Message from the District Forester

Welcome to the West Oregon District annual report for 2019. This report highlights some of the more noteworthy activities and accomplishments of the district this past year. Our administrative staff have once again done an outstanding job of assembling this information. I hope you find this reflection on the past year’s activities on the West Oregon District both informative and useful.

Our district staff members and our partners have always been the key to our success. In 2019, that was once again demonstrated with several tough fires on the district that challenged all of us. These situations serve as a great reminder of why we are successful, and the reason for our accomplishments.

Personnel changes have become part of our culture on the West Oregon District. New team members in 2019 included Cody Valencia, our new operations forester and Zane Sandborg, our new timber sale preparation forester. Both of these individuals have been valuable additions to our state forests team.

The 2019 fire season was another interesting one. The district and its partners were called on multiple times throughout the fire season to suppress a number of human caused fires. Several of these were very early in the season, leading us to believe that it could be a bad year. Fortunately, the weather cooperated for the latter part of the season, and overall, the fire season was not that severe. In addition to West Oregon District fires, district staff were deployed multiple times to help out on the many large fires across the state.

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. And the private forests program saw steady activity across the district in 2019 for much of the year.

In 2019 Jon Long, state forest operations forester, retired. Jon spent much of his career on the Astoria District before moving to the West Oregon District.

Finally, the district cannot be successful without the dedication and hard work of each employee and the strong partnerships with the West Oregon Forest Protective Association, forest landowners, operators, and our many other partners and cooperators. I would like to thank each and every one of them for their continued dedication and professionalism. I would also like to thank the families of our staff members for their support and understanding as our district staff worked through another challenging fire season.

Thank you all- Mike Totey
The Private Forest Program for the West Oregon District is staffed with 5 Stewardship Forester positions: Bill Mahr in Philomath; Jennifer Erdmann and Dave Thompson in Dallas; and Joe Koch and Leo Williamson in Toledo.

The workload for the Stewardship Foresters was higher than recent years, with a lot of stream improvement and culvert/crossing structure projects again being quite numerous. Notwithstanding their District duties, during the summer of 2019 Dave, Joe, and Jennifer were also dispatched out-of-district for fire assignments in support of the few fire team deployments ODF had.

The Dallas Unit Stewardship Foresters continued their strong partnership with the Polk and Yamhill NRCS, assisting 8 different landowners with PCT, brush management, and slash disposal projects. Bill, in Philomath continued working with Farm Services Agency in supporting 5 CREP programs through the 2019 year. Bill also worked on 6 NRCS projects helping landowners conduct beneficial work on their forests in Benton County. Toledo broke their recent trend of revolving Stewardship Foresters this year, with Joe and Leo managing the shop the entire year.

Tethered logging continues to be on the upswing for harvest methods, mostly for felling of timber, but there have been more units this year that were tether-yarded than in previous years. Other ‘new’ technology seen on timber harvest units include the use of drones to do site recon for layouts and string haywire for cable corridors; and the use of grapple carriages for yarding logs rather than the traditional choker methods.

We had 94% FPA compliance on inspections across all landowners within West Oregon District last year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019 Private Forests Accomplishments</th>
<th>Philomath</th>
<th>Dallas</th>
<th>Toledo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019 Notifications</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 NOAPs Continued</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statutory Written Plans reviewed</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Fire Inspections</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest Practices Inspections</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>253</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landowner Assistance contacts</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRCS Projects (Includes FMPs)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stewardship Forester Conference

The West Oregon District hosted the Northwest Oregon Area stewardship forester conference during 2019. Stewardship foresters from around the Northwest Oregon toured several operations conducted in the Benton county area through the year. Of note, the group stopped at: an active tethered logging site; The 2018 Oregon tree farmer of the year and contender for national tree farmer of the year’s property (Don Oakes of Oakes Family Investment); and the Hull-Oakes Mill (last steam powered mill). The group is pictured standing overtop a fish passage culvert installed on Starker Forests lands within the Philomath unit area.

