

2006 Annual Report

WEST OREGON DISTRICT



(above) Rick Harris, Philomath Forest Officer, watches the sunrise from North Grass Mountain, site of an 8-acre fire in southeast Lincoln County on July 2, 2006.
photo by Ted Erdmann

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Record low precipitation results in long fire season
- "Stix-n-Crix" program comes to West Oregon
- Wild November weather creates challenges
- Jerry Piering retires after 30 years of service

STEVE LAAM
DISTRICT FORESTER

MARVIN BROWN
STATE FORESTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

District Forester's Report	2
Protection from Fire	4
State Forests	10
Private Forests	12
Piering Retirement	14
Administration	15

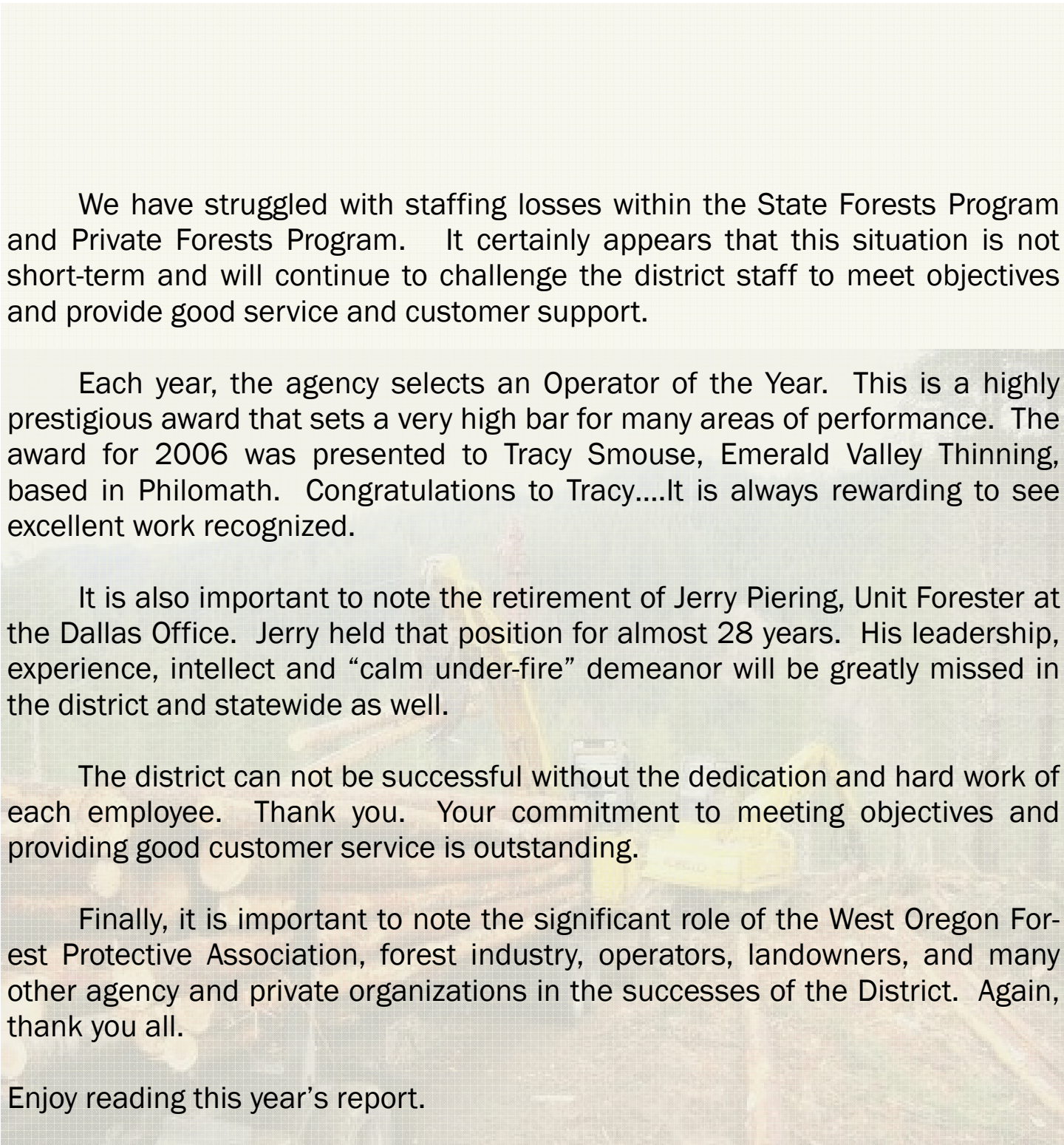
FROM THE DISTRICT FORESTER

This year's fire season can be summarized as extremely dry and overly long but very successful. Fire season began on June 26th and ended on October 19th. Maintaining the trend for the last five years, we experienced near record level fire danger indices. Rainfall recorded at weather stations near Newport during May and June was half of normal. July was one-third of normal. August and September were barely measurable and less than one-tenth of normal. These are certainly conditions that create significant apprehension among those with an interest in protecting forest resources. In the end, by luck and design, forest acres burned and costs were very minimal.

