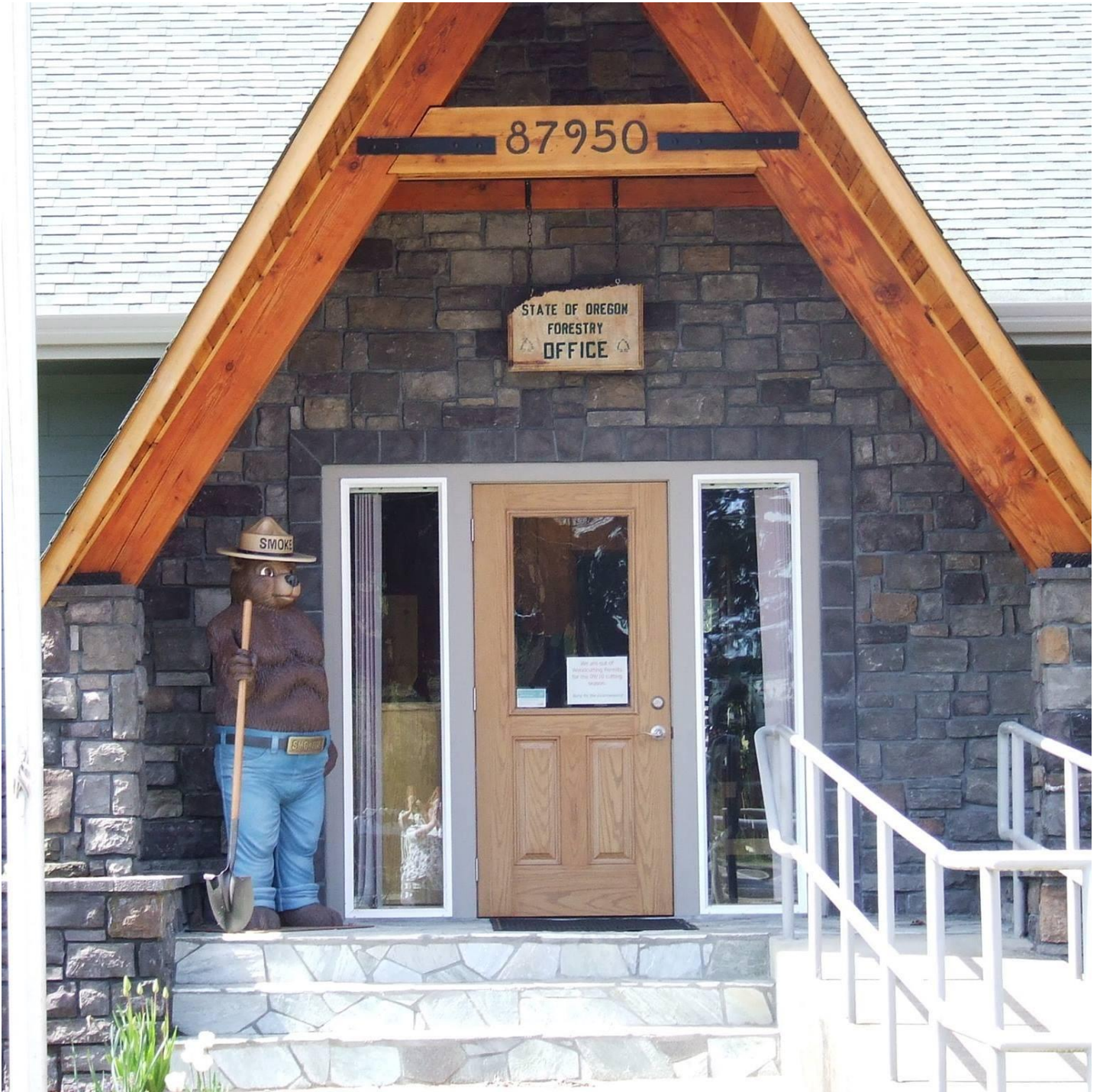


# Western Lane District Annual Report 2024



# WESTERN LANE'S DISTRICT FORESTER OLE BUCH

Welcome to the 2024 Western Lane Annual Report!

2024 was a memorable year for multiple reasons. In mid-January, a significant ice storm hit western Oregon with the epicenter being Lane County. There were long power outages, limited access to homes and property located on secondary roads, and significant timber loss/ forest stand damage across the district. The majority of the forest roads were unpassable for months due to downed wood. An ODF incident management team was even dispatched to support Lane County with recovery efforts.

After initial reconnaissance, it was clear the worst of the damage was located in the middle Siuslaw area roughly from Whittaker Creek upstream to Lorane and over the coast range divide into Cottage Grove. Most north and east facing slopes in that area had greater than 50% stand damage.

A significant recovery effort occurred that included a long list of government agencies, landowners, and local operators. The effects of this storm will impact the district for decades and you'll read more about it in individual unit updates later in this report.

Another memorable item in 2024 was the significant fire season. Western Lane district fortunately had a reasonably mild fire season, however the agency as a whole broke records in the number of acres burned and total suppression costs. There was a heat dome in early July that was immediately followed by numerous separate statewide dry lighting events. The lighting started hundreds of fires across the state with the Eastern Oregon area, USFS, and districts in the Cascade range receiving the worst of it. Fortunately, Western Lane was able to provide assistance to those firefighting efforts due to our milder fire season.

Other memorable items from 2024 include: continued implementation of the new Forest Practice Rules promulgated by the Private Forests Accord, implementation of the newly signed Western Oregon Operating Plan with the BLM, improving the Western Lane dispatch center by installing new dispatch consoles, reducing fuel loads via grant funds, continued aggressive treatments on new Sudden Oak Death sites, and many others that you'll read about later on in this report.

In closing, I want to recognize the great staff, landowners, operators, and partner agencies that I get to work with here on the Western Lane district. I'm surrounded by great folks, which makes working through the items above fun and successful.



## VENETA FUELS REDUCTION



*From Left to Right: Seth Griffith, Dayton Ricks, Kyle Schwartz, Kate Johns, Keegan Ferro, James Macklin, Tevin Erlambang*

The Western Lane District Fuels Program had a successful 2024 season in continuing to mitigate hazardous fuels for private landowners, developing Firewise Communities, attending public outreach/education events, and collaborating with local partners. In the last year, the Fuels Program treated over two hundred acres of hazardous fuels, including clearing fifty-three miles of roadways and opening five waterholes. The program successfully created two new Firewise Communities for a total of eleven active communities, provided four chipping days to active Firewise Communities, and attended fifteen outreach events around the district, such as the Lane County Fair and the Home and Garden Show. Additionally, during 2024 the program applied for one new grant and while working with partners, received new funding sources through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program and from Eugene Water and Electric Board.

