

# Forestland Conversion in Oregon

*Presented to the Oregon Board of Forestry, June 4, 2025*

Presentation overview:

1. Statewide Planning Goal 4 – context from DLCD
2. Development in forest zones under Goal 4 – details and data from DLCD
3. Conversion notifications in FERNS – data (and caveats) from ODF
4. Long-term land use change on non-federal lands – data from ODF/USFS
5. Interpretation, discussion, questions



Presenters/panelists:

Hilary Foote (Farm & Forest Specialist, DLCD)

Dan Hubner (GIS/Land Use Analyst, ODF)

John Tokarczyk (Resource Planning Manager, ODF)

Jim Johnson (Working Lands Policy Director, 1000 Friends of Oregon)





**DLCD**

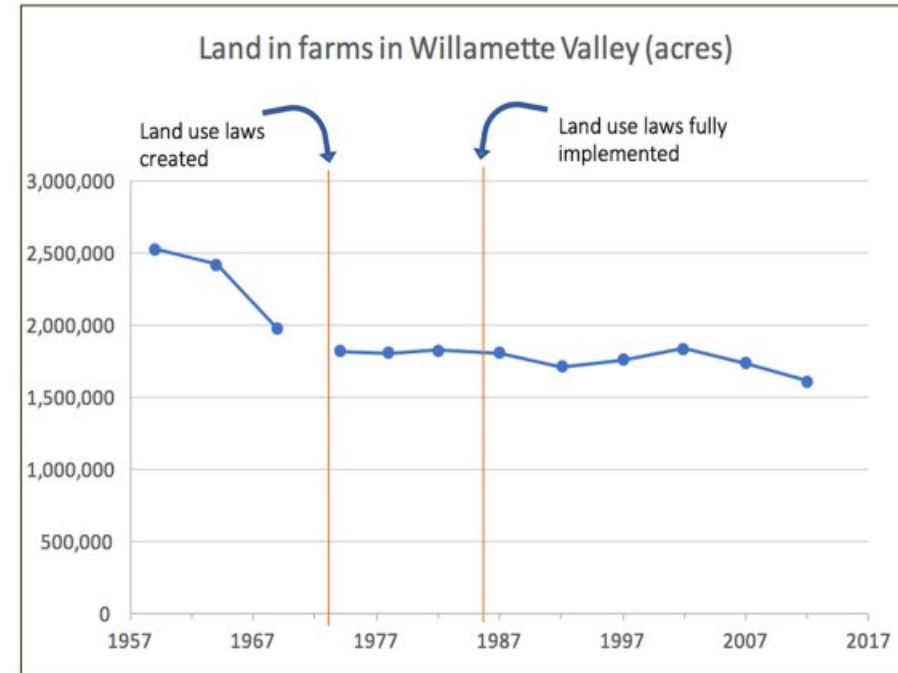


# Statewide Planning Goal 4

June 4, 2025

Hilary Foote  
Farm Forest Specialist

# Context for the Land Use Planning Program



# Planning Program Principals: Three Big Ideas

**RESOURCE  
LAND  
PROTECTION**



**PLANNING FOR  
URBAN  
COMMUNITIES**



**STATE  
OVERSIGHT OF  
LOCAL PLANS**







## Goal 4: Forest Lands

To conserve forest lands by **maintaining the forest land base** and to **protect the state's forest economy** by making possible economically efficient forest practices that **assure the continuous growing and harvesting of forest tree species as the leading use on forest land** consistent with sound management of **soil, air, water, and fish and wildlife resources** and to provide for **recreational opportunities and agriculture.**

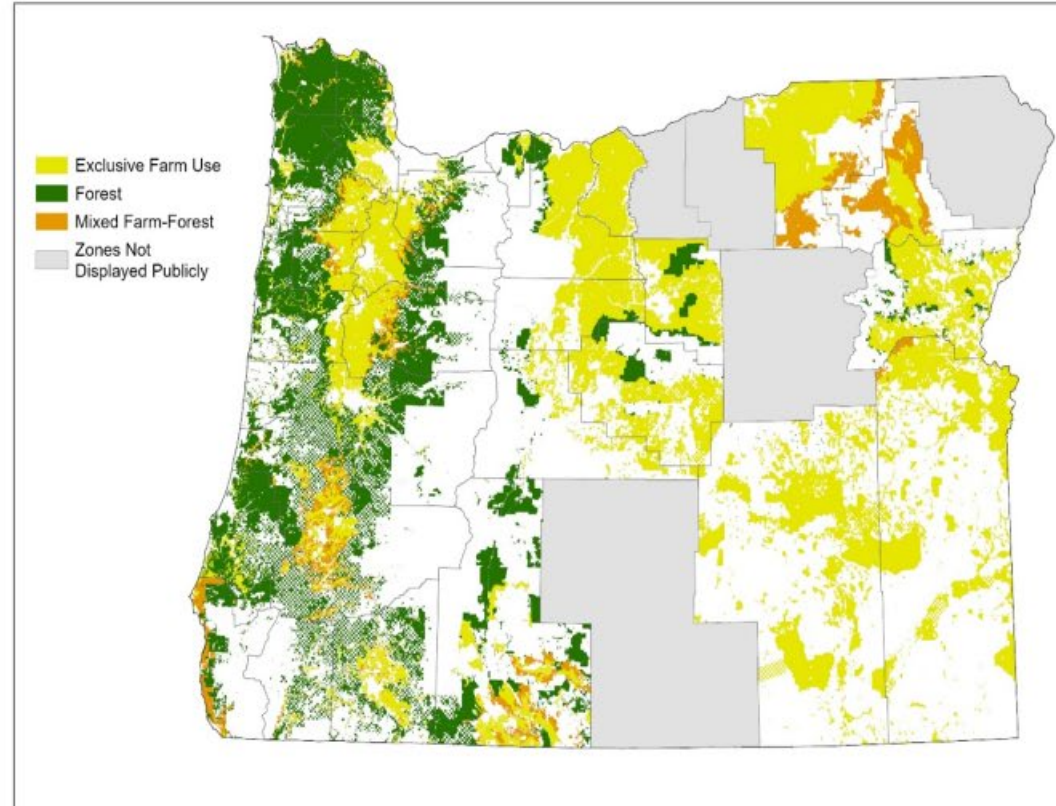
# How does the Planning Program Conserve Forestland?