Looking back at notable fire issues, public caused recreational fires clearly took center stage. This fire category represented the most fires, most acres burned and highest costs; more than the combined total of all other fire categories. This situation is obviously worrisome and we will be working with forest landowners, law enforcement and the public for strategies and solutions.

At the statewide level, the fire conditions were also very serious. The agency made good use of severity funding to influence positive fire outcomes. There were three incident management team activations. The district actively contributed to these fire mobilization efforts in both team member and supplemental personnel resources. As I have mentioned in the past, these experiences greatly enhance our ability to manage and support fire efforts on and off the district.





We have struggled with staffing losses within the State Forests Program and Private Forests Program. It certainly appears that this situation is not short-term and will continue to challenge the district staff to meet objectives and provide good service and customer support.

Each year, the agency selects an Operator of the Year. This is a highly prestigious award that sets a very high bar for many areas of performance. The award for 2006 was presented to Tracy Smouse, Emerald Valley Thinning, based in Philomath. Congratulations to Tracy....It is always rewarding to see excellent work recognized.

It is also important to note the retirement of Jerry Piering, Unit Forester at the Dallas Office. Jerry held that position for almost 28 years. His leadership, experience, intellect and “calm under-fire” demeanor will be greatly missed in the district and statewide as well.

The district can not be successful without the dedication and hard work of each employee. Thank you. Your commitment to meeting objectives and providing good customer service is outstanding.

Finally, it is important to note the significant role of the West Oregon Forest Protective Association, forest industry, operators, landowners, and many other agency and private organizations in the successes of the District. Again, thank you all.

Enjoy reading this year’s report.

Steve Laam, District Forester

PROTECTION FROM FIRE

READINESS

The 2006 fire season kicked off with the Mid-Willamette Valley Fire School near Sweet Home, June 26-30. This inter-agency training session included 250 students and instructors from USFS, BLM, BIA, USFW, Tribal organizations, as well as ODF.

Additional training opportunities for West Oregon seasonals was provided with a series of live fire training exercises throughout the district.

With cooperation of local landowners, these exercises were conducted on land owned by Lee Barclay near Tidewater, Starker forest land near Blodgett, Bald Hill—City of Corvallis, and EE Wilson land near Adair.



Dallas Unit Forest Officer Matt Roby (on stump) watches over West Oregon District crews at 2006 Mid-Willamette Valley Fire School in Sweet Home



Philomath Unit Forest Officers Rick Harris and Tom O'Connor instruct the finer points of hose-lays at the OSU Extension Small Woodland Owners Fire School held on May 18-19, 2006

Additional readiness trainings included a Small Woodland Owner Fire School put on by the OSU Extension Service and hosted by the West Oregon District. The participating landowners put together a fire plan for their property and participated in activities to lessen the risk of damage from wildfires on their land.

The participants reviewed basic fire behavior concepts, techniques of fire control, and how to best assist with initial attack for wildfires on their property. In addition, they were presented knowledge and skills for how to use fire as a silvicultural tool on their land.

These interactive experiences, as well as live fire training, provided by the Extension Service and ODF personnel will hopefully increase the district's overall fire readiness by making these smaller forests more fire-resilient.



PREVENTION

(Left) Fire Extinguisher training at Starker/Thompson Operators' Training June 7, 2006.

The district held three successful Operator meetings in 2006. These meetings were hosted by Unit Stewardship Foresters and Protection staff.

For Benton County operators, 47 attended the Philomath meeting which presented information and updates on interface fire issues, Industrial Fire Protection Levels, and landowner liability. In addition, Starker/Thompson hosted an operator's meeting attended by 50 of their operators, which included various prevention topics.

Toledo hosted 57 attendees at its meeting which included a review of fire rules, general preparedness, and a hose-lay competition, sponsored by Plum Creek Timberlands and West Oregon Forest Protective Association (WOFPA.)

The Dallas unit's meeting was attended by a whopping 74 operators and included a review of fire rules, Forest Practices Act issues, and the traditional strawberry shortcake provided by the unit's own Gail Culbertson.



