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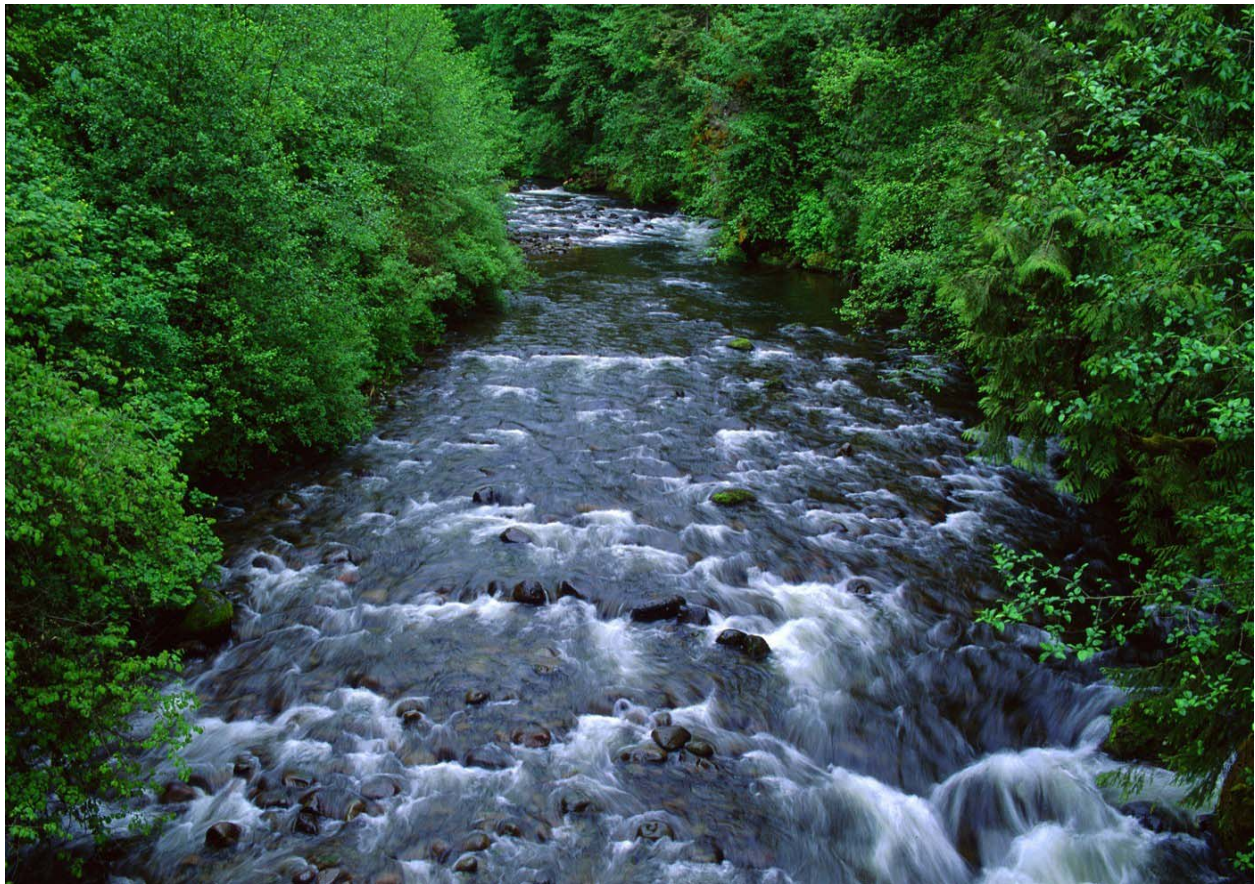
Forest Service

Pacific  
Northwest  
Region

2006



# Mt. Hood National Forest Strategic Stewardship Plan Executive Summary



*Little Sandy River, Mt. Hood National Forest*

# Mt. Hood National Forest

## Context

*Since establishment as Oregon National Forest in 1908, today's 1.1-million acre Mt. Hood National Forest has seen many social, economic, legal, and landscape changes that affect its stewardship today. That stewardship is essentially what MUST be done to secure the Forest as a continuing legacy for the future.*



*View of Mt. Hood from Portland, Oregon*

## Citizen Stewardship and Mt. Hood National Forest, April 2006

### Many Changes Influence Management of Mt. Hood National Forest

- ❖ Growing populations, with 2 million people in the metro area
- ❖ Changes in what people like to do in the Forest
- ❖ An increase in use of fire to benefit resources, when it is appropriate
- ❖ An increased focus on producing goods and services sustainably
- ❖ A focus on producing old growth and late-successional stages of native species
- ❖ Decreased funding and staff
- ❖ Continuing changes in the landscape over time
- ❖ A decrease in timber harvest levels
- ❖ Growing numbers of laws, plans, and regulations
- ❖ A focus on ecosystem management, with people of the ecosystem
- ❖ Changes in what people need and want
- ❖ A focus on restoring riparian habitat

*A variety of regional, state, and local laws, regulations, and plans affect Forest stewardship. Nationally and regionally, the USDA Forest Service also has overlapping strategic goals for best caring for natural resources.*