Goal 4: Forest Lands

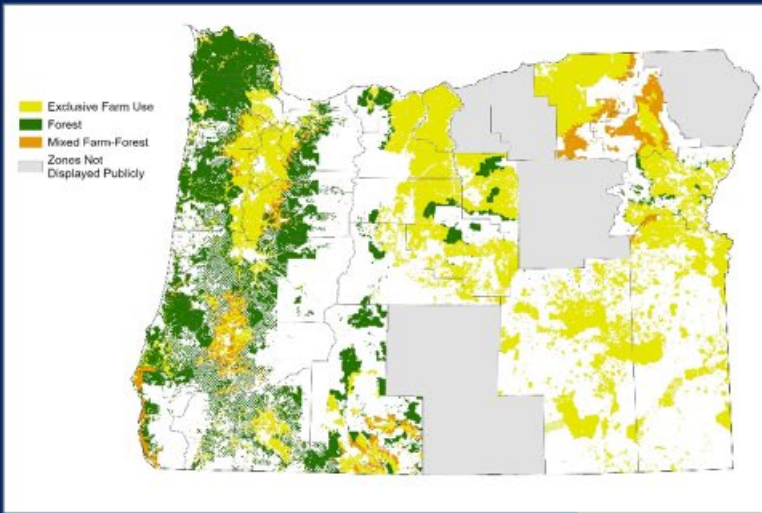
Oregon Revised Statute:  
ORS 215.700 through  
215.799

Oregon Administrative  
Rule: OAR 660-006

County Zoning Maps,  
Comprehensive Plan and  
Ordinances

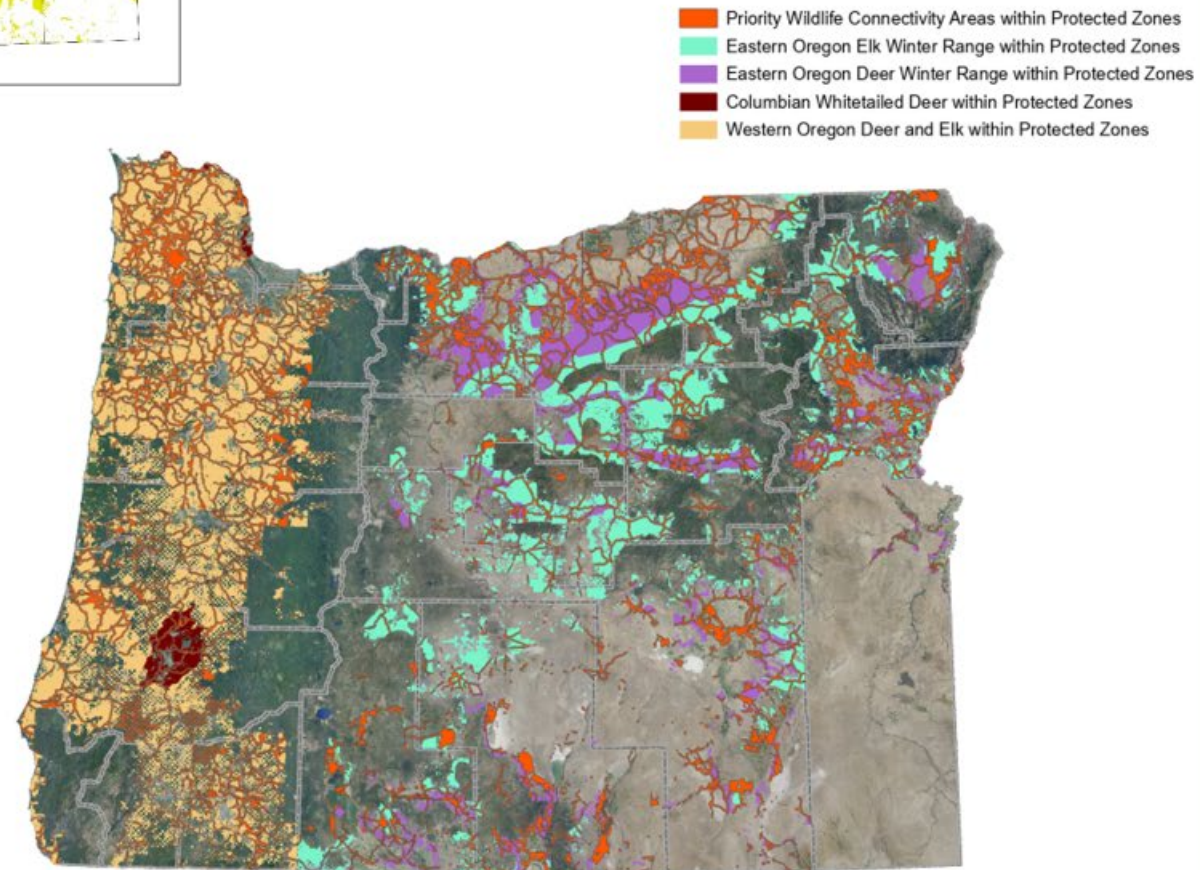






There are several co-benefits of preserving working lands

“There is distinct value in maintaining the integrity and functionality of the region’s resource lands to ensure that the benefits they provide persist. This interest is challenged as significant regional population growth threatens to fragment resource lands and disrupt the continuity requisite to their ecological health, productivity, and functionality.” 2020 Oregon Department of Forestry