(left) Philomath Unit Forest Officer Tom O'Connor demonstrates the concepts of defensible space with a group of school children at Forest Expo held April 11-13, 2006 at Benton Co Fair Grounds.

2006 FIRE SEASON at a glance

- ◆ June 26-October 20, 2006
- ◆ 116 days long
- ◆ Regulated use for 93 days
- ◆ IFPL 2 for 50 days



PROTECTION FROM FIRE

SUPPRESSION

The 2006 fire season for West Oregon District was long and dry, illustrated effectively by a look at the rainfall totals for Newport. Though usually quite moist even in the middle of summer, rainfall levels in Newport were only one-third of average, a record low, and were indicative of the extremely dry conditions the district faced during fire season.

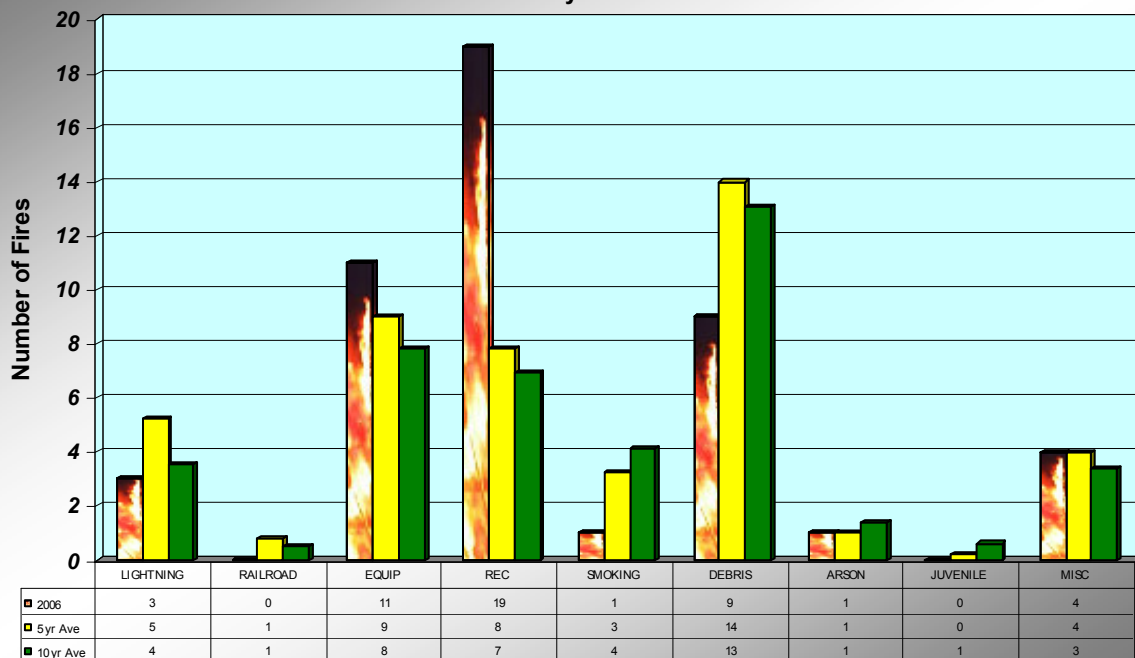
The 2006 fire season was 116 days in length (June 26 - October 19, 2006), the second longest of the past 10 years. There were 100 total fires (48 statistical fires, 10 non-stat fires, and 42 non-fire crew actions) reported, burning 51 acres for a total suppression cost of \$86,406. These costs made last fire season the second costliest of the past 10 years with recreation related fires seeing the biggest increase in both frequency and cost.

Of the statistical fires, recreation fire numbers were up and accounted for 40% of the total reported fires in the district. Eight recreation fires in the Toledo Unit resulted in \$71,143 (82%) of the total suppression costs for the year.



(above) Dallas Unit fire Crew plumbing hose lay during initial attack at Toledo Unit's Schooner Creek fire July 11, 2006. The fire was controlled at 7 acres for a cost of \$17,000.

