep Forester: Jacob Bergstrom (promoted to Small Forestland Owner Forester in Coos Bay)

Forest Officer: Brian Burchfield (promoted to South Fork Forest Crew Coordinator)

Toledo

Stewardship Forester: Joe Koch (transferred to Small Forestland Owner Forester in Philomath)

Additions

Philomath

District Business Manager: Kris Freeman Small Forestland Owner Forester: Joe Koch Stewardship Forester: Jack Stout Community Wildfire Forester: Jake Ruhl State Lands Operation Forester: Jeff Kuust State Lands Sale Prep Forester: Steven Irving

Toledo

Stewardship Forester: Reighly Sitton



Recognized Service Awards in 2023

Shirl Fredenburg—10 years

This is the Life 2023



This is the Life 2023





Our Daily WOOD

For the second s

The Evergreen Foundation

West Oregon

Forest Protective Association

Board of Directors

Dale Claassen, Hampton Lumber, President Luke Bergey, Miami Corporation Mgmt., Vice President Jeff DeRoss, Manulife Investment Mgmt., Treasurer Kristi Freeman, Secretary Lee Miller, Miller Land and Timber Nic Dahl, Nicholas & Megan Dahl LLC Matthew Fiorito, Weyerhaeuser Timber Holdings, Inc. Randy Hereford, Starker Forests, Inc. Ed Easterling, Crestmont Farm Mari Kramer, Confederated Tribes Advisory Directors

District Forester Michael Curran

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Unit Forester

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

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

of Siletz

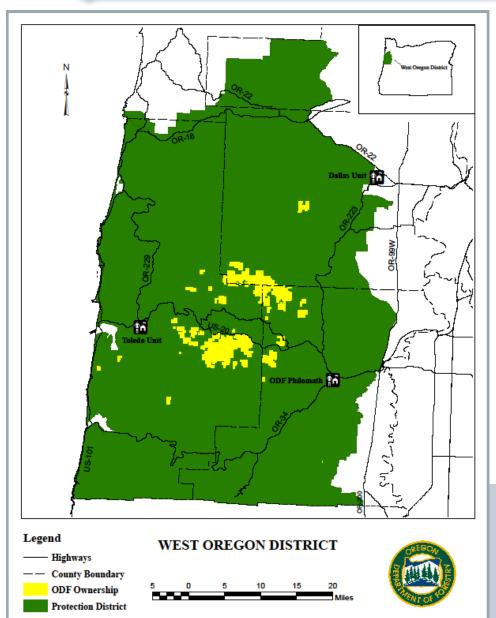
Don Everingham, ODF Kyle Williams, OFIC

Kristin Babbs, KOG Nancy Taylor, ODFW Dan Eddy, USFS/BLM

WOFPA Members

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 Shroeder and O'Neil 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 Widow Creek Tree Farm Van Eck Forest Foundation

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