**DLCD**



## **Statewide Planning Goal 4: Development in Forest Zones**

June 4, 2025

Hilary Foote  
Farm Forest Specialist



# Permissible Development on Forest Lands

Farm & Forest Uses

Resource-related or Compatible  
Must allow

Must Determine No Impacts or  
Fire Danger  
May be More Restrictive

Goal Exceptions

Zone Changes

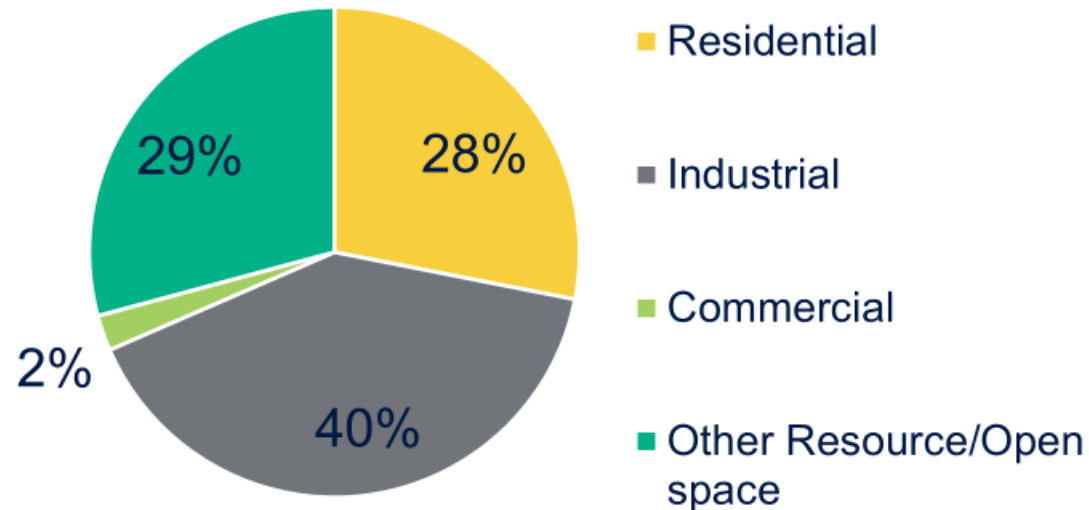
Property Remains Zoned Forest

Rural Zone Changes: Average loss of 1,400 resource acres a year

UGB Expansions: Average loss of 1,000 resource acres a year

Result: 43,000 acres removed from farm zoning and 10,000 acres removed from Forest zoning since 1984

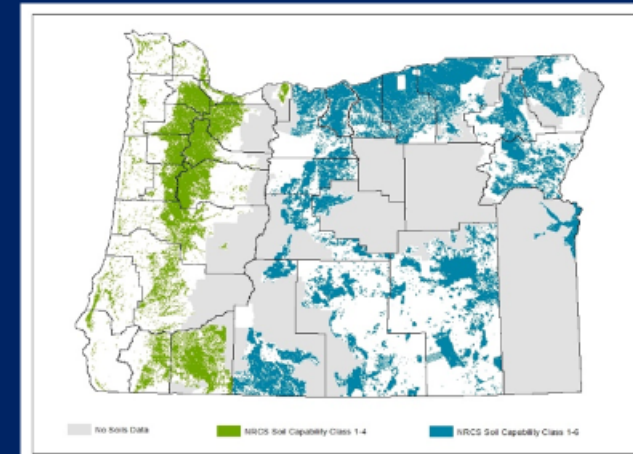
### Zone change from resource to type, 2018-2023



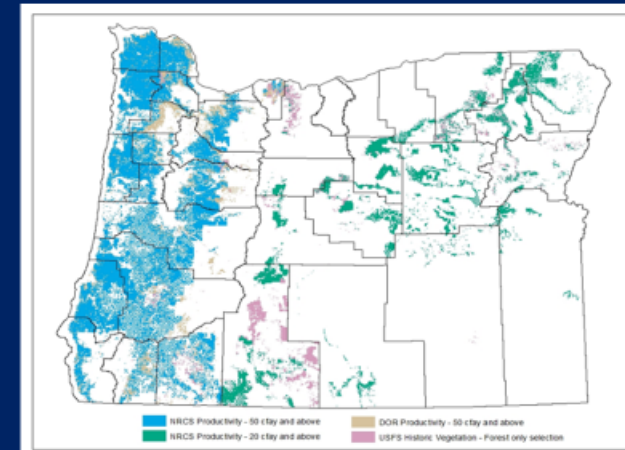
- Carrying capacity
- Infrastructure requirements
- Availability/cost of water and other public services
- Transportation
- Environmental factors
- Habitat impacts
- Hazards
- Rural character and open space

Correction of mapping errors has been carried out parcel by parcel rather than programmatically

County	Total Acres Designated Rural Resource/ Non-resource
Klamath	34,877
Crook	23,261
Josephine	15,573
Wasco	7,047
Douglas	3,341
Clatsop	2,351
Lane	613
Jackson	545
Deschutes	452
Linn	231
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,291</b>



Not agricultural lands OAR  
660-033-0020(1)

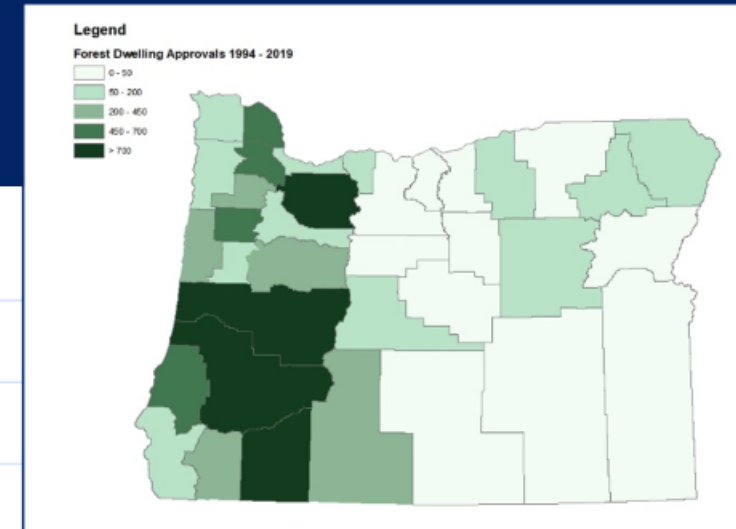
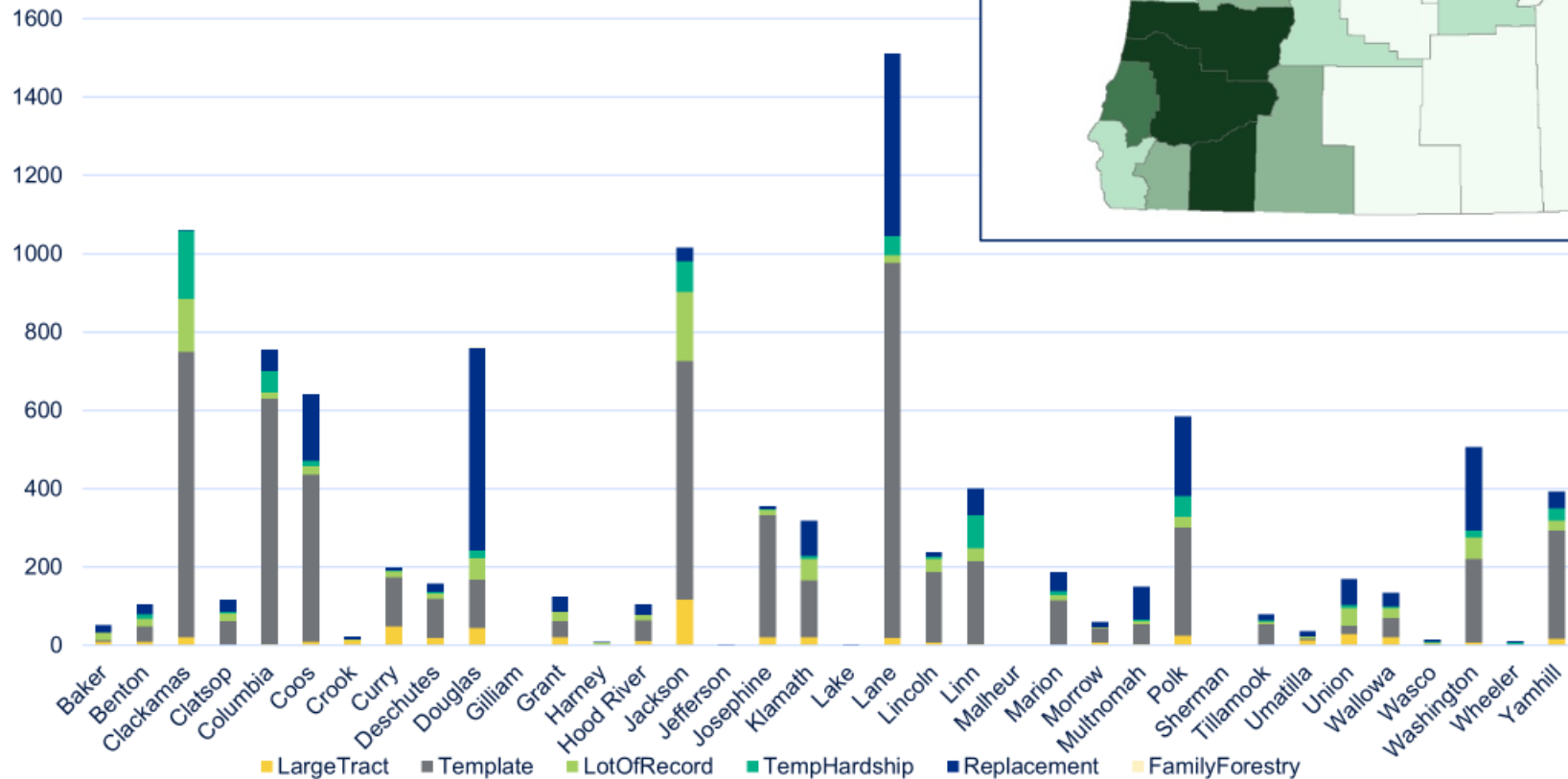


