



- BACKGROUNDER -

# Private forests provide public benefits

Promoting and practicing sustainable forestry

**P** private forests provide revenue, jobs, clean air and water, wildlife habitat, recreation and scenic beauty.

## An overview

Thirty-five percent (more than 10 million acres) of Oregon's forests are privately owned and are managed for a variety of uses. Private forest landowners range from companies with thousands of acres to families with small tracts. Many family woodlands are close to urban areas — the highly visible “forests in our back yards.” Because harvesting on federal lands has declined significantly in recent years, more than 80 percent of the timber harvested in Oregon comes from private forestlands.

The first such law to be adopted by any state, the **Oregon Forest Practices Act** helps protect water quality, sensitive wildlife habitat and other environmental values during harvesting. The Act also requires reforestation after harvesting.

## Improving forest health through sustainable management

**Stewardship foresters** advise landowners about requirements of the Forest Practices Act, one of many ways in which they help keep forestland healthy and productive.

Stewardship foresters:

- Provide on-the-ground assistance to help landowners reach their management goals, while protecting forest resources. **During 2005, 1,136 landowners received assistance with various management activities that affected about 95,116 acres of forestland.**
- Inspect forest operations to ensure compliance with the Act and enforce the Act, if necessary.
- Monitor forest practices to help ensure the Act's rules are efficient and effective. Overly cumbersome or burdensome rules may increase pressure on landowners to sell forests for other uses, eroding Oregon's forestland base. However, if the rules don't adequately protect natural resources, the public support that private landowners need to manage their forests may be jeopardized.



Right: Stewardship Forester Kristin Cotugno

## Administering funds used to reduce forest threats

The Private Forests Program administers state and federal dollars that are used to reimburse private landowners for projects that help improve or protect forest resources. Programs such as the Forest Land Enhancement Program are used to address insect and disease problems, the build-up of forest fuels that increase the risk of catastrophic wildfires, and other threats to Oregon's forests.

## Monitoring forest practices to meet resource protection goals

The Program monitors how well the Forest Practices Act is meeting the state's resource protection goals, while maximizing the use of forest resources.

Monitoring ensures that appropriate benchmarks and criteria are used to measure the effectiveness of the Forest Practices Act, and helps identify trends that may affect Oregon's forests and streams. Whenever possible, staff coordinate with others who are doing related monitoring and research to increase efficiencies and reduce costs.



## Oregon Plan efforts improve water quality

The program also monitors the implementation and effectiveness of the **Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds**,

which seeks to restore salmon runs and improve water quality. Oregon Plan volunteer activities are Oregon's home-grown response to listings of coho and other salmon species under the federal Endangered Species Act.

## Monitoring insect and disease outbreaks

The program's **forest health team** monitors insect and disease outbreaks that can kill trees or affect their growth. Although these disturbances are a necessary part of forest ecosystems, adding nutrients to the soil through decomposition and providing diverse wildlife habitat, they can also be devastating under certain conditions.

During the last fiscal year, about 21 million acres were surveyed by air and 9,213 acres were surveyed on the ground for insect and disease problems. The team also provides on-site technical advice to private forest landowners.

**R**educing  
greenhouse gas  
emissions  
through forest  
management  
practices

**P**reventing  
tree seedling  
shortages

**F**or more  
information

**Actively managed forests can help offset greenhouse gas emissions.** The Program is participating in research and demonstration products that are exploring how carbon dioxide in the atmosphere can be reduced by growing trees, and then measuring the environmental benefits to develop markets that could provide monetary payments to landowners.

The **Oregon Forest Resource Trust** provides financial assistance (up to 100% of the cost) to family forestland owners who convert marginal pasture, agricultural, range and brush land back to a healthy, productive forest.

The Department also works with **West Coast Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnership (WESTCARB)** demonstration projects in Lake County and in Shasta County, California, to measure the reduction of carbon resulting from forest health restoration and fire fuels-reduction efforts.

The Program's **Seed Tree Bank** helps ensure that family forest landowners, their organizations, and forest tree nurseries have the appropriate seed species available for various site conditions for reforestation. Having seed readily available also helps ensure opportunities to plant less common tree species. Much of the seed is produced by the Department's J.E. Schroeder Seed Orchard complex near St. Paul.

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