Operator of the Year

The NW Oregon Operator of the Year, Jim Gahlsdorf Logging, was nominated by Dave Thompson (Dallas Unit) primarily for their work on the Best Buds timber sale on Hancock Forest Management land. The clearcut harvest unit was in a remote location of west Polk County, and presented the operator with many challenges: steep terrain, blind leads, and limited road access, see photograph to the right. Their solutions included using intermediate supports and redesigning their carriage to handle the jack in order to log a significant portion of the unit; the use of a swing landing instead of building a 25% grade access road; using historical photos to see how the ‘old timers’ previously logged the area; and the use of drones to assist in layout and design of their cable corridors.
## 2019 Timber Sales Sold

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timber Sale Types</th>
<th>Number of Sales</th>
<th>Sold Volume (MMBF)</th>
<th>Estimated Net Revenue</th>
<th>Number of Sales*</th>
<th>Volume (MMBF)</th>
<th>Net Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearcut Sales</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>$4,130,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>$2,180,022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thinning Sales</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>$401,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>$405,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combo Sales (clearcut/thin)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>$338,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>$1,695,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,869,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,280,770</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Portions of these sales were harvested during 2019, or were continued into 2020.

## Timber Harvest

Timber prices were down slightly from last year’s prices. The two sales that did not sell in calendar year 2018, were reappraised and sold in 2019. However, one FY’19 sale (Little Elk Thin) did not sell despite two attempts.

## Wildlife

Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) and Marbled Murrelet surveys were conducted on all district planned sales that were determined to potentially contain habitat. The district switched from Operational NSO surveys to density surveys which allows more flexibility in harvest timing. There were no significant detections of either species in 2019.

## 2019 Miscellaneous Forest Products

### Permits - Commercial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Number of Permits Issued</th>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salal</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>$5,600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon Grape</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$1,400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanterelle Mushrooms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Firewood</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8,360.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Firewood Permits—Personal Use**

It was another busy year for issuing personal use firewood permits. Approximately 140 were issued during the calendar year.

**Miscellaneous Forest Products - Commercial**

Salal continues to be our top selling commercial permit. Our district has three different harvest areas that are available for a 28 day leasing period. Other permits are available depending on what the public is seeking, because our goal is to serve Oregonians well.
Reforestation and Young Stand Management

**Planting:** For the 4th year in a row, the district worked with the Western Lane District to implement a joint tree planting contract. On the West Oregon District, 394 acres were initial-planted and 41 acres were inter-planted (mostly by the Mill Creek crew), with approximately 158,000 seedlings.

**PCT:** The district completed 283 acres of pre-commercial thinning work under a contract and another 40 acres were completed by the Mill Creek crew.

**Mill Creek Crew:** In addition to planting and PCT, the crew conducted manual vegetation release on 104 acres of plantations and 26 miles of roadside. They also conducted tube installation and maintenance on Western redcedar seedlings, covered and burned slash piles and conducted 30 acres of herbicide release treatments.

**Road brushing:** To keep our forest roads open and drivable for our staff and the public we utilize the Mill Creek Crew, Timber Sale Contracts and Service contracts. The photos to the right show a good example of before and after of road brushing.

**Work Order Contracts**

The district awarded and administered it’s 2nd Work Order Contract (WOC), a bridge replacement project on Steere Creek in Lincoln County. The work was done under a cost-share agreement between Hancock Forest Management and ODF. ODF’s WOC covered the removal and disposal of the old unusable bridge and installation of the new one. Hancock covered the cost of the bridge structure, it’s delivery and the associated engineering analysis.
State Forests Employees

This was another year of change for the district State Forests Team. Elliot Lowry, district FO, started his first day as an FMT in January. Cody Valencia transferred from Astoria District to the West Oregon district as an NRS 1 Sale Prep forester in May. Zane Sandborg, a recent OSU grad, began his NRS 1 Sale Prep job in June. Leo Williamson, NRS 2 Stewardship Forester in Toledo, began his first state forests timber sale assignment in June. Jon Long, NRS 2 Operations Forester, retired in July. Blake McKinley, NRS 2 GIS Specialist/ T&E Coordinator, promoted to an ISS6 based in Salem in June. And finally, in September, Cody promoted to the NRS 2 Operations Forester position.

State Forests Intern

The district was fortunate to be able to host a summer intern, Zena Greenawald, paid for by the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians. Zena is a Natural Resources major at OSU and this was her first experience working in the woods. Among other things, she assisted the timber sale prep foresters in marking sale boundaries, cruising timber and determining the stream buffering extents.

Service Award

Jeff Classen presented Jennifer Erdmann with her 15 year service award. Jennifer started her career with DFPA in 2001 as a Seasonal Firefighter. She came to the West Oregon District in 2002 where she worked on the fire crews in both Philomath and Toledo. Jennifer left the agency for just short of two years to work for the BLM in timber. She came back to ODF as a Stewardship Forester in Dallas where she has been for eight years. Jennifer has held several positions within the agency and continues to demonstrate a positive attitude and the willingness to take on new challenges.