WEST OREGON DISTRICT
Fires by Cause





SUPPRESSION

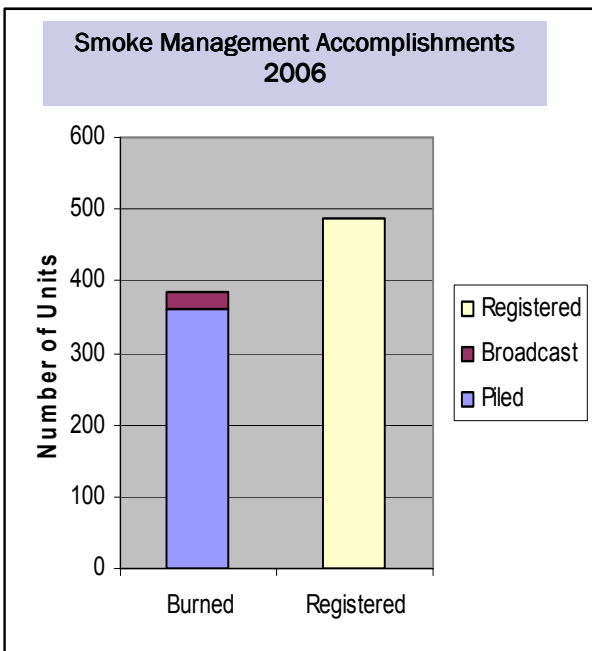
(left) Parker Stadium Fire mop-up on Sept 26. This was one of 19 recreation related fires in the district in 2006. This fire started Sept 25, 2006 and was contained at 4 acres for a cost of \$13,500



SMOKE MANAGEMENT

383 units burned (79%) of 487 units registered
 22 broadcast units (6%)
 361 piled and landing units (94%)
 5866 acres burned (80%) of 7313 acres registered
 132,599 tons burned (80%) of 166,086 tons registered

Slash burning continued to be a key management tool used across the district as part of the landowners' efforts to reduce slash hazard and prepare recently harvested areas for replanting. Landowners have turned predominantly to "pile burning" and burning landings where whole tree yarding was done, but a reduced level of broadcast burning still occurred on the district



(above) Clemens Unit broadcast burn May 3, 2006 on Freres Lumber Co, 45 ac, aerial ignition, 13s 8w sec 6 (Lincoln Co).

WEST OREGON FOREST PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION—A DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIP

West Oregon Fire Protection Association 2006 Directors and Members

Officers:

- President—Barte Starker
- Vice President—Tim Tompkins
- Secretary—Larry Black
- Treasurer—Britt Madison

Directors

- Jerry Anderson—Forest Capital
- Donald Carr—Carr Family Forests
- Dana Clay—Green Diamond
- David Hampton—Hampton Affiliates
- Dave Hiatt—Wakefield Farm
- Matt Higgins—Plum Creek
- Sara Leiman—Coast Range Conifers
- Lee Miller—Miller Timber Services
- Joe Steere—Miami Corporation

Advisory Directors

- Suzanne Knapp—ODFW
- Brad Keller—BLM
- Mike Bordelon—ODF
- Mike Dykzeul—OFIC
- Mari Kramer—Conf. Tribes of Siletz
- Mary Ellen Holly—KOG
- Jeff Nepstad—Conf. Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Carl West—BLM-USFS

Members

- Barclay Family Trust
- Carr Forest Resources
- Coast Range Conifers, LLC
- Conf. Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Rose Esbenshade
- Forest Capital Partners, LLC
- Freres Timber, Inc
- Georgia Pacific
- Giustina Resources
- Green Diamond Resource Co.
- Hampton Affiliates
- Hull-Oakes Lumber Co.
- Ron and Victoria Larson
- Miami Corporation
- Miller Timber Services
- Plum Creek Timberlands
- T&M Miller Family Trust
- Jeralyn O'Brien Trust
- Roseburg Resources
- Diane & Lance Stein
- Schroeder & O'Neil
- Smith Hill Properties
- Springer Logging
- Springer Tree Farm
- Starker Forests, Inc.
- Stimson Lumber Co.
- Van Eck Forest Trust
- Wakefield Farms
- Weyerhaeuser Co
- Widow Creek Tree Farm

For over 50 years, West Oregon Forest Protective Association (WOFPA) has been a vibrant partner in fire protection efforts in Polk, Benton, and Lincoln Counties with ODF.

The 2006 annual membership meeting and budget hearing were held April 6 in the Philomath office with 40 attendees. Vice-President, Tim Tompkins presented a summary of the proposed budget. The total FY 07 protection budget was \$1,586,753.

Tim also presented a summary of budget core items (personnel, engines, communications, aerial detection flights, and industrial cooperators) that are part of the proposed budget. The subcommittee also felt the association's resources would be best used in pursuing additional seasonal staff for fire crews if possible.

Besides the budget hearing, the membership also affirmed the current board of directors and advisory directors for the next year.

WOFPA's annual Summer tour focused on Polk County, with special emphasis on managing fire potential and smoke intrusions with growing numbers of debris piles and fewer burning opportunities.