Not forest lands  
OAR 660-006-0010(2)

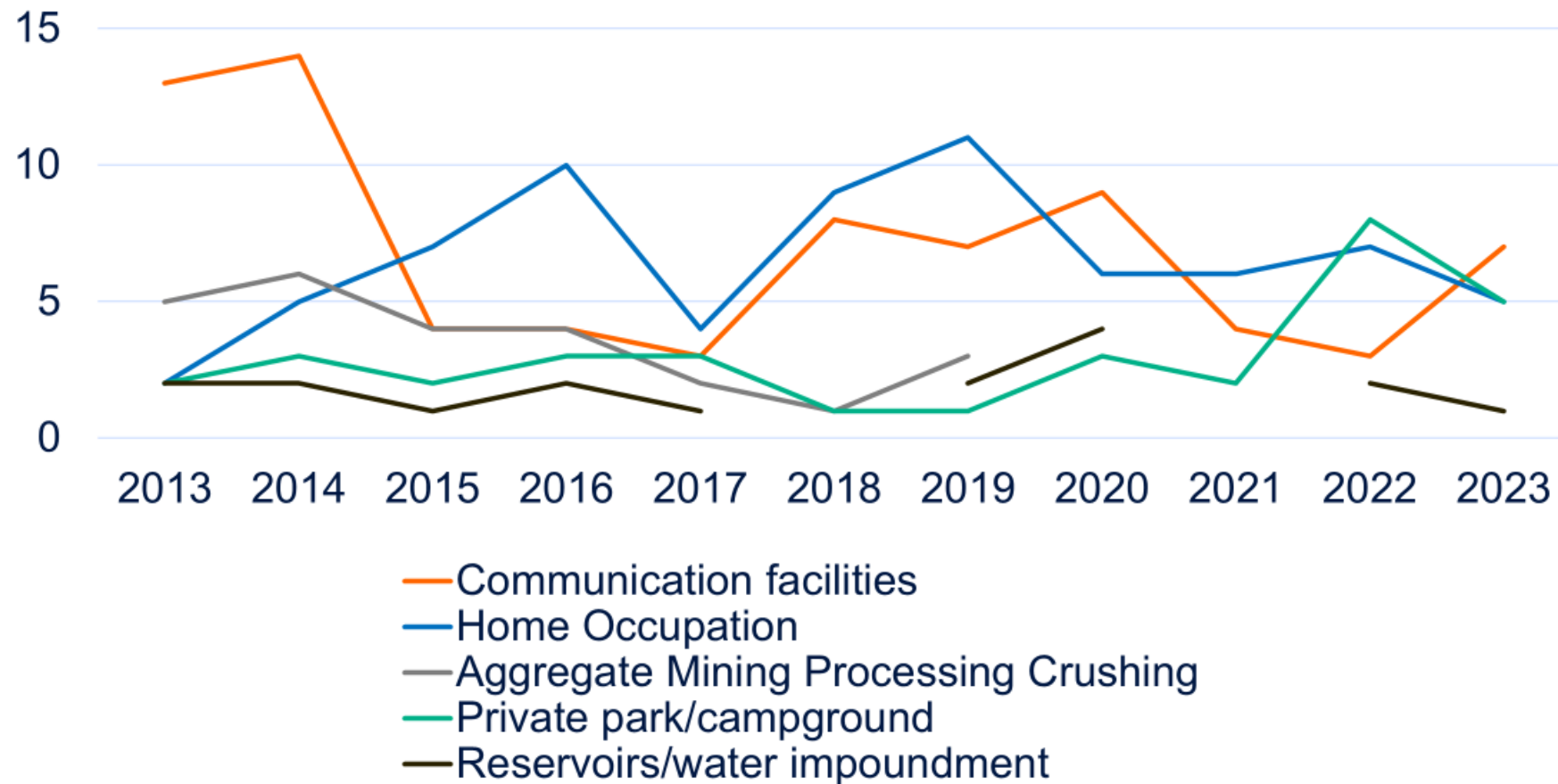


More than 10,200 dwellings have been approved in forest zones since 1994.

