



Summary Statement of Priority

The OWEB Board will consider proposals for investment in **dry-type forest habitat** for initiatives that address habitat conservation and restoration needs to achieve ecological outcomes over time at the landscape scale, which will restore and protect ecologically meaningful areas.

OWEB's Focused Investment Priority for dry-type forest habitat guides voluntary actions that address primary limiting factors related to the quality of this habitat type. These actions also support and/or improve watershed functions and processes. **These actions will be guided by the habitat, limiting factors, ecological outcomes, and conservation approaches outlined in Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan and other plans listed at the end of this document.**

Background

Where it occurs

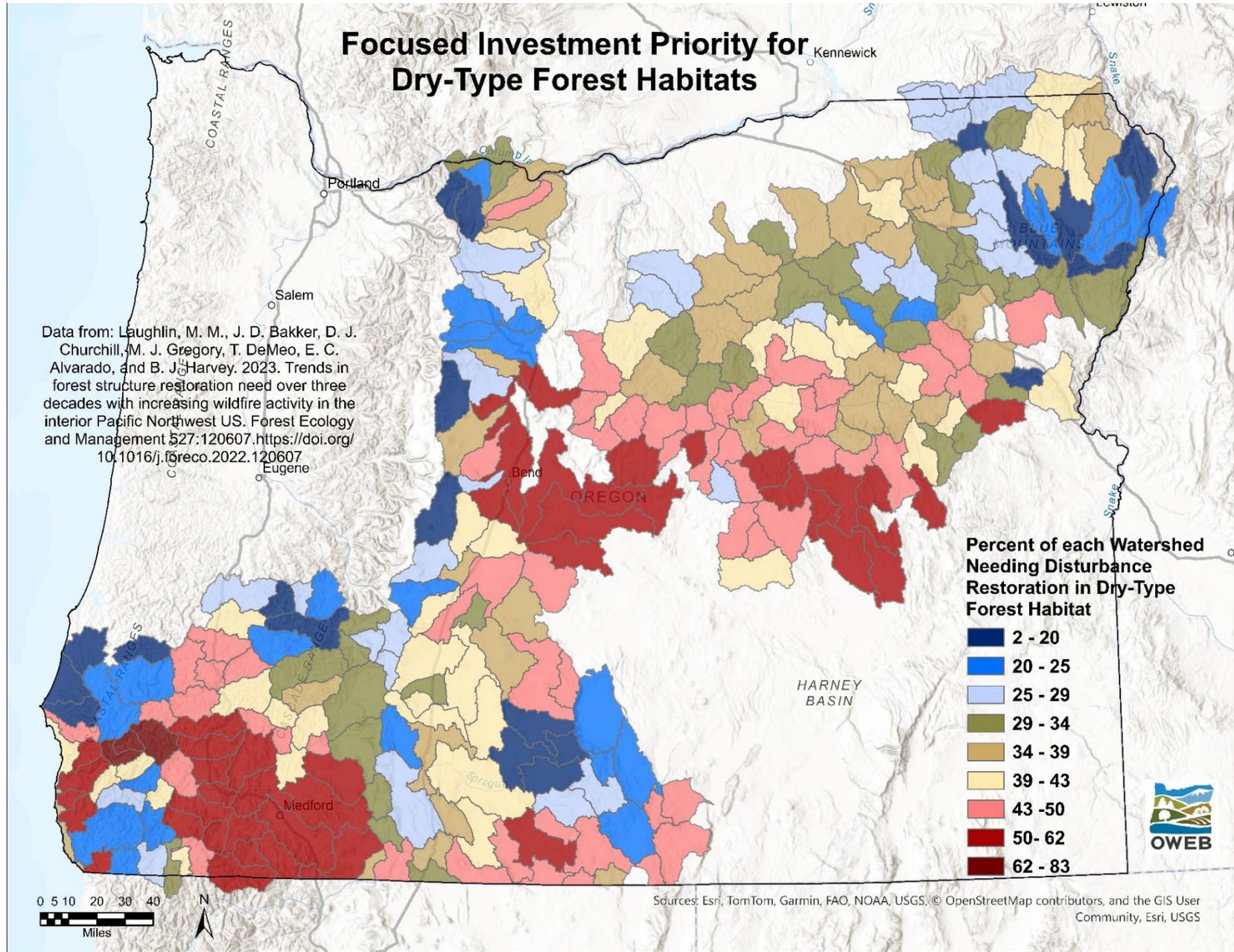
Dry-type forests exist east of the Cascade Mountains and southwest in the Umpqua and Rogue watersheds of the Siskiyou and Klamath Mountains. This forest type spans 14 million acres in Oregon, constitutes roughly half of all forests in the state, and accounts for approximately 25 percent of the state's land cover. These forests are associated with nine national forests in Oregon and encompass land managed by the Bureau of Land Management in southwest Oregon. "Dry-type" is a general term for forests that consist of dry pine forests, dry mixed conifer, moist-mixed conifer, and moist-cold forests.

