

Oregon Department of Forestry
2026 Forest Operator Recognition Program
Operator of the Year and Merit Award(s)

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) is seeking to recognize those forest practices operators that 'go the extra mile' for protecting Oregon's natural resources while working in the forest. Any size of forest practices operation is eligible, and companies, contractors or individuals may be recognized. Awards are not limited to harvesting operations. Landowners may be recognized if the landowner is the entity performing the work, or the landowner provided significant direction of a larger project.

Winners are selected by Oregon's Regional Forest Practices Committees from northwest, southwest and eastern Oregon. Nominees are evaluated on an operator's consistency of positive performance, innovation in project design, relative difficulty of the harvest operation and commitment to protecting Oregon's natural resources.

Appreciation for a job well done

The award winner(s) for 2026 will be honored by the Oregon Board of Forestry at their January 2027 meeting. Additional recognition events for the Operator of the Year winners will occur in Mid/Late January 2027 with Associated Oregon Loggers and at the Oregon Logging Conference in February 2027. ODF will also promote recognition of the winners through news releases, social media and posting of the Videos on the ODF YouTube channel. Additional presentations may occur at an OSWA meeting, CFF meeting and others as available.

How to apply:

In a short-answer or essay format, please provide the Committee and ODF the following information:

- **The Operator's name, mailing address and contact information**
- **The type of forest practices operation performed and the location.** This operation can be a current op or from the past year or two that will be the example of the work completed by the nominee and the site visit location for the RFPC tour to see and discuss the criteria for the selection process with the Nominator, Operator, Landowner and ODF staff.
- **Brief description of the operation.**
- **Nominator's name / phone number / e-mail contact.**
- **Provide information on the Nominating Criteria (nominated operation and past history of the nominee) to include:**
 - **Talk about the consistency of the operator.** Tell us how the operator can be counted upon to consistently do an outstanding job. "Consistently" here is defined as no violations of the Forest Practices Act within the last two years, and a recommendation from an ODF stewardship forester that the operator "exceeds" the intent of the Forest Practices Act. "Exceeds" is defined to mean that the operator prevents resource damage, and results go beyond the rules and the minimum required results. Consistently also should be to look back the past 5, 10 or 20+ years on the nominees success and great work you are nominating for.

- **Talk about the difficulty of this operation.** Show how the operator faced a difficult operation, evaluated the situation and succeeded despite the obstacles. Look back at the past couple years and operations that this operator has been involved with. The intent is to evaluate them over time and you can discuss several operations they have been involved with over the past several years (not just this current year).
- **Tell us about the innovation or extra effort required to be successful.** Show us how the operator planned ahead, did additional work or other creative solutions in conducting operations while protecting or enhancing resources currently and in the past. This could include utilization of new technology, modifications to existing equipment, practices or other items “outside the box”.
- **What results did the operation achieve** – Describe how the operation resulted in, or if still active, expected results relative to resource protection or enhancement. Remember to discuss past operations over the last several years (2, 5, 10 or 20+ years) and the results.
- **Financial risk assumed by the Operator.** The operator assumed some financial risk in conducting the operation. (Money, time, or equipment, as opposed to the landowner paying the operator for cost plus profit.)
- **Other information we should know.** This is a great opportunity to talk about the operator’s community service principles and activities, or unique characteristics of the Operator or this operation that didn’t fit neatly into another category. If they have worked with other government agencies or extra efforts for protection of roadways, working around city limits, or other challenges that do not fit within one of the criteria, include here. Think about other laws and rules in Oregon or Federal that may have been impacted/protected on the operators various operations over the past several years (Cultural Resources, OSHA, etc...).

Please utilize the 2026 nomination form attached at the end of this document

Deadline for Operator nominations is 5PM on Friday June 19, 2026

Once completed, please email the completed form and any attachments to ooy.nominations@odf.oregon.gov or print and return/mail to:

Oregon Department of Forestry
Greg Wagenblast
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310

Award submissions will be reviewed and screened by Area staff and ODF program staff before sharing with the respective Regional Forest Practices Committees. Winners will be selected by the Regional Forest Practices Committees at their October 2026 meetings. Award winners are notified and announced by ODF after the committees have conducted votes.

For questions about the Forest Practices Operator of the Year program, contact **Greg Wagenblast** with the ODF Private Forests Division: 541-525-6462 / **Greg.Wagenblast@odf.oregon.gov**.

Preparation and Tour Timeline for Forest Practices Operator of the Year and Merit Award(s) Program

November through June

Stewardship foresters are encouraged to think about potential projects, draft nominations, and invite informal field review by Salem staff. Stewardship foresters send email to Greg Wagenblast on potential nomination and Salem will work with them to schedule Public Affairs for assistance with photo/video capture of active operations. Stewardship foresters are encouraged to take photos and video of projects while operations are actively underway when they are onsite performing inspections. Deadline for nominations is the end of June.