The program is continuing to expand hiring opportunities and adding capacity to the protection program. The 2024 Fuels Crew was fortunate enough to continue supporting employment opportunities, including a Community Wildfire Forester, a Planning Fuels Management Technician (FMT), a Field FMT, and two new Fuels Crew Members. Furthermore, movement within the program has allowed individuals to advance into developmental leadership roles. For the 2024 fuels season, there was a total of ten personnel involved in the program with a range of fire qualifications including Engine Boss, Task Force Leader, ICT5, FF1, and FF2.



**Fuels Crew Supervisor:**

- Casey Smith

**Community Wildfire Forester:**

- McKenna Armantrout

**Fuel Management Technicians (FMT):**

- Kate Johns
- Chris Romero
- Seth Griffith

**Fuels Crew Laborers:**

- Kyle Schwartz
- Tevin Erlambang
- Keegan Ferro
- Dayton Ricks
- James Macklin



*The crew chips cut vegetation for a landowner*

**Hazardous Fuel Mitigation Projects:**

In the Wildland Urban Interface, the crew masticates invasive species such as blackberries, limbs trees, thins timber stands, and chips woody debris to decrease the risk of home ignitions in the event of a wildfire. In the last year, the district's hard working and dedicated crew treated 150 properties for defensible space and fuel breaks. Additionally, the crew received at least ten documented letters of gratitude from landowners around the district and multiple calls regarding appreciation for their hard work.

**Federal Hazardous Fuels Reduction Grant Projects worked on in 2024 include:**

**Finalized Long Tom:**

- 20 acres (10% of goal).
- 1 Firewise Community established.
- 1 outreach event.

**In-Progress Fox Hollow:**

- 123 acres (70% of goal).
- 6 active Firewise Communities.
- 1 prospective Firewise Community.
- 9 outreach events.

**In-Progress Florence Communities:**

- 20 acres (10% of goal).
- 2 active Firewise Communities.
- 1 prospective Firewise Community.
- 2 outreach events.

**In-Progress Lynx Hollow:**

- 56 acres (27% of goal).
- 3 outreach events.
- 1 post-treatment, long-term maintenance plan brochure for landowners.



*Tevin Erlambang masticates blackberries with a weed eater*



Alternate funding sources in 2024 included:

**In-Progress BLM Community Assistance Agreement:**

- 53 miles of road brushed.
- 5 waterholes cleared.

**In-Progress Willamette Valley Oak Landscape Scale Restoration:**

- 5 agency stakeholder meetings.
- 1 oak management workshop.

**In-Progress Small Forestland Grant:**

- 42 acres (28% of goal).
- 3 outreach events.

**In-Progress EWEB Agreement:**

- 2.5 acres (7% of goal).

**Lane County Ice Storm:**

In January, two Western Lane Fuels Crew members were deployed on a two-week assignment with Team 1 to support the cleanup efforts during the Lane County Ice Storm. With the significant increase in accumulated downed fuels, the Fuels Crew prioritized landowners heavily impacted in the Western Lane District as well. The crew also efficiently cleared BLM roads affected by the ice storm, improving access and response during fire season.



*McKenna Armantrout & Kate Johns at the Oregon Logging Conference*

**Outreach Events:**

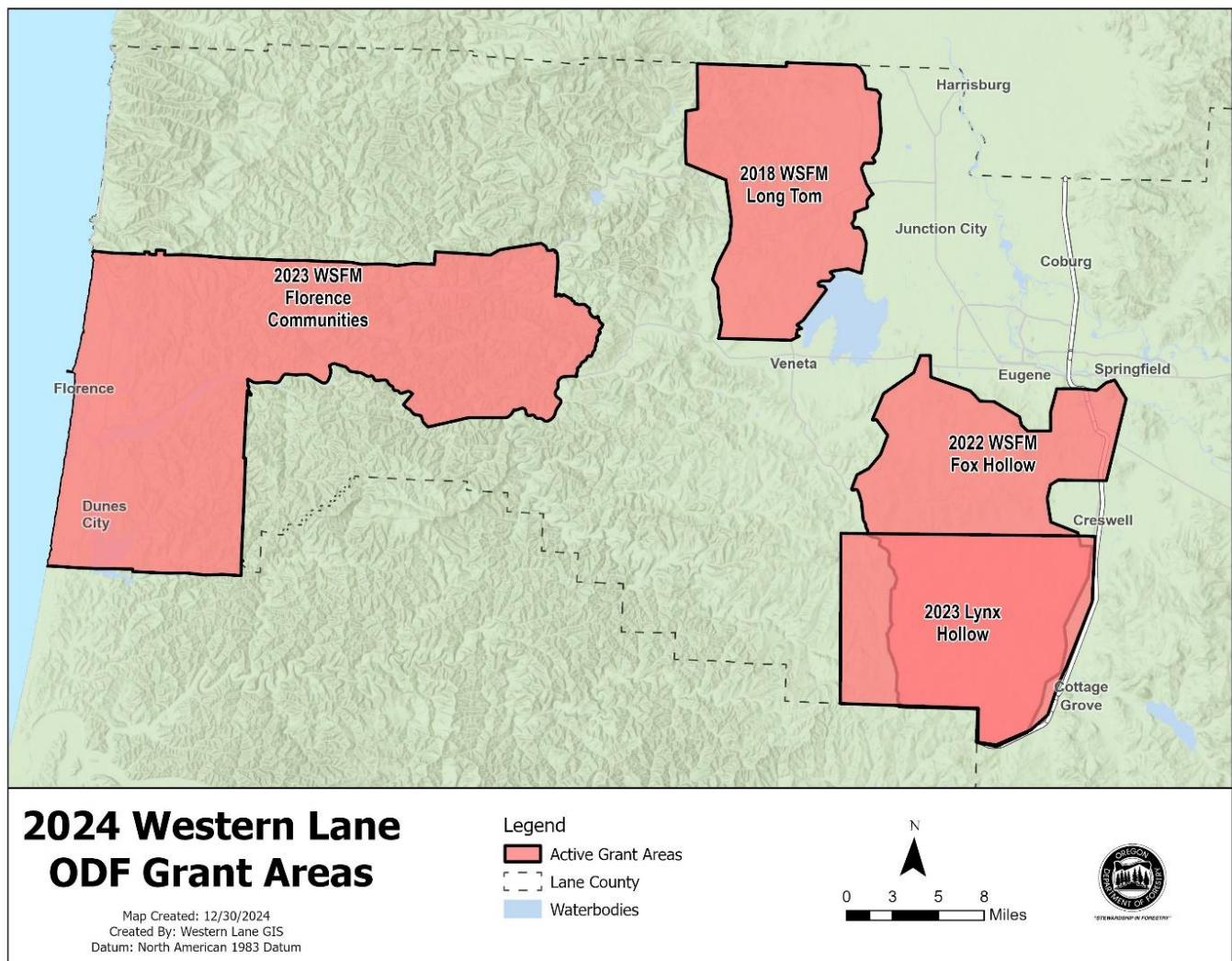
Beyond offering fuels reduction to landowners, a major focus of the Fuels Program is attending outreach events and hosting community meetings to educate the public on the importance of reducing fire risk across the county. During 2024, the program attended fifteen outreach events and three community presentations. Outreach events included the Oregon Logging Conference, Jerry's Safety Day, and the Veneta Light Parade. The community meetings resulted in two new certified Firewise Communities.