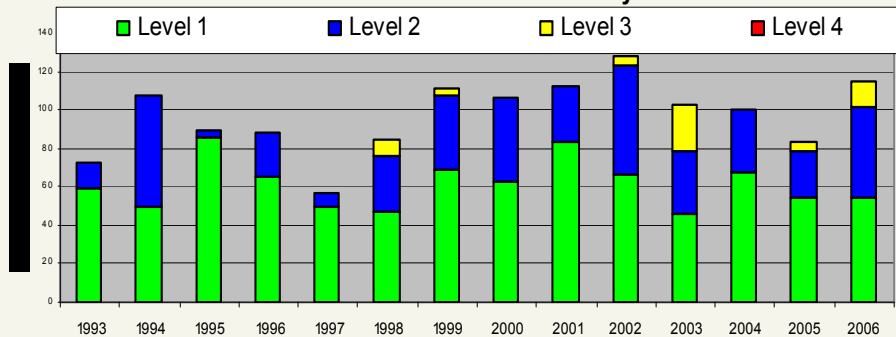
Attendees included WOFPA members, ODF personnel from the district and Salem staff, as well as Polk County Commissioners. The group toured Weyerhaeuser, Forest Capital Partners, and urban interface lands.

With recreation activities becoming more widespread, the tour also visited the Black Rock area, home of Black Rock Mountain Bike Associations' trail system. This stop focused on the efforts being made to balance the responsibilities of ODF in managing timber harvests on public land, recreation areas, and threatened species like the Northern Spotted Owl.

The fall Board of Director's meeting was held on December 5, 2006 with 33 in attendance. Agenda topics included a review of the recent fire season from District Forester, Steve Laam, Mike Bordelon, Area Director, and Bill Lafferty, Salem Protection.

With the large increase in recreation fires noted during fire season, the board recommended that the budget committee and ODF staff work together to add additional forest patrols around high-impact areas historically prone to recreation fires.

**West Oregon District
Industrial Fire Levels Summary**



PROTECTION FROM FIRE

WEST OREGON DISTRICT
10 YEAR FIRE SUMMARY

12/04/2006

YEAR	FIRE SEASON		FIRE SEASON LENGTH-DAYS	STATISTICAL FIRES		
	BEGIN	END		# FIRES	ACRES	SUPPRESSION
1996	7/8	10/14	98	51	76	\$45,890
1997	7/21	9/16	57	31	66	\$12,713
1998	7/13	10/5	84	37	190	\$42,736
1999	7/8	10/27	111	33	68	\$43,880
2000	6/28	10/12	106	43	17	\$11,873
2001	7/2	10/22	112	43	112	\$35,939
2002	7/1	11/6	128	76	279	\$88,400
2003	6/26	10/7	103	49	431	\$28,069
2004	6/28	10/6	100	18	46	\$69,549
2005	7/13	10/4	83	36	158	\$40,069
2006	6/26	10/19	115	48	50	\$86,406
10 YR AVERAGE			100	41	142	\$45,963
5 YR AVERAGE			106	45	193	\$62,499

10 YEAR SUMMARY

	YEAR		YEAR
LONGEST FIRE SEASON	2002	SHORTEST FIRE SEASON	1997
YEAR OF MOST FIRES	2002	YEAR OF LEAST FIRES	2004
HIGHEST ACRES BURNED	2003	LOWEST ACRES BURNED	2000
HIGHEST SUPPRESSION COST	2002	LOWEST SUPPRESSION COST	2000

MOST COSTLY FIRES OF THE LAST 10 YEARS

Fanno Ridge	\$63,082	2004	Lightning
200 Road	\$28,728	2002	Smoker
Denzer Bridge	\$19,857	2002	Arson
Schooner Creek	\$16,703	2006	Campfire
Rocky Creek	\$13,686	2005	Lightning
Parker Stadium	\$13,511	2006	Recreation
1620 Road	\$12,488	1999	Arson



STATE FORESTS

During 2006, the West Oregon District continued to manage state forestlands under the Northwest Forest Management Plan for "Structure Based Management". The district remained active in its timber sale, reforestation, roads, and recreation management programs.

While accomplishing its annual objectives within the state forests program, the district generated revenue for Lincoln, Benton, and Polk counties from the Board of Forestry lands and revenue for the Common School Fund from its Department of State Lands holdings. Volumes and values are given in the table below.



Harvesting operations underway on the Tums Relief timber sale on State Forest land in Benton County

Reforestation activities were specifically geared at rapidly reforesting sites that have had a timber harvest, to address disease issues, and to promote species diversity in areas planned for more complex stands. These objectives were accomplished by using a variety of species, and tailoring specific silvicultural prescriptions to each site.

Administratively, West Oregon continued to provide miscellaneous forest product permits to a growing number of residents. Permits to commercially harvest salal were in particular demand. With environmental concerns being evaluated, the district curtailed commercial moss harvesting.