*Recreational Camping*



*Lost Creek*

## National Strategic Goal

## Pacific Northwest Emphasis Items

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ❖ Reduce the risk from catastrophic wildland fire                                  | ❖ Reduce extent and impact of wildfire               |
| ❖ Reduce the impacts from invasive species   | ❖ Invasive species management                        |
| ❖ Provide outdoor recreation opportunities   | ❖ Outdoor recreation services and heritage resources |
|  | ❖ Wilderness management and Wild & Scenic Rivers     |
|  | ❖ Outdoor recreation infrastructure                  |
| ❖ Help meet energy resources needs   | ❖ Energy resource needs                              |
| ❖ Improve watershed condition  | ❖ Watershed and aquatic restoration                  |
|  | ❖ Flood and fire recovery                            |
|  | ❖ Rangeland management                               |
|  | ❖ Restore plant and animal species diversity         |
| ❖ Conduct mission-related work in addition to that which supports the Agency goals | ❖ Infrastructure management                          |
|  | ❖ Resource information                               |
|  | ❖ Lands  |
|  | ❖ Minerals   |
|  | ❖ Resource planning and monitoring                   |

*It's complex. Mt. Hood National Forest's many and varied goods and services are valued at about \$150 million a year. This greatly influences surrounding communities and counties, large and small.*

*Add to all this – more people! The Forest draws about 4.5 million visitors a year from all over. With two million people in the nearby Portland/Vancouver area, Mt. Hood National Forest is considered an urban National Forest. However, the Forest comprises and serves two greatly differing areas — urban areas to the west, and rural communities to the east. As you can see, as well as being influenced by the Forest, these areas help shape the Forest's stewardship challenges.*

## Challenges

Mt. Hood National Forest stewardship challenges include:

- ❖ Protecting communities from wildfire.
- ❖ Restoring public and private lands stream habitat for the recovery of aquatic species.
- ❖ Managing for a healthy forest that sustainably provides goods and services for people.
- ❖ Working with public, private, and civic interests for sustainable regional recreation.
- ❖ Assuring relevance of public lands, goods, and services in an increasingly diverse society.

## Opportunities

Briefly, Mt. Hood National Forest's special niches include:

- ❖ Community engagement, cooperation, and partnerships.
- ❖ Conservation education and interpretation.
- ❖ Natural resources, especially fisheries, vegetation and water.
- ❖ Recreation, land, and heritage resources.

The niches briefly listed above help focus the stewardship work to be done in order to ensure the Forest and its goods and services are sustainable and relevant. Niches are connected to (but different from) Forest base programs. Base programs are the day-to-day operations that support stewardship work.



*Mt. Hood Wilderness Timberline Winter Trail Shelter*

*Stewardship challenges are also shaped by the Forest's special niches, which are essentially what the Forest has to offer, connected to what people want.*



*Working together with partners.*



*Volunteers cleaning trails.*

## Through base programs, the . . .

- ❖ Bills are paid
- ❖ Collections made
- ❖ Contracts let
- ❖ Obligations are met
- ❖ Employees are hired
- ❖ Lands acquired
- ❖ Employees trained
- ❖ Decisions explained
- ❖ Grounds are tended
- ❖ Buildings mended
- ❖ Dents are fixed
- ❖ And rent is paid!

While the focus, type, and amount of work to be done is changing, tighter Forest budgets since 1994 (down 35 percent) and fewer staff (down 40 percent) mean we **MUST** work differently to secure the Mt. Hood National Forest legacy.

## Importance

One way is through – people! Citizens increasingly recognize that stewardship of the Forest is a shared civic responsibility. Currently, a thousand people a year roll up their sleeves and volunteer. There has never been a time when they are needed more, or when their opportunities to make a difference have been more significant.

Today's stewardship challenges offer unparalleled opportunities for citizen stewardship, including helping to determine what must be done, and how it gets done, as well as actual “doing.” That's not a traditional way for government to operate. But the stakes are high: Nothing less than conserving and protecting the Forest for the future. We think that's worth working differently!

## What we bring to the table . . .

In addition to incredible natural resources, Mt. Hood National Forest brings dollars, programs, people and expertise to the citizen stewardship partnership table. The 2004 Forest budget was about \$22.1 million, largely from Congressional appropriations, reimbursements, and revenues, plus variable amounts from other sources. We also bring the ability to deal with the official bureaucratic responsibilities that remain on OUR part of the plate!

## What You Can Choose to Do

Here are a few opportunities we've identified in the Mt. Hood National Forest strategic stewardship plan. There are many more we can identify together. We envision working with you to identify other possibilities.

### Challenges and Opportunities: Citizen Stewardship Partnerships

Stewardship Challenges	Citizens, Groups, Organizations, Business Ventures and Partners of all kinds could:
❖ Protecting communities from wildfire.	... find funds for community fire prevention and protection projects; identify fire risk areas in your community; or supervise or be part of work projects to protect communities and city watersheds.
❖ Restore critical public and private lands stream habitat for the recovery of aquatic species.	... assess, plan, and complete priority stream habitat restoration projects; seek grants and funding; or be part of river basin policy and technical working groups.
❖ Managing for a healthy forest that sustainably provides goods and services for people.	... build citizen knowledge of public land resources, especially in the metropolitan area; be part of collaborative planning for desirable, sustainable goals; talk to people about the options available; or design forums about healthy forests.
❖ Working with public, private, and civic interests for sustainable regional recreation.	... shape a "Friends of..." organization; plan and complete high priority projects; or work on joint strategic projects on recreation issues such as ski areas or off-highway vehicle use.
❖ Assuring relevance of public lands, goods, and services in an increasingly diverse society.	... engage diverse audiences in joint projects and partnerships; lead education workshops and forums; create a single conservation education program or serve on a Board of Directors; or assure adequacy and relevance of Forest goods and services; recommend changes.



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## Citizen stewardship is a joint responsibility, yours and ours.

To get involved, contact your local District Ranger, Recreation Staff Officer, or Public Affairs Officer. today to discuss opportunities, and to tell us about YOUR potential “niche” (what you offer that your Forest needs).

### Contacts

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*Little Zigzag Falls*

## Notes:

*The Forest Service is an equal opportunity provider, employer . . . and stewardship partner.*