### Grant Applications:

During 2024, the Fuels Program applied for the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) and worked with district partners to secure funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. Additionally, Western Lane was a sub-recipient with Eugene Water and Electric Board for federal funding. The CWDG application has moved on to the second phase of scoring with awarded grants anticipated to be announced in the Spring of 2025. Funding for the RCPP will be received in the fall of 2025, with work starting in 2026.

### Challenges and Obstacles:

From the beginning, the Fuels Program has been presented with several challenges, including increasing costs, high employee turnover, and extended fire seasons. Despite these challenges, the program continues to provide excellent service to private landowners, fire prevention education to the public, and fuels reduction work in preparation for fire season across the district. Additionally, having the Fuels Crew all year adds the benefit of support to fire protection during shoulder seasons. As 2024 ends and 2025 begins, the Fuels Program looks forward to making strides in accomplishing current goals and preparing for new upcoming projects.





## COOS/BROOKINGS SOD PROGRAM

Sudden oak death (SOD), caused by the non-native pathogen *phytophthora ramorum* kills highly susceptible tree species such as tanoak and California black oak. The pathogen was first discovered in Oregon in 2001 and has been spreading ever since. A European strain of SOD was discovered in Oregon forests in 2015. This strain has affected and killed Douglas-fir in other parts of the world. The North American 2 strain was found in Port Orford in April 2021. Potential effects on Oregon's forest health, forest industry, and interstate or international trade are large concerns. The goal of the SOD program is to slow the spread of both the North American (NA1 & NA2) and European (EU1) strains. The only treatment option is to remove the key host species for the disease which in ODF's case is tanoak. The treatments consist of cutting and burning the tanoak that is infected and any tanoak that is within 300 to 600 feet.



Excavator piling tanoak along a road in Port Orford



Wet and windy conditions are favorable for the disease to spread via increased spore production and as a result there are more infected sites discovered. On the northern front of the disease several new sites have been discovered this year near Port Orford. They are mainly near other known trees and show disease spread.

Detecting new sudden oak death sites is essential to slow its spread. Helicopter flights and high-resolution aerial imagery provide a large-scale monitoring effort. This is coupled with bait leaves placed in streams and field transects that are an on the ground effort. These different survey methods helped the program take samples from 481 trees that were sent to the lab. Of these samples, 146 were positives for *phytophthora ramorum*.



Treatment consists of herbicide application to prevent sprouts, cutting and piling tanoaks during the dry months in summer and fall, and burning piles during the wetter winter months. During 2024, 216 acres were cut and piled and piles from 174 acres were burnt.

The bulk of the treatments this year were near Port Orford with the only exception being a treatment site on Lobster Creek near Gold Beach.



*Contractor working with one of the burn piles*



*Completed Treatment Unit*

The program also works with Oregon State University conducting research into various aspects of the disease. The prime project currently being worked on is one to determine the length of time a tanoak log will harbor viable disease. The results of this study would help determine how long a cut infected log must be left before it would be safe to ship out of the quarantine area. Disease presence and quarantine rules have major impacts to forest owners on the south coast.



## ADMINISTRATION & DISPATCH

2024 began in much the same way we ended 2023 - with payroll audits. Our admin team continued working to ensure our payroll from the 2023 Fire Season was recorded appropriately to finish out fiscal year 2024 as accurately as possible. Completing these audits was a massive workload but getting them done helped ensure the success of our EFC audit, getting billings out in a timely fashion, and preparing for multiple cost share reconciliations



*Andrea Lively- District Business Manager*



*Carlos Jones- Seasonal Dispatcher*

Unlike many ODF Districts, Western Lane experienced a moderate fire season, allowing our admin staff to provide support for various fires throughout the State.

Andrea Lively:

- 8 days as a Timekeeper for the Dixon Fire in DFPA
- 36 days as the Payment Team Leader for the Lane 1 Fire in South Cascade

Brandy Simmons:

- 3 days as an Initial Attack Dispatcher for Lane 1 Fire
- 25 days as a Payment Team member for the
- Lane 1 Fire

Lauren Fischer:

- 31 days as a Timekeeper & Payment Team Member for Lane 1 Fire
- 5 days as a Payment Team Member for the MP98 Fire in DFPA
- 9 days as a Payment Team Member for the Devils Knob Fire in DFPA





*Dave Kjosness- Administrative Specialist 1*



*Brandy Simmons- Dispatch Coordinator*



*Lauren Fischer Office Specialist 2*

Dave and Carlos covered the home office behind these employees, increasing their workload significantly. While not directly supporting these large fire incidents, the coverage provided by these employees that allowed others to go is greatly appreciated and recognized.

We continue to make improvements to our dispatch center. This year we redesigned the overall setup within the dispatch office, created processes that will help dispatch function during power outages and added a new dispatch radio console.

2024 was the first full year operating under the new Private Forest Accord (PFA). Lauren spent a great deal of time in trainings and in Stewardship Forester Meetings, learning about the changes. Participating in these trainings and meetings helps Lauren better serve our customers.

Our team participated in several committees:

- Andrea – Incident Finance; Incident Finance Payroll Subcommittee; Dispatch Steering Committee; SOA Fireweb Working Group
- Brandy – Dispatch Steering Committee; SOA Fireweb Working Group; Western Lane Prevention Committee
- Dave – Admin Training Committee
- Lauren – Western Lane Safety Committee.

In addition, Brandy had the opportunity to be a member of the cadre for the Aviation Dispatch Training.

Overall, 2024 was a very successful year for our admin and dispatch team. We have an incredible group who make an efficient and cohesive team, offering exceptional support to our internal and external customers.



# WESTERN LANE FOREST RESOURCES

The purpose of the Forest Practices Act is to promote forest practices that are consistent with sound management and protection of trees, soil, air, water and fish and wildlife resources while assuring the continuous growth and harvesting of forest tree species. Stewardship Foresters place priorities on environmentally sensitive forest harvest operations, conducting pre-operation, active, and post-operation visits, ensuring written plans address all protected resources, and assisting forest landowners and operators.