Dwelling approvals on forest land by county, 1994-2023



## Top five nonfarm, nonresidential approvals on Forest & Mixed Farm-Forest land 1993-2023





## Forest Zone Development Standards

### All Structures:

- Primary fuel-free break

### Dwellings:

- Fire retardant roof
- Slope <40%
- Spark arresters on chimneys
- Road design standards
- In fire district or on-site suppression plan





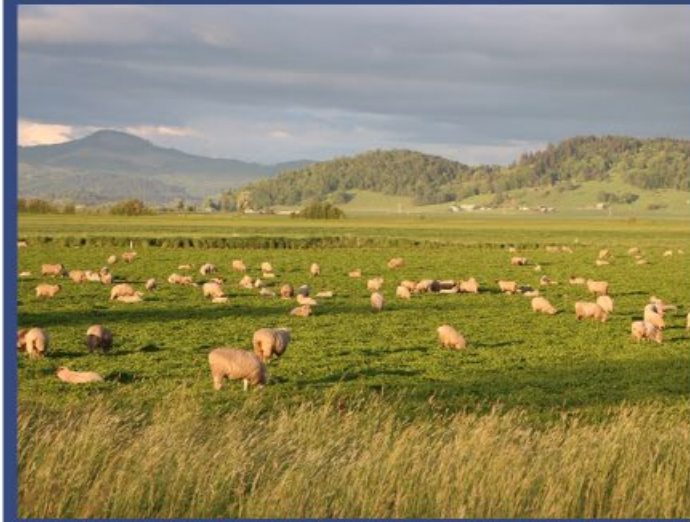
## Forest Zone Development Standards

### All Structures:

- Sited to minimize impacts to forest operations
- Sited to minimize wildfire risk

### Dwellings:

- Proof of water supply
- Proof of legal access
- Restocking to ODF standards and survey report
- Non-remonstrance agreement



**Thank you!**



**DLCD**

Department of  
Land Conservation  
& Development

Hilary Foote, Farm and Forest Lands Specialist  
[Hilary.Foote@DLCD.Oregon.gov](mailto:Hilary.Foote@DLCD.Oregon.gov) / 971-301-1849





# **FERNS Notifications for Conversion to Non-Forest Use (2015-2024)**

Presented June 5, 2025



Dan Hubner  
John Tokarczyk  
(Thanks: Greg Wagenblast)



# Conversion of Forestland to a Non-Forest Use

ODF is the "gatekeeper" for other governmental review/approval

7/2020

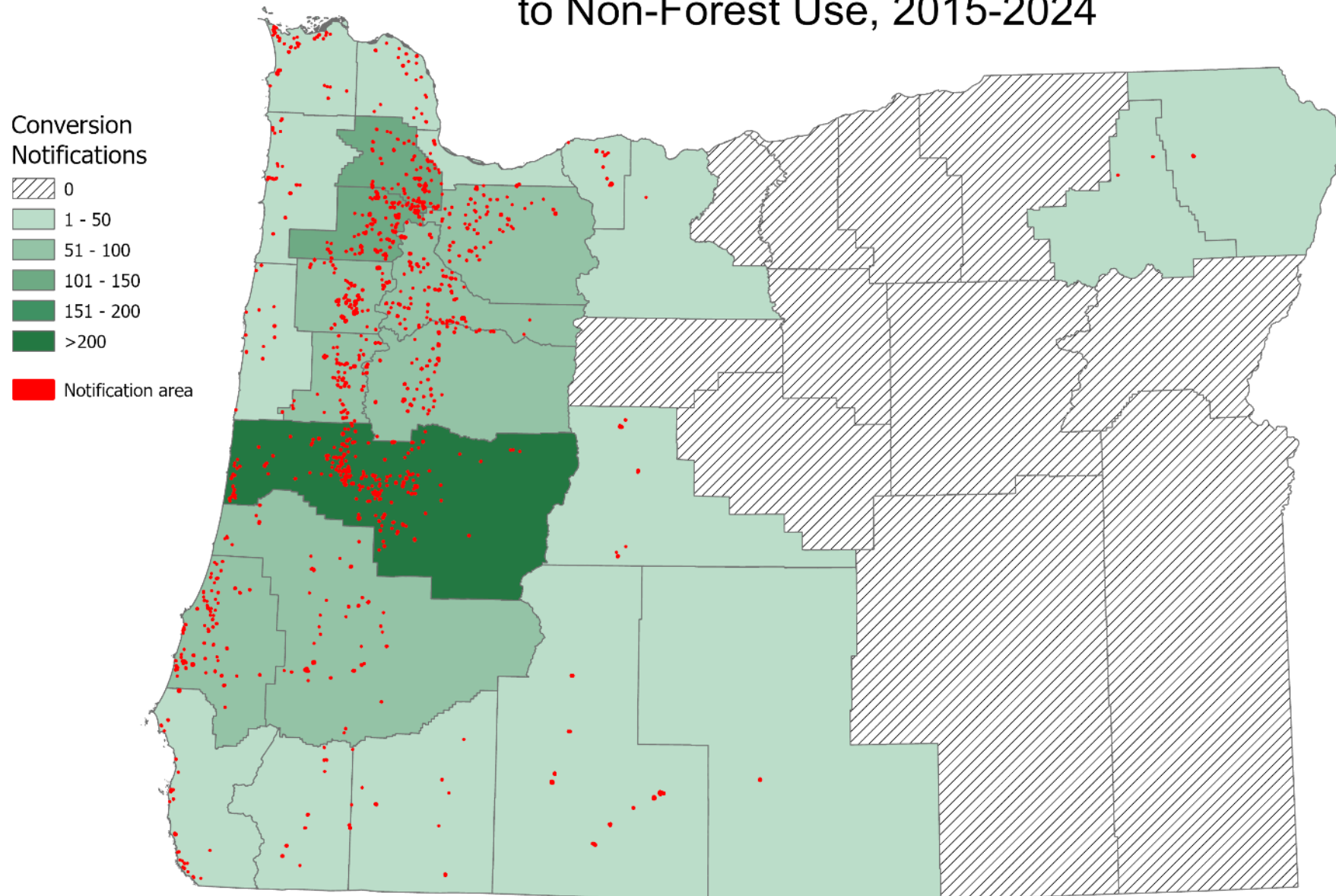
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
	Landowner Request or ODF Observations	ODF Initial Action	Landowner Action	Govt. Review/Approval	ODF Monitoring Action
Exemption: Reforestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landowner <b>requests</b> FPA reforestation exemption because landowner's objective is incompatible with forest management</li> <li>ODF <b>observes</b> operational activity that indicates a forestland conversion (<i>example: stumping</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform landowner an approved PFAP is required to be exempted from FPA reforestation</li> <li>Inform landowner to acquire appropriate signatures for PFAP Form</li> <li>Send DEQ NOAP and PFAP if <b>≥ 1 acre</b></li> <li>Send ODA NOAP and PFAP if ag. use</li> <li>Determine monitoring dates: end of operation and development stages</li> <li>Take appropriate enforcement action</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send County Planner and Assessor the PFAP for review/approval</li> <li>Send ODF written confirmation from County Planner and Assessor for forestland conversion</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determination by County Planner if PFAP is compatible with the City and/or County land use ordinances</li> <li>Acknowledgement by County Assessor of the forestland conversion</li> <li><b>ODF approves PFAP ONLY AFTER approval from County</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor if conversion started within 12 months from end of operation,</li> <li>Monitor if conversion completed within 24 months from end of operation, and</li> <li>Monitor if conversion maintained for 6 years from end of operation</li> <li>End FPA after 6 years from end of operation</li> </ul>
Exemption: Other FPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landowner <b>requests</b> reducing a FPA requirement other than reforestation (<i>example: proposed harvest FPA required RMA</i>)</li> <li>ODF <b>observes</b> operational activity that indicates a forestland conversion (<i>examples: harvesting FPA required wildlife trees; road width over 22 feet, or stumps pulled</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform landowner an approved PFAP is required to reduce a FPA requirement</li> <li>Inform landowner to acquire appropriate signatures for PFAP Form</li> <li>Send DEQ <u>all</u> NOAP and PFAP</li> <li>Send NOAP &amp; PFAP to county planner and appropriate state agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSL: wetland and in-stream</li> <li>ODA: agricultural land</li> <li>ODFW: specified resource site, RMA</li> <li>OPRD: scenic waterway</li> </ul> </li> <li>Determine monitoring dates: end of operation Recommend landowner contact USFWS for Northern Spotted Owl and Bald Eagle protection requirements</li> <li>Take appropriate enforcement action</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write the PFAP and send copy to ODF</li> <li>Send PFAP to the appropriate state agencies for approval.</li> <li>Send PFAP to USFWS for Northern Spotted Owl and Bald Eagle protection requirements, if applicable</li> <li>Send ODF written approval of PFAP or approved permit from appropriate state or federal agencies</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determination by appropriate state or federal agencies if PFAP complies with resource protection standards of the "receiving jurisdiction" or if an approved permit is required</li> <li><b>ODF approves PFAP ONLY AFTER approval from other state and federal agencies</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor if conversion started within 12 months from end of operation</li> <li>Monitor if conversion completed within 24 months from end of operation, and</li> <li>Monitor if conversion maintained for 6 years from end of operation</li> <li>End FPA after 6 years from end of operation</li> </ul>

