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| Agenda Item No.:      | 6  |
| Work Plan:            | Private Forests  |
| Topic:                | Ceremonial Events and Recognitions   |
| Presentation Title:   | 2015 Forest Practices Operator of the Year awards  |
| Date of Presentation: | March 9, 2016  |
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**SUMMARY**

The Board of Forestry annually recognizes Forest Practices Operators of the Year. This year’s award recipients are WyEast Timber Services, Giustina Land & Timber Co. and Hull-Oakes Lumber Co, and R&R King Logging Inc.

**BACKGROUND**

The “Forestry Program for Oregon” includes the Operator Recognition program, which aims to protect, maintain, and enhance Oregon’s forest soil and water resources through voluntary resource enhancement efforts. The program recognizes operators who voluntarily protect forest resources and exemplify forestry values. To recognize operators meeting or exceeding the forest practice minimums, each year the program typically names: three Operators of the Year (one per Area); Merit Award recipients; and Letters of Commendation.

The program has two goals:

1. Recognize operators who consistently exceed the Oregon Forest Practices Act and voluntarily raise industry standards; and,
2. Improve public understanding of the Forest Practices Act, its administration, and its effectiveness in protecting natural resources

**Process**

To earn an Operator of the Year award, operators must be nominated. Anyone may nominate an operator. Department staff screen the nominations to ensure nominees meet the minimum requirements and then refer the nominations to the respective Regional Forest Practices Committees. As directed by the Board, the committees base their decision on the operators’ innovative techniques, cooperative spirit, consistent performance, and preventative measures by participating in field tours, reviewing the written nominations and tour videos.

The 2015 Forest Practices Regional Operator of the Year Award recipients are:

**WyEast Timber Services** (Eastern Area – Hood River) – WyEast Timber Services earned the

Eastern Oregon Area Operator of the Year award for improving two parks, Rock Creek and Punch Bowl Falls. WyEast and Mosier city officials created a strategic plan to help prevent bark beetles from damaging more trees. In Rock Creek Park, WyEast removed specific trees and navigated complex urban issues like powerlines, traffic and hiking trails to meet city goals and create a healthier forest. On the Punch Bowl Falls project, Western Rivers Conservancy hired WyEast to promote forest health by removing damaged and diseased trees and create space for growing larger trees while protecting Hood River's west and middle forks, which contain protected salmon species. Western Rivers Conservancy then gave the land to the county.

**Giustina Land and Timber and Hull-Oakes Lumber Companies** (Northwest Area – Eugene and Monroe) – Giustina Land & Timber and Hull-Oakes Lumber Companies earned the Northwest Oregon Area Operator of the Year award for two stream improvement projects. The Long Tom Watershed Council determined that replacing multiple culverts throughout the South Fork Ferguson basin could open it for fish passage. The companies learned of the opportunity and voluntarily joined efforts to install two larger culverts for improving stream quality and fish passage. Giustina and Hull-Oakes helped open five miles of stream for coastal cutthroat trout to spawn and access cold water habitat. The companies contributed the labor, expertise and equipment to enhance the stream for fish.

**R&R King Logging Inc.** (Southwest Area – Florence) – R&R King Logging earned the Southern Oregon Area Operator of the Year award for protecting the streamside buffer along Little Paradise Creek, a large fish-bearing stream with salmon, steelhead and trout. The creek runs south, bisecting the harvest unit. R&R King needed to move the logs from the creek's east side to the west side for processing. The team used a suspended cable system to move the logs along 1,500- to 4,000-foot spans over the creek to protect its buffer trees. R&R King went above and beyond the Forest Practices Act minimum requirements to better protect natural resources at the expense of lost production.

These operators have been and continue to be recognized at annual statewide industry events throughout the year including the Associated Oregon Loggers Convention, the Oregon Logging Conference, and the Oregon Small Woodland Association Conference.

All nominees exceeded the Forest Practices requirements and improved Oregon's forests, fish and wildlife habitat, fire safety needs and water quality. Merit Award recipients selected by the Regional Forest Practices Committees will be recognized by the committees and at local functions, along with those receiving Letters of Commendation from their districts. The Merit Award recipients are:

- Melcher Logging – Sweet Home
- J.M. Browning Logging. – Astoria

A brief presentation describing the Operator of the Year projects has been prepared.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Department recommends the Board of Forestry formally recognize the recipients for their excellence in forest operations.