Indicator species and/or species of interest supported by this habitat

Dry-type forest habitat contains a wide variety of tree and understory species. Historically, these forests experienced more frequent low-intensity fires that would burn off the understory and small trees on a 7-15 year cycle, resulting in a diverse and robust mosaic of older, larger aforementioned tree species mixed with areas of younger trees, stands, and forests. Fire suppression practices in the past century have altered forest species composition and succession and increased susceptibility to uncharacteristic large wildfires due to elevated fuel loads. In addition to the building of fuel levels, forest management practices during the last century have reduced diversity of species and age structures and increased densities of trees within this forest type.

Dry-type forest habitats support a variety of fish and wildlife species, including white-headed woodpecker and northern goshawk, ringtail, fisher, Pacific marten, red-tree vole, Northern Spotted Owl, salmon, Rocky Mountain elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer.

Figure 1: Map of Focused Investment Priority for Dry-Type Forest Habitats



The map above displays the percent of each watershed across Oregon needing disturbance restoration in Dry-Type Forest Habitat, ranked in nine levels from 2% - 83%.

Why it is significant to the state

Dry-type forests cover vast acreages in Oregon and are at critical risk for severe wildfires. These forest systems support a diverse range of aquatic and terrestrial species, including federally listed fish and bird species. Properly functioning dry-type forests are also critical to maintaining healthy watershed function and processes. Dry-type forests are iconic in Oregon, of cultural significance to Native American tribes, provide people with clean water, and have economic importance related to natural resource-based economies in rural communities. In addition, these areas support an increasingly important recreation-based economy.

Key limiting factors and/or ecological threats, with a focus on ecosystem function and process

Departure from historic disturbance regimes has increased the risk of more severe disturbance from hotter burning wildfires. In order to restore ecosystem function and process and protect culturally important areas (including food), the following limiting factors and ecological threats need to be addressed:

- Severe wildfires as a result of fuel buildup in the absence of fire, past and some current landscape forest management practices, and hotter and drier conditions due to climate change.
- Altered fire regimes resulting in forest densification, changes in species composition, and more continuous, homogeneous fuel conditions across the landscape.
- Loss of multi-age class, complex forests with habitat mosaics due to wildfire and past logging practices, and habitat connectivity.
- Invasive species and more widespread and uncharacteristic insect and disease outbreaks leading to accelerated tree mortality.
- Lack of land management capacity, including ability to implement prescribed and/or cultural burns.
- Landscape-scale disturbance, including wildfire, landslides, flooding or similar events may occur within the FIP geography. Post-disturbance restoration actions addressing landscape-scale disturbance may be eligible FIP actions.
- Loss of wildlife habitat connectivity. Many species rely on the ability to move throughout the landscape to fulfill their daily and seasonal needs for access to food, shelter, and opportunities to reproduce. ODFW produced [Priority Wildlife Connectivity Areas \(PWCAs\) maps](#) to show where habitat connectivity is most important. Fifty-four species were selected for the project as surrogates, representing a variety of taxa, movement types, dispersal capabilities, and sensitivity to anthropogenic threats. FIP Initiatives may include actions enhancing PWCAs within the geographic boundary of their FIP Initiative.

Reference plans

- 1) [Oregon State Wildlife Action Plan](#)
- 2) [Restoration of Dry Forests in Eastern Oregon](#)
- 3) [General Technical Report](#) – The Ecology and Management of Moist Mixed-Conifer Forests in Eastern Oregon and Washington: A Synthesis of the Relevant Biophysical Science and Implications for Future Land Management
- 4) Haugo, R., Zanger, C., DeMeo, T., Ringo, C., Shlisy, A., Blakenship, K., Simpson, M., Mellen-McLean, K., Kertis, J., Stern, M. 2015. [A New Approach to Evaluate Forest Structure Restoration Needs Across Oregon and Washington, USA. Forest Ecology and Management 335: 37-50.](#)
- 5) [Landowners' Options for Prescribed Burning](#)