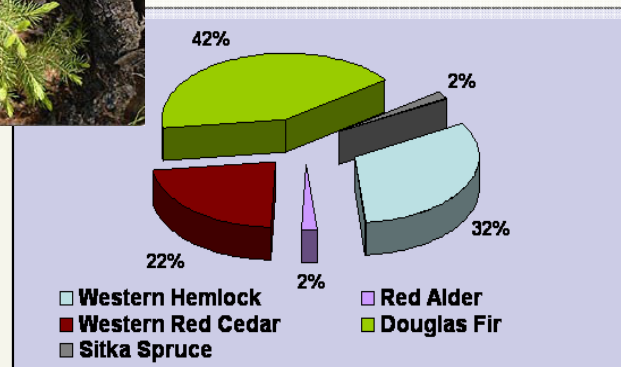
Roads and engineering continued to play a key role in accessing state managed lands while protecting key resources. The district continued to work along with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to identify areas of concern for fish passage. In 2006, A 45-foot culvert on Balm Creek was removed to provide unrestricted fish passage and allow for movement of natural materials to downstream habitats. Engineering unit personnel also replaced a culvert on Cline Creek road. This was one of the last known stream crossings that was identified as a fish passage barrier on state forest lands within the district.

2006 STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR WEST OREGON DISTRICT

Timber Volume Sold	12.7 MMBF
Associated Timber Value	\$5,854,000
Tree Planting Completed	242 acres
Number of Trees Planted	99,000
Timber Volume Harvested	12.8 MMBF
Timber Harvest Value	\$5,304,000
Fish Passage Culverts Replaced	1



SEEDLINGS PLANTED IN WEST OREGON DISTRICT - 2006



STATE FORESTS



Forest recreation use across the district continues to expand, and 2006 was no exception. The district continues to work with recreation user groups to help manage this increasing demand. Both the Black Rock Mountain Bike Association and the Mt. Baber ATV club continued to be active in 2006.

Other projects of note in 2006 included completing nearly 100 miles of roadside vegetation management, and working with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to place large wood structure in two different stream reaches and accomplish fish distribution surveys.



Trail bike riders watch as one of their group gets some serious hang time on one of the jumps that is part of the Black Rock Mountain Bike trail system located on state forest land outside of Falls City.

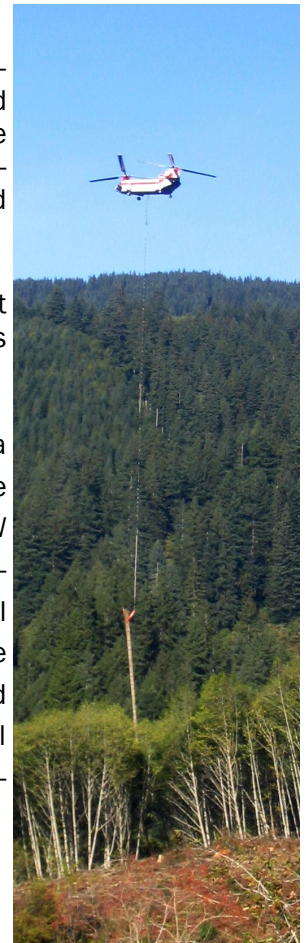
STIX IN CRIX PROGRAM ENHANCES LOCAL STREAMS

West Oregon State Forests Program in association with ODFW coordinated a riparian restoration project nicknamed “Stix for Crix” that added 25 trees to Steere Creek and Yaquina River. The trees, sold from timber managed by the district were moved into place by a heavy lift helicopter, that arranged the trees to simulate natural debris jams and develop deep pool habitat necessary to improve summer and winter rearing for salmon and trout.

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board provided \$20,222.99 for the project and Oregon Department of Forestry is contributing \$18,200. The total project cost was \$43,222.99.



“This project will treat a large, productive stream with whole trees,” said Jason Kirchner, ODFW Stream Habitat Restoration Biologist. “Using a helicopter is a real advantage because it would not be possible to treat Steere Creek and Yaquina River with traditional methods because of access difficulties and size of the streams.



PRIVATE FORESTS

Developing positive working relationships with forest landowners and focusing efforts on customer service have helped make “2006” a very successful year for WOD’s private forests program. The District has welcomed two new stewardship foresters in Randy VanProoyen and Terry Orton who have both brought significant forest management experience and leadership skills to the program.

