

## **STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Item No.:	10
Topic:	Forestland Conversion
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Contact Information:	John Tokarczyk, Resource Planning Manager <a href="mailto:john.a.tokarczyk@odf.oregon.gov">john.a.tokarczyk@odf.oregon.gov</a> Dan Hubner, Land Use & GIS Analyst <a href="mailto:daniel.hubner@odf.oregon.gov">daniel.hubner@odf.oregon.gov</a>

## **SUMMARY**

The Board has indicated interest in being informed on data and trends regarding conversion of forestland to other uses in Oregon. This agenda item will provide information about long-term land use change and rates of development on resource lands (i.e., forest, farm, and range lands) in the context of Oregon's Statewide Land Use Planning Goals, especially Goal 4 for forestlands.

## **CONTEXT**

Oregon's comprehensive land use planning program was established in 1973 by Senate Bill 100, and was fully implemented by local governments by the mid 1980s. With respect to forests, Statewide Planning Goal 4 seeks to protect the state's forestland base by requiring counties to identify and zone forestland consistently with state rules and by placing development restrictions on those lands. The planning system also allows for land to be zoned as mixed farm-forest, in which case both Goal 4 and Goal 3 (for farm lands) apply; counties have varied to some extent in the standards that they apply to these mixed lands.

There has been an ongoing need to monitor the effectiveness of the state planning system at achieving its intended goals. To this end, Department staff--in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (PNW-FIA) and with the support of state partner agencies--produce a long term land use change report for non-federal lands in Oregon ("Forests, Farms, and People") every 4-6 years. This analysis is based upon interpretation of aerial imagery, and provides a methodologically-consistent assessment of land use change at medium scales (i.e., where "wildland forest" is defined as undeveloped forestland of at least 640 contiguous acres in size) that extends temporally back to 1974 (and most recently to 2018). Broadly, the data indicate that conversion rates of forest and other resource lands to more-developed uses were notably curtailed after the implementation of statewide planning. However, the data also indicate that densification of developments on resource lands is continuing incrementally (an ongoing policy concern in the state). Also, while this data is rigorous and consistent, its sampling design does not allow for monitoring at the level of individual parcels (or other small areas).

Parcel-level monitoring data is available from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), which receives and summarizes official county land use decisions on farm and forest lands. DLCD provides a Farm & Forest Land Use Report to the State Legislature every two years, with the most recent report covering 2022 & 2023. DLCD's data covers the period since 1994 and provides information on the numbers of dwellings and other nonforest use approvals on resource lands, the amount of resource land impacted by urban growth boundary expansions, etc.

This agenda item will summarize the information that can be drawn from these data sources (and outside sources of information such as the U.S. Census of Agriculture), and provide room for discussion of recent trends and development pressures on forestlands.

This is an informational item only.

## **NEXT STEPS**

During the second half of 2025, ODF staff will work to update long-term land use change data from 2018 to 2024 (in partnership with PNW-FIA). Publication of a new "Forest, Farms, and People" report will follow, and a more detailed project-specific update on recent trends and findings will be made to the Board (anticipated early 2026).

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None