**ORS 527.633**  
**Conversion of forestland to other uses.**  
Nothing in the Oregon Forest Practices Act shall prevent the conversion of forestland to any other use.

**In other words:**  
ODF's role is focused on applying the appropriate rules/exemptions for forestry activities under the FPA, not on approving or rejecting conversions.



## FERNS Notifications for Conversion to Non-Forest Use, 2015-2024



Total number of conversion notifications, 2015-2024:  
**1,236**

Total area of submitted conversion notifications, 2015-2024: approx. 17,000 acres, **but notifications are not a reliable estimate of actual change on the ground.**

No clear temporal trend in notifications during this time period.





# Long-Term Land Use Change on Non-Federal Land in Oregon

*(Forests, Farms, and People)*

Presented June 5, 2025



Dan Hubner  
John Tokarczyk  
(Thanks: Gary Lettman)



Even if FERNS notifications provided comprehensive tracking of actually-occurring conversions, this would not be the full picture.

Why? A contrived example...



Density and spatial pattern of development matter!

# Forests, Farms, and People

(also known as the *Development Zone Project*)

- Data is collected for non-federal lands statewide every 4-6 years. Most recent data is for 2018
  - Collaboration between ODF, USFS PNW Research Station Forest Inventory & Analysis Program (PNW-FIA), and the Institute for Natural Resources, with support from state partner agencies
- Consistent methodology back to 1974
  - Statistical sampling based on the PNW-FIA inventory design. Each sample point receives a land use class and a structure count
- Includes all resource lands – i.e., farm, range, and mixed lands as well as forest
- Based solely on observed change – not zoning/permitting





# Important Definitions

- To be considered **wildland forest**, an area must:
  - Be at least 1 square mile (640 acres) in size
  - Have fewer than 5 developments per square mile
  - Be >80% forested (by PNW-FIA's definition)
- Analogous definitions apply to agricultural, range, and mixed resource lands



In this image there is **no** wildland forest – too developed.

**Low-density residential** land use (despite forest cover).

Keep this in mind as we discuss **conversion** in this context – we are now talking about the **density of development** on the landscape (not land cover change at parcel level).



# Results – overall summary

Land use class	Change in area							
	1974	1984	1994	2000	2005	2009	2014	2018
	<i>Thousand acres</i>							
<b>Resource land uses:</b>								
Wildland forest	10,673	10,550	10,489	10,472	10,442	10,427	10,418	10,405
Wildland range	9,292	9,158	9,109	9,079	9,034	9,023	9,001	8,974
Mixed forest/agriculture	972	915	894	893	883	873	872	871
Mixed range/agriculture	665	671	673	685	700	700	708	718
Intensive agriculture	5,853	5,811	5,791	5,760	5,750	5,732	5,738	5,746
<b>Total area</b>	<b>27,454</b>	<b>27,104</b>	<b>26,956</b>	<b>26,889</b>	<b>26,808</b>	<b>26,755</b>	<b>26,738</b>	<b>26,713</b>
<b>Developed land uses:</b>								
Low-density residential	785	1,060	1,167	1,200	1,250	1,288	1,297	1,316
Urban	378	452	495	527	559	570	579	585
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>1,163</b>	<b>1,513</b>	<b>1,661</b>	<b>1,727</b>	<b>1,809</b>	<b>1,858</b>	<b>1,876</b>	<b>1,900</b>
Other land uses <sup>1</sup>	88	88	88	89	88	92	92	92
<b>Total area: All land uses</b>	<b>28,706</b>	<b>28,706</b>	<b>28,706</b>	<b>28,706</b>	<b>28,706</b>	<b>28,706</b>	<b>28,706</b>	<b>28,706</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes areas of naturally non-vegetated land such as lava fields, beaches, dunes, and large bodies of water.

From 1974-2018, Oregon lost a total of 268,000 acres of wildland forest.

However, nearly half this loss (46%) occurred in the decade 1974-1984.