As in previous years, administration of the Forest Practices Act remained the core focus for the six Stewardship Foresters within the West Oregon District. Total notifications processed included: Toledo - 710, Philomath - 896 and Dallas - 717



Cable yarder operation in West Oregon District



This year’s nominations for the Operator of the Year program once again proved to be very successful. R & T Logging was awarded a Letter of Commendation for their special efforts to protect resources during difficult logging conditions while Emerald Valley Thinning will represent the Northwest Oregon Area as Operator of the year. These awards will be presentation during the “2007” logging show in Eugene and the Toledo operator’s meeting.

Winter weather visited the valley floor around Dallas and other areas of the district, as well as the higher elevations, in November and continued with several blasts of snow and ice throughout the winter

PRIVATE FORESTS

Foresters were also involved with several cost share programs to support small woodland owners including: Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Forestland Enhancement Program, Stewardship Planning and the 50% tax credit among others. These efforts continue to provide financial support and expert guidance to landowners seeking to make improvements to forestland throughout the District.



(At left) Spar tree at Fall Creek. (Below, clockwise from left) Older stream crossing washout; newer stream crossing washout resulting from heavy November rainfalls. A major Fall windstorm ripped through the Van Duzer Corridor in northeast Lincoln County, resulting in major blowdown

November showed its wild side, after four months of relatively little precipitation, the District received heavy amounts of rain within a 5-day period. Though most landowners' road systems weathered the storms, there were a few incidents of fill failure, both old fills and new.



This rain event was followed a short time later by two very powerful wind events within 2 weeks of each other, causing more damage than the rain events did. Many large landowners incurred significant timber blowdown and many small private landowners lost a large amount of timber as well. Finally, at the end of the month, a heavy dusting of snow effectively shut the woods down for a few days, though most of our units were able to stay open.

ADMINISTRATION

JERRY PIERING RETIRES AFTER 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

After 30 years of dedicated service to the Department of Forestry, the past 28 of them as the Unit Forester in Dallas, Jerry Piering retired June 1, 2006.

Jerry began working for the Department of Forestry shortly after obtaining his Masters Degree in Silviculture from Washington State University. Jerry, a Wisconsin native, started his career with the Department of Forestry in July 1976 as a State Lands Forester working out of the Reedsport office. After 4 months in Reedsport Jerry transferred to

the Coos office where he worked till November 1978, when he promoted to the Unit Forester Position at the Dallas office.



"Just remember old foresters never die, they just petrify."

Jerry Piering



If you ask Jerry what are some of the significant events and memories he takes with him from his years of service, he'll tell you there are many. Jerry says he always enjoyed slash burning about as much as anything he did and that it was interesting to see burning evolve over the years. When he first came to the West Oregon District there was no one broadcast burning in the spring for fear of hold over fires.

With a little encouragement landowners learned there were opportunities to accomplish burning in the spring with minimal mop-up and minimal potential for hold over, so the bulk of the broadcast burning shifted from the fall to spring burning. Next the transition was from broadcast burning to more units being mechanically piled with pile burning in the fall and currently, the transition is to a minimal amount of slash burning of any kind being done within the district.

ADMINISTRATION

PIERING RETIREMENT (CONTINUED)

Jerry said he also enjoyed a lot of the relationships he had the opportunity to build with many people through the years.

Other memorable events during Jerry's tenure include moving of the Dallas office from the old River Drive location to its current location on Oak Villa Road in 1981 and the two big fires on the Dallas Unit in 1987. The Rockhouse Creek and the Shady Lane Fire both required ODF fire teams to be brought in to manage them which is a very rare occurrence for the District.

Jerry says he's enjoyed his career with ODF and leaves a few parting words, something to the effect, "Just remember old foresters never die, they just petrify."



SAFETY AND WELLNESS
 Vehicle accidents – 1
 Personal injury – 1
 100% accident-free permanent staff
 29 safety awards presented