In 2024, Stewardship Foresters and forest landowners were fully immersed in the new rules that came about from the Private Forest Accord. Due to substantial rule changes, no continuations were allowed from 2023 into 2024; all FPA activities required a new notification requiring an in-depth review to ensure that current rules were adhered to, including new and enhanced written plan requirements.



Immense time was spent by all Stewardship Foresters learning and communicating rule changes and additional documentation requirements to landowners. In most cases, written plans and stream flow surveys went back and forth between ODF and landowners until a satisfactory result was achieved. This customer service need shifted more time into the office and less time in the field.

2023 Notification Totals				2024 Notification Totals			
	Veneta	Coos	Total		Veneta	Coos	Total
Notifications Received	1066	1255	2321	Notifications Received	1377	1193	2570
Continuations from 2022	375	440	815	Continuations from 2023	0	0	0
FPA Inspections	461	327	788	FPA Inspections	447	334	781
Written Plans reviewed	354	564	918	Written Plans reviewed	387	539	926

# COOS UNIT FOREST RESOURCES

The Coos Unit (Coos Bay Unit office and Brookings sub-unit office) administers the Forest Resources Program on 1.38 million acres in Coos, Curry and western Douglas counties.

Jacob Bergstrom was hired as a Small Forestland Owner (SFO) Forester in mid-2023 to be the stewardship forester for all forestry landowners with less than 5,000 acres of forestland and less than 2 million board feet harvested per year. This model of one forester to assist all small landowners over the entire Coos unit was unsustainable. Upon Jacob's resignation from the agency in mid-2024 the workload was reorganized for all Stewardship Foresters to have oversight on all landowner types in a geographic area with a sixth forester focused on the Coos Bay – Bandon – Coquille – Myrtle Point area with a higher percentage of small forestland owners.

Foresters Quinn Allen and Donnie Widener led a field lab for Southwestern Oregon Community College's Field Measurement class, focused on distance and height measurements, tree diameter, and navigation using the Avenza app.



*Stewardship Foresters Quinn Allen and Donnie Widener teaching Southwestern Oregon Community College students how to use a laser rangefinder to measure distances and tree heights during a field exercise as part of Field Measurement.*



Coos Unit employees dedicated 198 days in fire suppression roles across Oregon, supporting the complete and coordinated system. Participating staff were dispatched as base camp manager, logistics section assistant, information officer, geographic information systems specialist, resource unit leader, and plans section chief.



*Sean Alexander (center) participated in the Multi Mission Aircraft (MMA) program, spending 13 days flying three missions across the state*

#### Personnel

Chase Villanueva was hired in Brookings as a Stewardship Forester in February.

Jacob Bergstrom resigned as the Small Forestland Owner (SFO) Stewardship Forester in June.

James Hill was hired in Coos Bay as a Stewardship Forester in December.



*James Hill*



*Chase Villanueva*



## Good Neighbor Authority

The Coos Unit operates GNA agreements with a timber sale every few years. In 2019, the Long Ridge sale salvaged 2,868 thousand board feet (MBF) of dead or dying roadside timber after the Chetco Bar fire, and in 2024 the Gobbler timber sale thinned a dense douglas fir plantation that was beginning to succumb to mortality due to thin soils, dry site, and overstocking.

Project	Planned Year	Acres	Planned Volume (MBF)	Harvested Volume (MBF)	Purchase price \$/MBF	Notes
Long Ridge	2019	200	1,901	2,868	\$27.80	Chetco Bar roadside salvage
Eagle Salvage	2019	300	1,800	n/a	n/a	Canceled due to deteriorated wood quality
Gobbler	2021	159	1,619	2,292	\$303.50	
North Lobster	2022	269	2,422			On hold pending USFS road project
Pine Grove	2025	450	>2000			In progress



*Coos Unit staff checking out the TimberPro TF840D in action for ground-based felling/yarding*



*Before (2023) and After (2024) thinning*

Gobbler is an isolated Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest parcel in the Powers Ranger District surrounded by industrial forestlands. ODF staff posted boundaries, cruised and appraised timber, wrote the contract and sold the sale in 2021 for \$303.50 per MBF to 3H Forestry and Land Management of Myrtle Point. Harvesting occurred in 2024 totaling 159 acres thinned, producing 2,292 MBF and a more resilient forest. Revenues from this and all GNA timber sales reimburse ODF expenses first and the remainder goes back to the national forest as restoration projects. The logger purchased a new TimberPro TF840D combination feller buncher / skidder for this project, which worked well on slopes less than 30%. Steeper portions of the sale were harvested with a 30' yarder.



## VENETA UNIT FOREST RESOURCES

2024 was a busy year for the Forest Resources program in Veneta. Stewardship Foresters workload immediately kicked into high gear when a significant ice storm fell over Lane County on January 13<sup>th</sup> bringing significant damage to the area. Although the storm was widespread throughout the county it was determined that the primary impacts could be seen in the Siuslaw drainage from Whittaker Creek east to the town of Lorane. This later became what we referred to as the “epicenter”. Impacts were primarily seen on the east facing slopes at or below 1,500’ elevation with no discrimination to age class of trees. Damaged trees spanned in age from 5-year-old reproduction to multi aged complex stands with mature timber while the heaviest hit was 30-40 year old stands. We estimated damage to have impacted 40% of the epicenter area and 5-10% of trees in remaining portions of the district, all totaling a rough approximation of 40,000 acres of broken and uprooted trees across the district. Industrial landowners went straight to work opening roads and working with our staff to plan extensive salvage efforts resulting in an increase in notifications and requests for Plans for Alternate Practice (PFAP). Small non-industrial landowners impacted by the storm also worked with our foresters to take advantage of the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) grant dollars for post storm recovery.



*Trail Creek Headwall northeast aspect*



While storm recovery was in full swing and workload was peaking, our foresters also answered the call to support the district and statewide fire suppression efforts during the record breaking 2024 fire season. Starting in May, when the district saw its first significant fire, and throughout the remainder of the season, Forest Resources staff was instrumental in suppression efforts, serving in overhead positions and supporting wherever needed. Staff ultimately spent 139 days off district supporting fires around the state.

Personnel movement has been common in recent years and 2024 was no different. In early July Ian Goodwin vacated his SFO Forester position to take an opportunity with the State Lands division as an inventory forester. Matt Grimes concluded his developmental and was hired permanently as the stewardship forester working on the eastern edges of the district where a major component of his duties include facilitating the success of small non-industrial landowners. James Hynes-Petty was also hired on November 12<sup>th</sup>. James came to us from California where he worked for Sierra Pacific Industries implementing harvest and reforestation plans. With Ian's departure and staffing levels at the desired capacity it was determined that the best course of action would be to reorganize and add a fifth work area where foresters would facilitate compliance for all landowner types in their respective areas.