Nomination Deadline in June

Submissions due to Area Office for review before submitting to Salem. Area Staff and Salem Private Forests staff to provide a level of screening and review prior to moving ahead to Regional Forest Practices Committees (RFPC). Recommendations will be offered to the Stewardship Forester to help improve the nomination prior to the RFPC tours in October/November.

July through September

Salem Private Forest and Public Affairs will work with individual nominators and nominees to schedule on site visits to capture photos and videos, including active operations, post operations and interviews of Operator, Landowner, Nominator, Stewardship Forester and others are appropriate.

Towards end of September / early October

The final 'eligible list' of nominations and details for field tours is distributed to Committee members and involved staff. RSVP's are due from staff and Committee members regarding tours and RFPC meetings to finalize logistics.

October Field tours

The field tour schedule for the three Forest Practices regions (which will be announced as early as possible) taking place in October/November (EO Region – 1st, SW Region 2nd and final tour with NW Region). The stewardship forester who has a nominated operator in their area selected for the tour will need to attend the respective tour date for that operation. All foresters are always welcome to attend any one of the tour dates.

Notes

- ✓ *The field tour would be strictly observational for the Committee members, as the selection of the Operator of the Year would still occur during the public meeting following the tour to comply with the Oregon Public Meetings Law.*
- ✓ *A secondary tour day serves as an alternate or where geography between nominations in the region will be an issue.*
- ✓ *Salem will set up tour route and schedule. A Local district may be asked to assist with logistics of lunches and drinks being provided in coordination through the Area Office.*

- ✓ *Salem will build tour packet for each stop based on the information provided in the nomination packet (Nomination, NOAP, maps, photos, etc).*
- ✓ *Salem will contact local Stewardship Forester to coordinate the tour stop – stewardship forester to invite Nominee/Operator, Landowner, Timber owner, other agency staff or those appropriate individuals that can help present information on the nomination to inform the RFPC members on the tour.*

October RFPC Meetings

Operator of the Year/Merit Award video presentations (if available) are shown during the Regional Forest Practices Committee's 4th quarter meeting and award selections are made.

January Board of Forestry Meeting

During the January Board of Forestry meeting, a portion of the morning session prior to lunch will be reserved for the Operator of the Year award ceremony and celebration. Photos of each winner will be taken with the BOF and State Forester along with lunch and a celebration cake for each Regional Operator of the Year and guests.

Tour and Meeting dates for 2026 will be:

- *Eastern Region Tour October 6-7, 2026 (typically Tuesday and Wednesday)*
- *Eastern Oregon RFPC mtg on Thursday October 8, 2026*
- *Southwest Region Tour October 20-21, 2026 (typically Tuesday and Wednesday)*
- *Southern Oregon RFPC mtg on Thursday October 22, 2026*
- *Northwest Region Tour October 27-28, 2026 (typically Tuesday and Wednesday)*
- *NW Oregon RFPC mtg on Thursday October 29, 2026*

**** Please place the tour dates on your calendar now to assure you have those available for presentations during the tour. Thanks!**

2026 Operator Recognition Program – Nomination Form

AWARD CATEGORY: ***Operator of the Year / Merit Award***

REGION (NW/SW/East):

DISTRICT:

NOMINATED BY:

OPERATOR INFORMATION AND MAILING ADDRESS:

Operator Company Name:

Company Address:

Company Phone No. ()

Company Email:

Company Primary Contact Name (Owner):

Contact Cell Phone No. ()

Contacts Email:

Operation Information (*Operation as example of work with RFPC tour*)

Activities: Harvest () Site Prep () Reforestation () Road Construction ()
Stand Management () Other () _____

Date of Operation:

NOAP No.

Location of Operation (Legal Desc & Landmark):

General Description of Operation:

What were the protected resources involved and efforts involved:

Criteria of Award Nomination

Describe Operator's **Consistency** in performance over the years (use examples):

Describe the **Difficulty** and complexity of the operation nominated as well as past operations in regards to protection of forest resources:

Describe how the operator was **Innovative/Extra Efforts** (including matching equipment to the job) or used extra effort on this operation and then Past Operations:

Describe **Results** in resource protection and forest management benefits:

Describe the **Financial Risk assumed by the operator** as well as how much influence the landowner had on this operation:

OTHER INFO that should be known for consideration to help form a solid picture of your nominee:

Landowner of Operation listed above:

Agency/Company:
Contact Name:
Title:
Email:
Phone No. ()

Nominator(s):

Name:
Agency/Company:
Title:
Email:
Phone No. ()

Name:
Agency/Company:
Title:
Email:
Phone No. ()

Please Attach if Available (for the selected demonstration operation) or other overall information for operators history and experiences:

- NOAP
- Written Plan/PFAP
- Location Map
- Operation Map
- Aerial Photo
- Photographs of operation/activities/efforts/etc.
- Letters of Reference/Support
- Any additional documents to support nomination
 - Other landowners
 - Other agencies involved with the nominee on projects
 - Other ODF staff
 - Neighbors/community (ie. Mayor of city or neighbors next to op that have input, etc.)

Nominations are due no later than Friday June 19, 20226

Please email nominations to: ooynominations@odf.oregon.gov