DISTRICT SAFETY MEETINGS – 2006

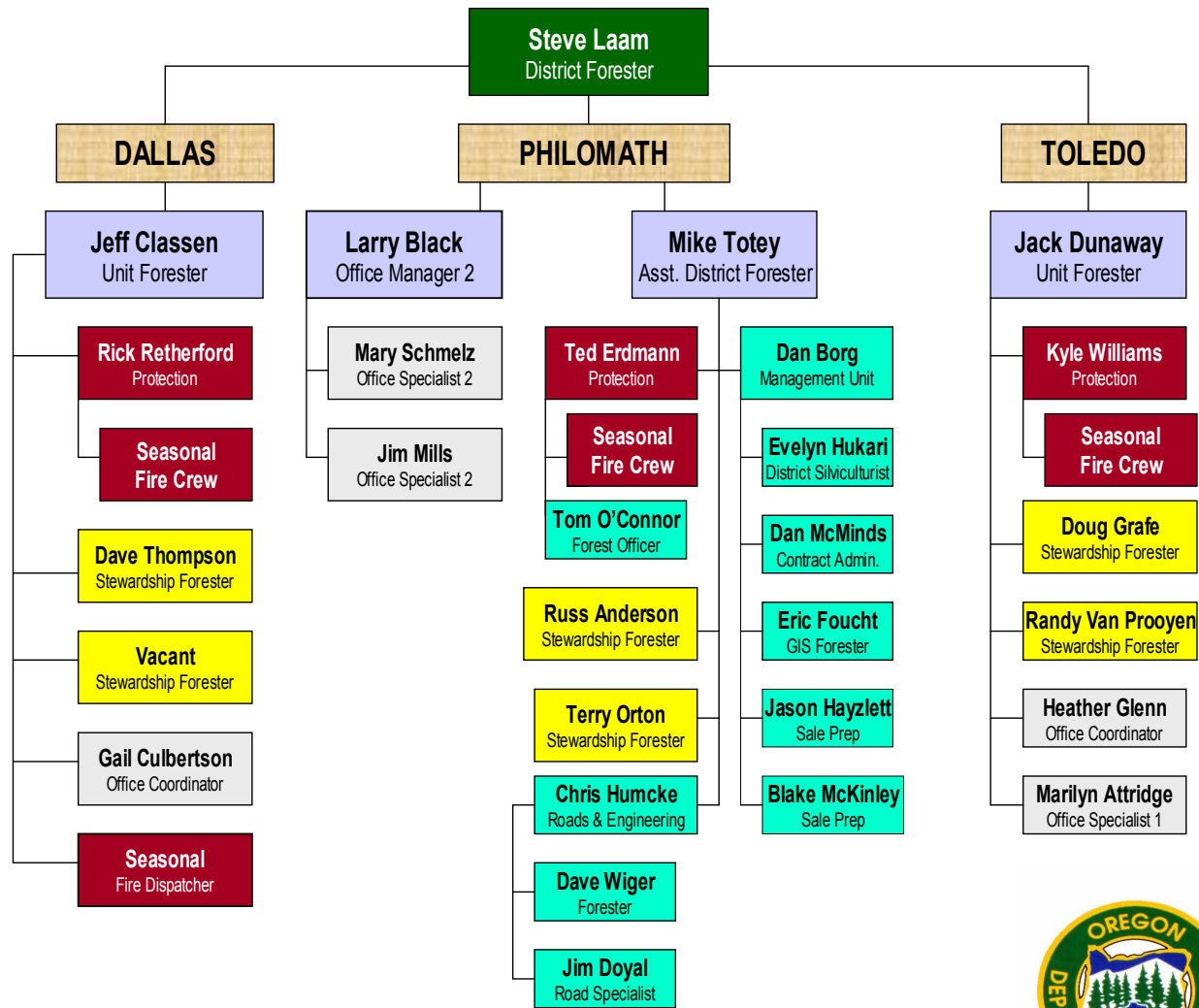
West Oregon staff participated in two district-wide safety and wellness meetings in 2006. The first meeting was held in May and concentrated on safety and fire readiness.

Philomath fire department personnel conducted a live fire extinguisher exercise, giving staff first-hand experience with using varying types of fire extinguishers on a blaze. Employees also participated in annual refresher training on fire shelters, including practice in deploying shelters.

District Forester, Steve Laam, presented a IS-700 training in order to get all employees certified. The group also participated in an extended attack fire simulation on district protected land, giving staff a great review of basic resource ordering, logistics, and operational preparedness.

In December, the all-district safety meeting began with annual audiometric testing as well as IS-800A training. Guest speakers included Chris Friend from the Tillamook Forest Center and Darren Mahr, speaking on biomass resources. The meeting continued with a rousing game of Safety Jeopardy pitting State Forests, Private Forests, and Management/Admin staff against each other in a review of yearly safety topics. Closing the meeting was the presentation of annual safety recognition awards to individuals and programs within the district.

**West Oregon District
December 2006**



Oregon Department of Forestry

WEST OREGON DISTRICT

West Oregon District—Philomath
24533 Alsea Hwy
Philomath, OR 97370
(541) 929-3266 Fax (541)929-5549

West Oregon District—Dallas Unit
825 Oak Villa Road
Dallas, OR 97338
(503) 623-8146 Fax (503) 623-9034

West Oregon District—Toledo Unit
763 Forestry Road
Toledo, OR 97391
(541) 336-2273 Fax (541) 336-5261