*James Hynes-Petty*



*James presents at the reforestation training for landowners*

***Note: The Veneta Unit notification totals can be seen alongside the Coos Unit totals in a table on page 11.***



# WESTERN LANE STATE FORESTS UNIT

The Western Lane District manages 53,555 acres of forestland in Lane, Douglas, Coos, Curry, Jackson, and Josephine Counties.

## Timber Sales

Due to January's ice storm damage, several salvage sales were put up for auction in lieu of primary sales. In total, 4 timber sales were auctioned in fiscal year 2024, totaling 11.5 million board feet, with a gross value of \$7,610,939.

1. Self-loader Roadside Salvage: after roads were cleared from January's ice storm, five road systems were identified as having merchantable timber in roadside decks, including Carpenters Bypass, Van Curren Creek/H-line, Almasie Road and Nelson Mountain Road. 64 MBF at \$188/MBF for a \$28,500 value.
2. Druggs Creek: 4,286 MBF at \$461/MBF for a \$2,671,655 value.
3. Chicken Bone: 5,073 MBF at \$689/MBF for a value of \$3,450,933.
4. Son in Law: 2,109 MBF at a value of \$1,459,851.



*Griffin & Kylie*



*John joins the fun*



*Kylie hard at work*

Chet Behling (ADF): oversees State Forests management unit.

Jason Hayzlett (NRS2): T&E coordination, contract administration, sale planning.

John Enos (NRS2): reforestation and young stand management.

Kylie Husman (NRS1): reforestation, young stand management, timber sale layout & contract writing.

Griffin Puls (NRS1): roads specialist, timber sale layout & contract writing.

Vacant (NRS1)

Morgan Kawakami (NRS3): roads contract specialist (although not officially a WL employee, Morgan works at the state forests program level and shares workspace in the state forests unit).



*State Forests staff enjoying a tailgate lunch bbq during a quarterly trash cleanup day near Glendale*

## Ice Damage Across the Veneta Unit

January 13<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> produced a winter storm that brought 1-2" of ice to western Lane County. This resulted in snapped tops and downed trees across much of the Veneta Unit. State Forest staff quickly opened-up primary roads to further assess storm damage. Two work order contracts were awarded to open an additional 55 miles of forest roads to aid further reconnaissance, and two existing timber sale contracts were modified since additional work was required by the purchaser to open-up haul roads, and access active harvest units. ODF partnered with the Civil Air Patrol through the Office of Emergency Management for an aerial reconnaissance flight over the unit. CAP generated about 8,000 high resolution photos using an advanced camera system, which allowed state forest staff to analyze stand damage and prioritize salvage units through aerial photo interpretation.



*Ice storm damage*



The ice storm affected much of western Lane County however severe damage was very patchy. Many areas of severe damage were not accessible by roads or would not create a reasonable harvest unit. As a result, only stands having high amounts of damage, existing road infrastructure, and yielding logical harvest units were prioritized for salvage. Capturing the volume and value of ice-damaged stands was a priority in 2024, and consequently, several of our 2024 AOP primary sales were bumped into our 2025 AOP.



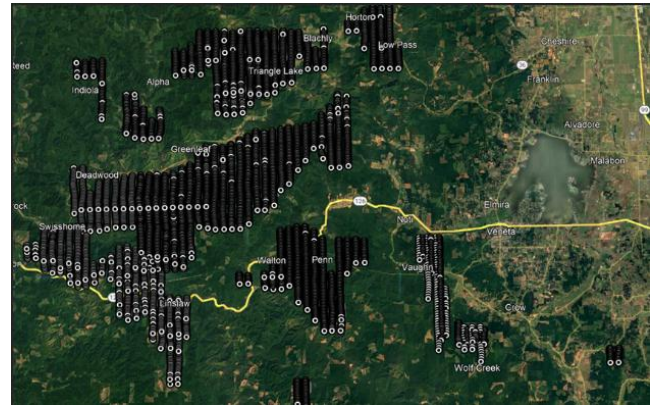
*Chet takes flight*





*Back seat view*

State Forests staff spent a considerable amount of time with district and off-district fires, leaving us a month or two behind in timber sale preparation. Staff remained focused in the fall and early winter and were able to get back on track by the end of the year. This is a testament to the hard-working and talented staff within the State Forests Unit.



*Aerial grid search pattern*

## Fire Season

State Forests staff worked a combined 140 days and over 1,700 hours on fire assignments! Both on and off district, staff held a variety of positions in Plans, Logistics and Operations.



Griffin had a 2-week Helitack assignment in Central Point and was sent on several Logistics assignments with IMT deployments.





Kylie provided Logistics support on district, and on IMT assignments. She is part of the IMT Logistics surge, providing additional support during the first few days of IMT deployments.

John continued his experience as a qualified and well-respected TFLD and will be looking to advance as DIVS in the coming years.

Jason provided much needed support on District fires and was often the only person to oversee critical State Forest operations during portions of the summer.



Chet filled in periodically as District Forester and contributed mainly in a Plans and Logistics role on district. He was dispatched to the Copperfield Fire in a Peer Support capacity working with the Klamath Falls District and assigned IMT, with the objective to spread awareness of the newly formed Peer Support Team and the services they provide.



Despite the number of days spent on fires, State Forest staff were able to make excellent progress in the fall and winter with timber sale preparation and was nearly caught up by the end of the year.





*Morgan and Griffin at fire camp*

## Trash Clean-up

Kylie has taken the responsibility of addressing the increased amount of trash we're seeing on state forestland, most notably in the Glendale area. She has made considerable progress to better track and inventory existing trash dumps ranging from abandoned camp trailers and RV's, to vehicles, boats and household trash dumps. After prioritizing clean-up efforts, she developed contracts and worked with contractors to have the trash removed and is coordinating quarterly trash pick-up days with unit staff. Despite it being undesirable and often dirty work, these trash pick-up days allow the unit to come together and work as a team, become more familiar with the southwest ground the district manages; and given favorable weather conditions, allows for a tailgate barbeque and warming fire over the lunch break on occasion. These efforts contribute to providing GPV and will increase public experience as they recreate and enjoy their state forest land.



## Joint Partnership Between ODF and ODFW - Forest to Meadow Conversion

To create wildlife habitat for purple martins, bats, bees and other wildlife, ODF has partnered with ODFW to create a high-elevation meadow. The four-acre Walker Meadows site is located about 13 miles west of Veneva and is at an elevation of 2,300 feet. The project started as a six-acre ODF timber harvest to reduce fire risk and to protect an ODF smoke detection camera and communication tower. While this harvest was occurring, ODFW asked if there were any suitable sites for an upland meadow at a regular end-of-season meeting between the two departments.