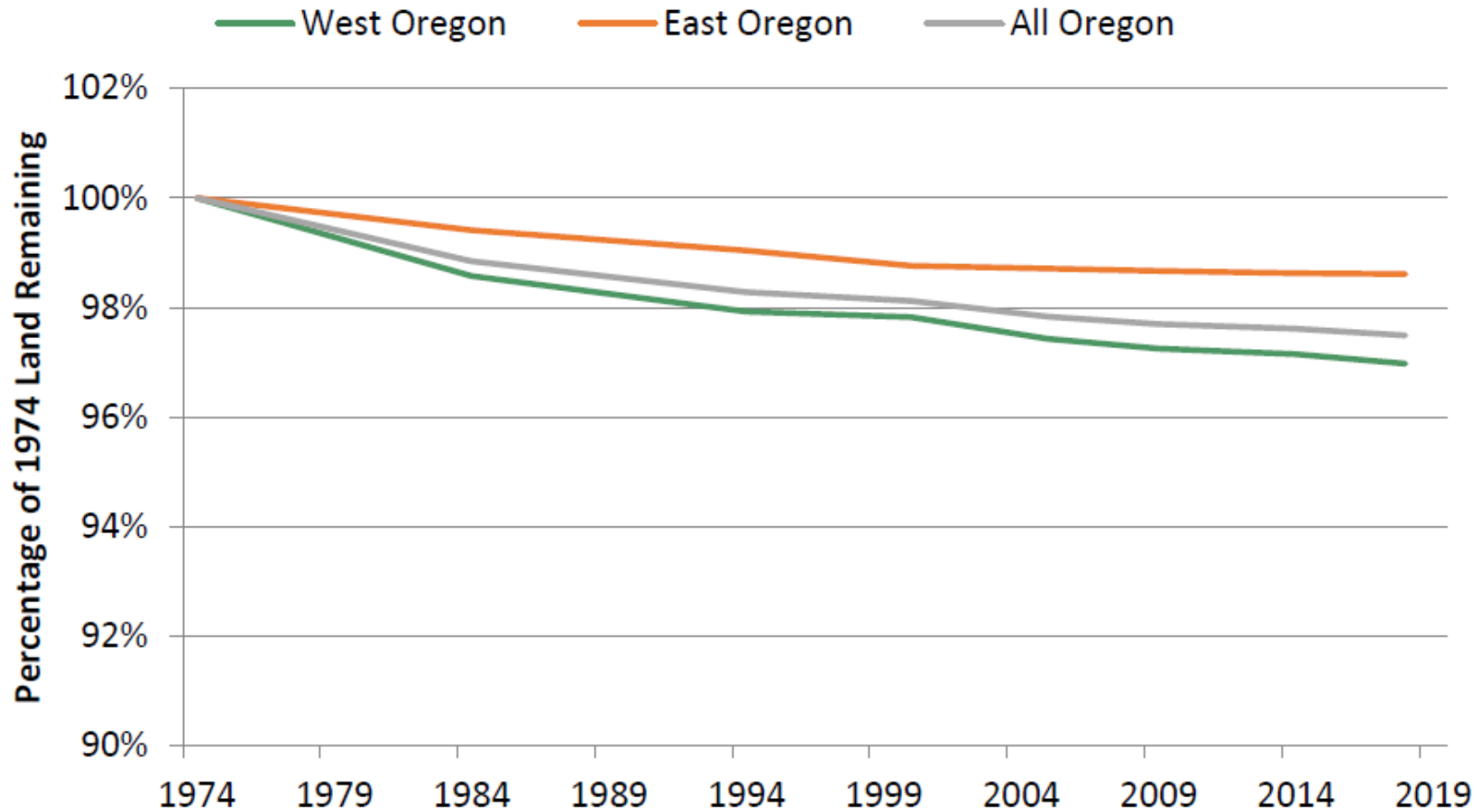
In the most recent period (2014-2018), Oregon converted 13,000 acres of wildland forest to other uses.





# Results – conversion of wildland forest

Proportion of 1974 wildland forest remaining unconverted



On the west side, 3.0% of wildland forest has been converted since 1974.

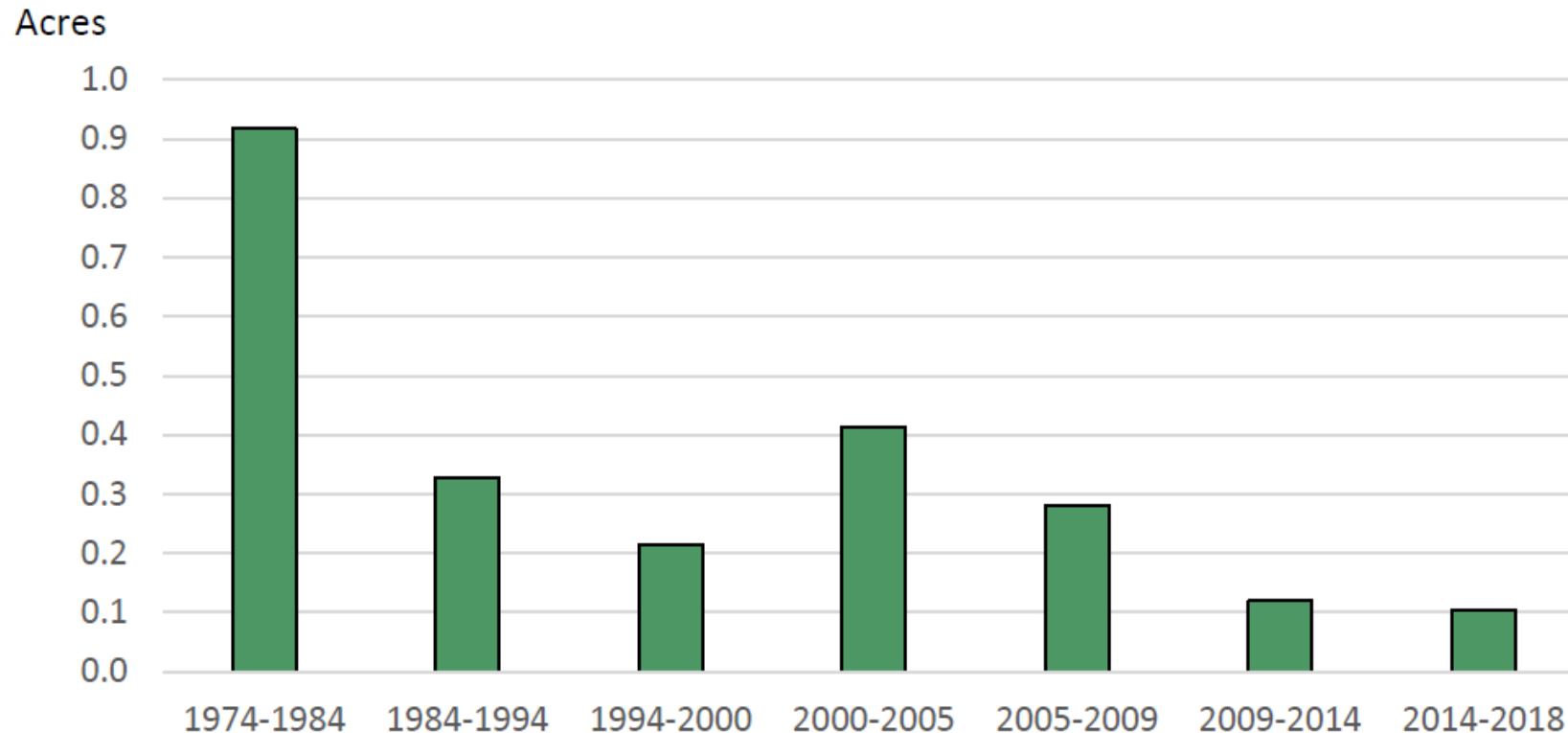
On the east side, 1.4% of wildland forest has been converted since 1974.