Admin Staff

The 5 administrative staff on the district have done a wonderful job of learning several new programs that have been introduced into their job duties. Not only have they learned these programs for their daily work, they have also helped district staff through the transition, of out with the old program and in with the new.
Smokey Bear turned 75!

We took this opportunity to come together with our units and communities to celebrate Smokey Bear. Both our Dallas and Philomath offices put on a party for Smokey Bear. During it we had prevention activities, craft projects and shared snacks and cake. Thank you Smokey Bear for having a birthday so we could share your prevention message with family and friends, and enjoy one another.

West Oregon All Employee Meeting

This year's West Oregon District All Employee Meeting took us up to a local point of interest, Marys Peak. Where we went on a short hike and listened to a talk led by retired USFS Forest Ecologist, Cindy McCain. She shared with us information about the Siuslaw Forest’s Marys Peak meadow and native habitat restoration project. She shared some of the struggles and successes that they’ve had during the project. In the photo to the left you can see our group standing in one of the meadows where they have worked to restore native habitat. We were lucky to have pleasant weather for our outing. Our district is lucky to have such a beautiful site located within our area.
As the rain began to subside and the sunshine became abundant, the fire danger began to rise on the West Oregon District. This year though, that shift in weather patterns began to happen several months ahead of normal. After a wild February, with heavy snow and rain in the coast range, the precipitation turned off. An early warm spell, coupled with no rain and breezy conditions set the stage for the 2019 Fire Season on the West Oregon District. By late March, the District began to experience “Fire Season” like conditions, resulting in multiple fires. These fires were the Crystal Creek Loop Fire, the Harlan Rd. Fire, and the Trojan Fire.

On March 19th, 2019 just after lunch, a small brush fire was reported on Crystal Creek Loop. Upon arrival, the fire was 2-3 acres and moving uphill at a steady pace with multiple structures threatened. Resources from all 3 units and Mill Creek responded with Toledo Fire Department, Newport Fire Department, Depoe Bay RFPD, Blodgett RFPD and Philomath RFPD to provide support. As the sun began to set, the fire behavior decreased and a hand line was completed around the perimeter. In total, the fire was just under 10 acres as the result of a tree into a power line.

As we continued through the spring, the weather conditions did not improve. On May 1st, a report of smoke on Harlan Rd. was received by dispatch. Resources from the Toledo Unit responded and found a small brush fire working its way uphill, away from a previously burned debris pile. With help from the Philomath Unit, South Fork, and Toledo Fire Department, the fire was contained at 3.5 acres.

Trojan Fire, in Lincoln County June 4th, 2019
On June 4th, the Toledo Unit received a call from foresters with Miami Corp reporting a fire in an operation south of Hwy 18 off of the Murphy Main Line. Resources from all three Units responded along with cooperators from Miami Corp and local logging contractors. When resources arrived, the fire was well established in a recent fell and bucked harvest unit and was rapidly spreading east across the slope into heavy slash. As the logging crew worked to move equipment to safe locations, the ODF crews began to develop a plan to establish an anchor point. At this time, the fire was 10-15 acres and showed no signs of stopping. A very well defined column was starting to form that could be seen from the Willamette Valley, all the way to Lincoln City. As the crews continued to establish a good anchor point and scout ahead of the fire, a type 2 helicopter, South Fork crews, more engines, and cache supplies were ordered. Crews continued to battle the stiff westerly wind and heavy fuel loading as the fire progressed across the hillside. While the crews were working hard on the ground, staff back at the offices were working on putting together a plan for the next few shifts. This included ordering overhead, tenders, crews and logistical supplies. As the sun went down, the fire continued to burn aggressively with the wind. Just after midnight, the fire left industrial timberland and crossed onto adjacent BLM land. This is ultimately where the fire was stopped, not too far inside the timberline. Before sunrise and shift change the next morning, crews had the fire progression stopped and most of the perimeter lined. Fresh crews set up extensive hose lays and began a full mop-up operation. The Trojan fire burned 108 acres, resulting from line rub while changing yarding roads.
After a brief cool down, summer conditions returned and so did our seasonal fire crews. We were up to full staff come mid-June. Like years previous, most of the first few weeks of work for the fire crews involve a great deal of training. The district once again showed strong support and participation for the Mid-Willamette Valley Interagency Fire School in Sweet Home. The district sent multiple students and instructors to participate/teach in classes such as S-130/190, S230/231, L280, and S131 as well other practical sessions and live fire training.