The work included removing 4 acres of stumps, leveling the ground to prepare for replanting, and chemically treating noxious and invasive plants. ODF obtained 120 potted plants for the new meadow habitat. Staff from both agencies got



together and did the planting. ODFW staff then seeded the rest of the meadow with a native pollinator/grass seed mix. All the planting and seedling was done last October, and the meadow is looking good this year. Multiple species, including a variety of birds and bats have been documented utilizing the forest opening for feeding. Also, meadows like this have optimal forage for small and large mammals such as moles, voles, rabbits, bobcats, Roosevelt elk, black-tailed deer, mountain lions and black bears. Both ODFW and ODF see this meadow as a model project that can be used as a guide to create more critical habitat.



***Site preparation slash pile burning for meadow development***



***Randy Smith worked with Western Lane staff***



***ODF & ODFW staff preparing wildlife and pollinator friendly plants for planting***



***Snags left standing on the prairie***



***Staff performing the planting***



## Pile Burning

We wrapped up 2024 with the annual pile burning festivities. The unit came together and made quick work of the three units, with thanks to Morgan for lending a hand.



***Griffin strikes a pose***  
***Kylie enjoys her work***



***Griffin, Kylie & Morgan***  
***Morgan preps the drip torch***  
***Morgan buried in her work***



***Chet oversees the hard-working crew***

### **Additional note from Chet:**

Western Lane once again participated in the Annual Lane County Logging Conference in February. This year an estimated 750 people came through the yurt, in which we were able to engage the public and provide discussion around ODF programs and how we might best serve the public. ODF programs in the yurt consisted of State Forests, Forest Resources, Fire, Recreation Education and Interpretation, Insects and Disease, and the Forest Trust of Oregon. Thank you to Salem staff and our neighboring districts including North Cascade, South Cascade, West Oregon, and Southern Oregon for helping staff tables.



*John Enos presents at a reforestation training for landowners*



# PREVENTION PROGRAM

Prevention in Western Lane keeps on trucking along to educate the public on the importance of fire safety. We participated in several annual events, including the Logging Conference, Veneta National Night Out, and Jerry's Fire Safety Day among many others.

## 2024 Fire Prevention Activities for Western Lane District:

- 86th Annual Logging Conference - February 22-24
- Lane County Spring Home Show – March 8
- Veneta Elementary Earth Day – April 22
- City of Creswell Arbor Day – April 27
- Florence Arbor Day – April 27
- Handed out 25,000 prevention coffee sleeves – May
- Tabled with Eugene-Springfield Fire for the Eugene Saturday Market – May
- Pre-season equipment checks with tree service companies, ODOT, and utility companies – May & June
- National Night out in Veneta – August 6
- Jerry's Fire Safety Day, September 28
- Forest Today & Forever Outdoor School – October
- Veneta Light Parade – December 12
- Participated in prescribed burns with other agencies



*February 22, 2024 – McKenna Armantrout & Kate Johns @ the Logging Conference*





*August 6, 2024 – Veneta National Night Out*

**Other notable Prevention efforts included:** IRA Fire Suppression Trainings for operators and contractors, put on in April and May this year for a total of 5 training sessions. Passing out over 30,000 coffee sleeves with prevention messages to local Coffee booths in western Lane County for National Wildfire Awareness Month, in addition to creating a “Thank You” video on Facebook to all the Coffee Shops for sharing Smokey’s Fire Prevention Message.





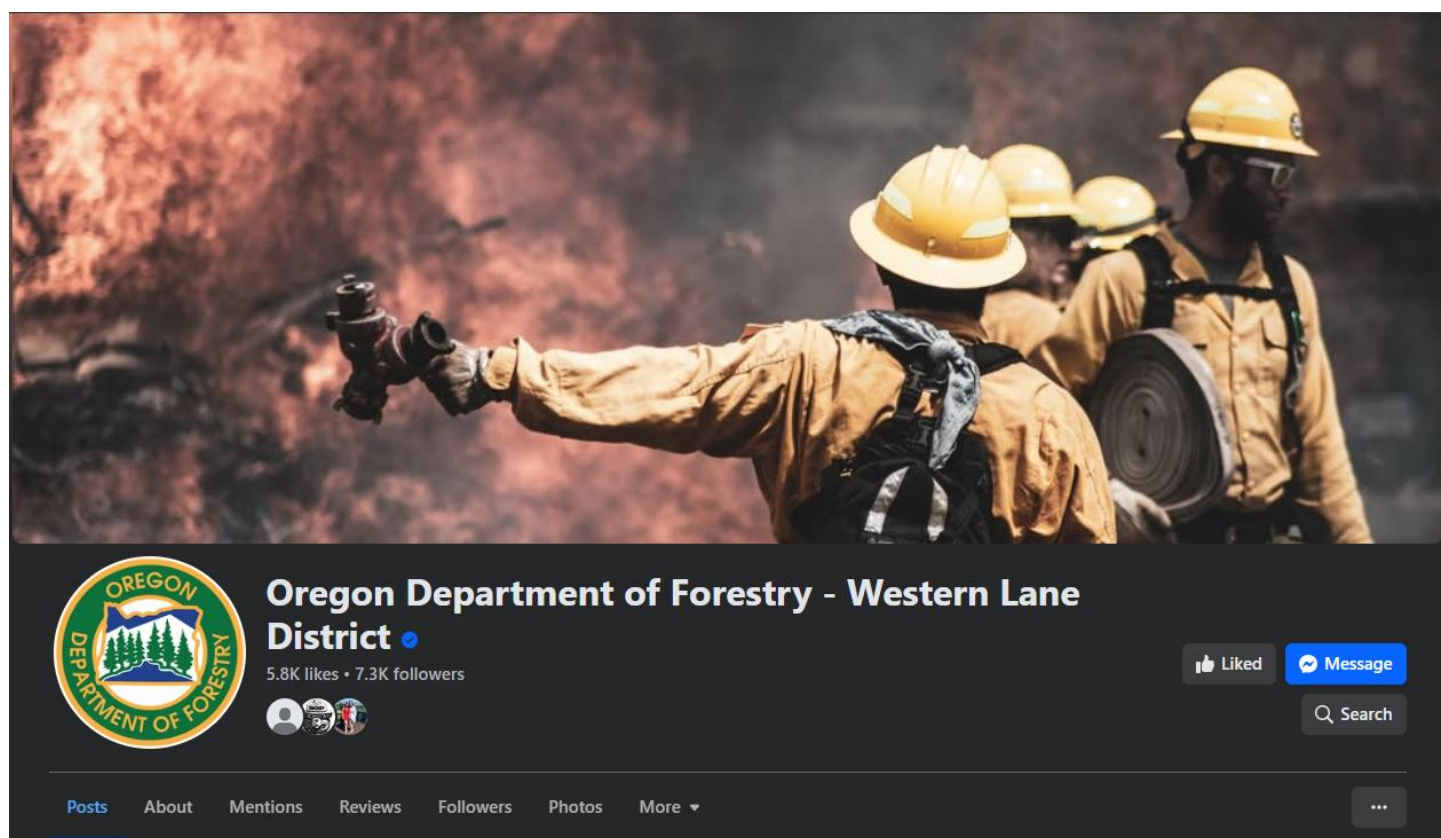
We also filmed content for a Prevention video that will address how to safely conduct debris burns in the hope of preventing piles from escaping during shoulder seasons. The video will be edited and finalized in 2025.