Overall, Oregon has retained 97.5% of its wildland forest since 1974.



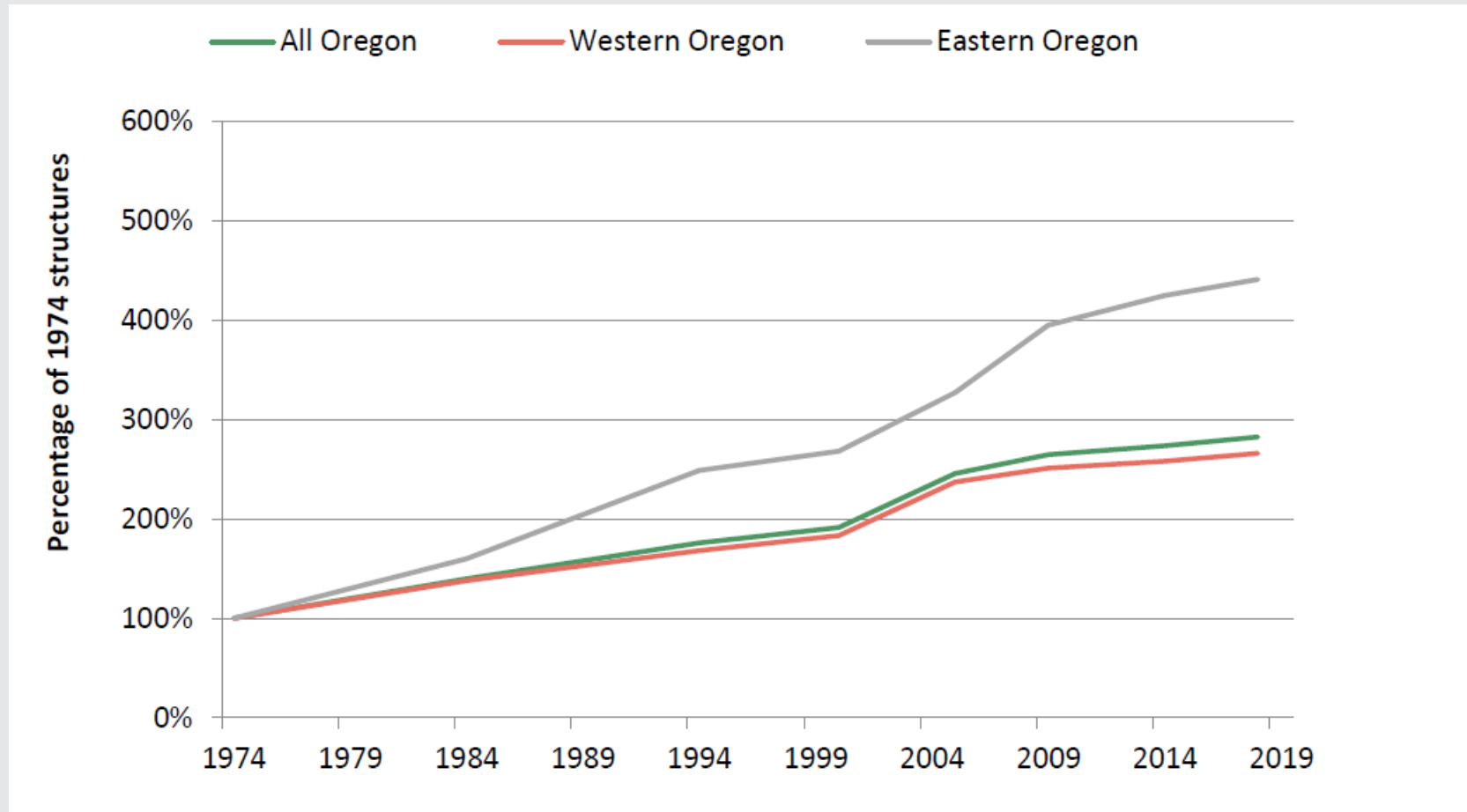
# Results – conversion & population growth

Average area of resource land converted *per new resident* in Oregon, 1974-2018



# Results – development on land remaining forest

Structures (proportional to 1974 count) on land remaining in wildland forest use



Dispersed development on wildland forest continues incrementally.

Note: the proportionally higher increases on the east side are predominantly driven by development in the Bend area.



# Key Points, Discussion, Questions

- Conversion of forest (and other resource lands) was significantly reduced after implementation of comprehensive land use planning.
  - Oregon has retained 97.5% of its wildland forest since 1974, with the highest conversion rates occurring in the earliest decade (1974-1984).
  - Most conversion occurs close to existing developed areas and/or UGBs.
- Dispersed development continues gradually but steadily on land remaining in wildland forest use.
  - DLCD data documents over 10,200 dwellings approved on forest land statewide from 1994-2023 (i.e., roughly 350/year on average).
  - Forests, Farms, & People data suggests structures on wildland forest nearly tripled from 1974-2018.
- Where we stand with data
  - DLCD (Farm & Forest Report) and FERNS provide *regulatory approval/notification tracking* at parcel level, but not quantification of actual change.
  - ODF/USFS Forests, Farms, & People data provide rigorous estimation of change on non-federal lands statewide, but do not (and cannot) monitor individual parcels or other small areas.