Following a year of trial by Districts in the Southern Oregon Area and in conjunction with other Northwest Oregon Area Districts, the West Oregon District implemented a new approach to public use restrictions or “Regulated Use”. This new approach employs a system of graduating timing restrictions tied to fire danger objectives. On June 17th Regulated Use was put in-place at the same time as Fire Season. Most regulated activities were allowed in Low fire danger, however as fire danger increased, so did the tightening of restrictions. This new approach was well received by the majority of the public, and will likely continue into the future.

As we progressed into summer, the weather moderated, receiving cooler temperatures and higher humidity than normal. This helped to minimize fire starts and keep them small in size. Although there were moderate conditions, the district did have a handful of more fires. The most notable was on July 31st alongside Hwy 18 near Grande Ronde. A car traveling westbound had a defective exhaust system that was discarding catalytic converter pieces that resulted in multiple fire starts along the roadway for a total of .36 acres. West Oregon ended public use restrictions and fire season on September 19th.

For the 2019 fire season, including the spring fires, the West Oregon District had 19 statistical fires for 127.59 acres. The district also responded to 9 Non-Stat fires and 27 Non Fire Crew Actions.
Community Involvement

As a district we participated in several community programs. We continue to support local outdoor schools with presentations on forestry and fire suppression. We went to the annual Governors camp out at Willamette Mission State Park to interact with Salem students. We are involved with events such as Trunk or Treat, Touch-A Truck and fire department programs and open houses. Smokey Bear also kept a busy schedule of birthday parties, parades such as the Philomath Frolic and a pre-game appearance for his favorite football team. He’s pretty active for turning 75 this year!

We actively seek out opportunities to participate in high school and college job fairs, the logging conference, and other school programs to promote our mission of forestry, fire prevention and to recruit seasonal and permanent employees.

Smoke

We continue to provide direction and support to our communities when it comes to burning logging slash. A big part of what we do is to help educate and inform concerned members of the public about our processes and procedures to mitigate smoke getting into Smoke Sensitive Receptor Areas (SSRAs). We also explain how burning reduces fuel loading in the woods, which can help reduce the potential of large fires.

This year we accomplished:
For Philomath: 1,855 acres / 30,044 tons
For Dallas: 4,140 acres / 25,015 tons
For Toledo: 4,823 acres / 36,859 tons
All together: 10,818 acres / 91,918 tons
The Community Wildfire Program of the West Oregon District is staffed with two Community Wildfire Forester positions, Eric Jacobs (Dallas) and Allison Blair (Philomath). These two positions remained busy throughout the year as they oversaw 181 acres of completed fuels reduction projects, with an additional 143 acres planned. Two WSFM grants were successfully closed out in June, a combined 346 acres of fuels treatment since the award dates. Early in the year the District proposed a new WSFM grant to treat the 165 acre Monroe / Fishback Fuels Project, which was successfully funded in October.

In May, the District offered up one of its Community Wildfire Foresters (Allison Blair) to assist with staffing needs in Eastern Oregon. This left a vacancy in Philomath which was filled by Casey Smith (Forest Officer/Fuels Crew, ODF Western Lane) in a developmental capacity. Casey brought a great level of knowledge and skills to this position as he assisted in keeping the Community Wildfire program fully staffed and running smoothly throughout the remainder of the year.

Current fuels projects being administered on the West Oregon District are as follows:

**Soap Creek / Gooseneck** Project # 449037-02: Began October 2017 with the goal of completing 165 acres of fuels reduction treatment on private forestlands. In 2019, 82.5 acres (50%) of the total goal was treated through 40 projects. Currently another 64 acres of fuels reduction and defensible space treatments has been allocated.

**Wren / Grand Ronde** Project # 449041-03: Began in October 2018 with the goal of completing 165 acres of fuels reduction treatment on private forestlands. There have been 31 acres (19%) completed of the total goal. An additional 79 acres has been committed with 26 projects in 2019.

**Monroe / Fishback** Project # 449047-03: Began October 2019 with the goal of completing 165 acres of fuels reduction treatment on private forestlands. In 2019, there have been no projects allocated at this time due to ongoing activity in other active

**Benton County Firewise Chipping**

We set up 9 Firewise Chipping locations around Benton County. This Program is funded by Benton County and coordinated by the Community Wildfire Foresters from ODF. The photo to the right is from 1 of those 9 locations.
West Oregon
Fire Protection Association

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Pacific West Timber Company LLC c/o Campbell Global
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Wakefield Farms, LLC
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Van Eck Forest Foundation
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