*Aaron Lighty, Kate Johns, and Dylan Coughran (below) help with the content of the film for a short video on preventing escaped debris burns*



ODF Western Lane's Facebook page gained 628 followers in 2024 for a total of 7,366 followers. We started our page February of 2017, and it has remained a valuable way to connect with the public about Regulated Use Restrictions, current Fire Danger Levels, IFPL changes, and much more.



### **Lane Fire Prevention Cooperative:**

The Lane County Fire Prevention Co-Op continued going strong, meeting once a month. This year, members of the Co-op participated in several outreach events throughout Lane County, including the Lane County Spring Home and Garden Show, the Lane County Fair, the Upper McKenzie Disaster Preparedness Fair, and the Memorial Day Celebration in Veneta. Members also discussed potential new events that could be represented by the Co-op as a whole, with the 2025 Spring Home and Garden Show and the Veneta Farmer's Market as two potential options. Lastly, the LFP Co-op donated an old fire engine apparatus to the Oregon Fire Service Museum this year.

Western Lane's Prevention team has worked hard this year to spread information on the importance of fire safety and prevention to the public. Representing ODF at outreach events allows the opportunity to have conversations with landowners and ensures that a wider prevention message is spread in Lane County. In 2025, Prevention will continue to attend outreach events around Lane County as well as develop more prevention related content to educate landowners throughout the year.



## PROTECTION

The 2024 fire season was a safe and successful one in Western Lane, one that leaves us feeling very fortunate given the immensity that was the '24 fire season across the state. Because we were not faced with a significant fire load on district, a large effort for the year can be summarized by our ability to provide support throughout the season to various other districts in their time of need. No significant accidents or injuries took place, and this was notably a testament to the awareness and professionalism of our fire supervisors and crew.

The ice storm that blanketed Lane County on January 13 prompted protection staff to evaluate potential impacts to suppression efforts. A couple key concepts identified were road access and fuel loading on the landscape. Staff worked with partner agencies and landowners to open roads and identify others that would not be opened after initial cleanup efforts. Unopened roads were then tracked and catalogued to provide fire resources with an immediate understanding of access if lightning or a confirmed fire was present in an area, with the intent that the information would help inform fire managers on strategies and resource needs. Fuel loading was mitigated through salvage efforts on industrial ownership but will continue to be a concern on public ground for years to come and will dictate suppression efforts and strategies for the foreseeable future.

'24 Stat Fires		
<u>Cause</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Lightning	10	5.35
Equipment Use	18	69.57
Recreation	8	.56
Smoking	3	.12
Debris Burning	19	29.39
Arson	3	.03
Juveniles	0	0
Railroad	0	0
Misc.	9	3.2
Under Invest.	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>108.22</b>

There were some staffing changes for the year. Matt Grimes stepped out of his permanent Forest Officer position to take a developmental opportunity as a Stewardship Forester and Aaron Lighty stepped into his vacancy. The South Cascade district was kind enough to loan us Ben Cline for the summer to fill the vacant Wildland Fire Supervisor position in a developmental capacity. Two suppression specialists also took developmental opportunities as Forest Officers for the summer. All individuals took full advantage of the opportunities and excelled in their roles.

The district experienced a higher-than-average number of fires for the season but only had two fires grow to larger than 10 acres. 70 fires were suppressed with a total of 108.2 acres burned as equipment use and debris burning fires lead the cause categories. 85% of fires we responded to were human caused and 97% of fires

suppressed were 10 acres or less. The district-initiated fire season on July 1 and terminated the season on October 21 with a total of 113 days in fire season. Of note this year was the district support to our rural fire counterparts on our district boundaries where we were engaged in 11 fires that burned a total of 158 acres.



Spring weather was initially welcomed as April and early May brought good amounts of precipitation, but a warm dry trend set in starting May 8 and by Mother's Day temps were in the 80's with winds becoming prominent throughout the month. Between mid-May and the start of fire season on July 1, the district suppressed 12 fires that burned a total of 67 acres. The large majority of acres burned during this time were attributed to the Letsom Mt. operator fire that occurred on May 31.



***Letsom Mt. Fire started May 31 at 16:30, burning in slash on steep terrain in an active logging operation. Fire size 65.39***



The fire load in June was minimal and allowed us to move forward with our intent of increasing prevention and training efforts. By organizing site visits with industrial landowners, we were able to perform a greater number of pre-season fire inspections on equipment than in years past. Whether related to this increase or not we saw a lower number of deficiencies on operations, wrote fewer industrial warnings/citations, and saw an increase in operators with fire readiness plans in place throughout the season. We were also focused on meeting our intent to continually adapt and improve the training product we provide for our seasonal crew. This year we partnered with Weyerhaeuser to conduct a field training with their type 2 helicopter. The training offered personnel the opportunity to work in direct coordination with the pilot as they ran simulated fire scenarios and learned to understand best management practices when working with helicopters.



Level	Days	IFPL	WT-I	SL-2
LOW	5	1	29	29
MODERATE	40	2	45	84
HIGH	68	3	39	0
EXTREME	0	4	0	0

*Fire danger levels and IFPL's during the 2024 fire season*



***Siuslaw fire started October 10 at 13:45. Burning in slash on steep ground in an active logging operation. Final fire size 3.08 acres***



***Hurricane Helene Support***

As we moved into the heart of fire season our support to the statewide effort kicked into high gear. Staff from all programs filled positions from finance, logistics, public information officer, and dispatch to fire line support as single resources and overhead. At one point the district had 19 employees off district on fires while maintaining an adequate level of protection on district. In total, staff spent hundreds of days and thousands of hours off-district in supporting roles, with those staying back picking up the core business duties at home. Two staff members were also deployed to North Carolina in October to help with cleanup efforts after hurricane Helene.

A higher-than-average number of thunderstorms came over the district in '24 but we were fortunate enough to suppress all subsequent fires before they grew to a significant size. This can be attributed to organized pre-planning, aggressive initial attack and some good luck in our ability to access fires via road systems, taking advantage of available aviation assets, and two of the five storms coming with precipitation. Ultimately, we suppressed 10 lightning caused fires that burned a total of 5.3 acres.





***6 thunderstorms over the district dropped approximately 250 total positive strikes. 10 fires as a result burned 5.3 acres***



***Letz Creek fire started 10/10 at 13:09. Fire contained to the machine and minimal surrounding wildland fuels.***





*Elk Drive started 10/26 at 14:20 and burned in close proximity to multiple homes, prompting a level 2 evacuation. Final fire size: 24.6 ac.*



## SMOKE MANAGEMENT

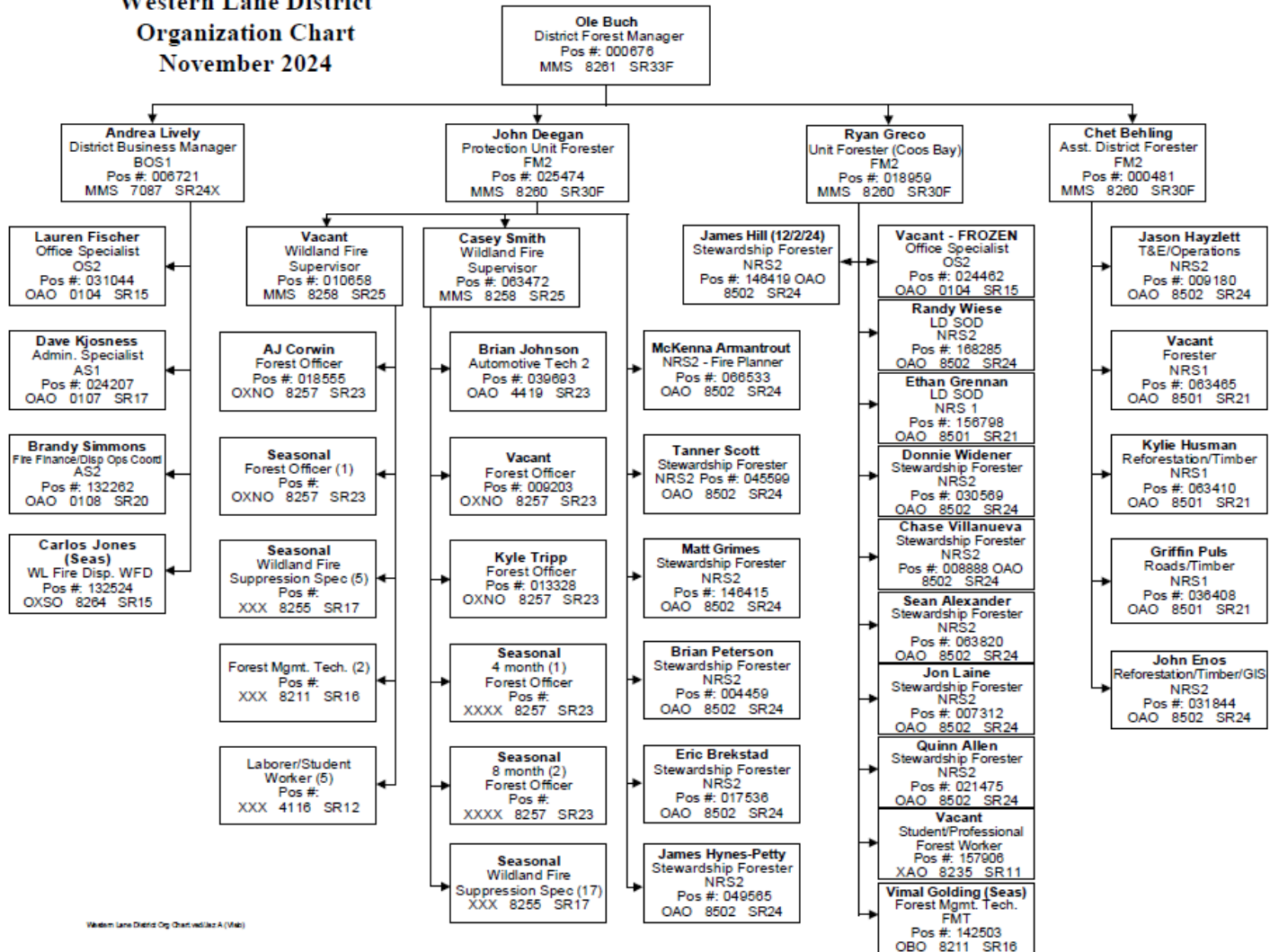
2024 Smoke Management Units	
Units Registered	209
Units Planned	221
Units Burned	175
2024 Smoke Management Acres	
Acres Registered	9853
Acres Planned	12,822
Acres Burned	5773
2024 Smoke Registration Tons	
Tons Registered	63,380
Tons Planned	32,183

The 2024 smoke management season was successful with no incidents or intrusions recorded. Staff saw an increase in registrations and planning, with more units, acres, and tons scheduled for burning compared to previous years. However, ultimately fewer units, acres, and tons were burned than planned. This suggests a more cautious approach, possibly due to environmental factors or operational challenges, despite the overall growth in planned activities.



# DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

## Western Lane District Organization Chart November 2024





## 2023 WLFPA BOARD

### DIRECTORS

**President- Lindsay Reaves**  
Bauman Tree Farm

**Randy Hereford**  
Starker Forests Incorporated

**Vice President- Nikolai Hall**  
Forest Investment Associates

**Lindsay Sage**  
Campbell Global

**Secretary- Garrett Yarbrough**  
Giustina Land & Timber

**Tim Truax**  
Roseburg Resources Company

**Mike Emmons- Treasurer**  
Sierra Pacific Industries

**Jeff Yost**  
Weyerhaeuser Company

**Willie Bronson**  
Martha Bronson Trust

### ADVISORY DIRECTORS

**Voting Advisory Director- Sarah Bickford**  
Bureau of Land Management

**Dave Larson**  
ODF Southern Oregon Area

**Kristin Babbs**  
Keep Oregon Green

**Chad Washington**  
Oregon Forest Industries Council

**Dave Crowell**  
Siuslaw National Forest

### MEMBERS

Atkinson Territory, LLC- Martin Atkinson  
Cafferata Family Forest LLC- Steve & Wylda Cafferata  
Coast Range Conifers, LLC- Sarah Leiman & Ed Cummings  
Davidson Industries, Inc.- Phil & Sue Davidson  
Giustina Resources- Kenny Rose  
Koozer Bros., LLC- John Koozer  
Lane County Board of Commissioners- Kellie Hancock, Ryan Ceniga, Heather Buch  
Lone Rock Timber Co.- Chris Arnold  
Gerald Meier  
Mount Scott Holding Co.- Tim Truax  
Rienschke Timber LLC- Sandra Faulhaber  
Craig & Cindy Royce  
Swanson Bros. Lumber Co.- Derek Lee  
Thomas A. Lawler Revocable Trust  
Woolley Enterprises Inc.- Jay Fox