



- BACKGROUND -

## Department overview

Promoting and practicing sustainable forestry

### At a glance

### How the Department protects and manages forests

**The Department serves all Oregonians by practicing and promoting sustainable forestry intended to produce a continual flow of a wide range of benefits.**

- **Staff:** For most of the year, the Department employs about 800 people. The hiring of seasonal employees increases the work force to 1,100-1,200 during the summer firefighting season.
- **Budget:** The Governor's Recommended Budget for the Department for 2007-2009 is \$266.1 million, a 13 percent increase from the 2005-07 Legislatively Adopted Budget. The recommended budget seeks to rebuild capacity that was reduced during past budget cuts and to make limited new investments (*Additional details are in the budget section of this briefing book*).

The Department focuses on maintaining healthy, productive forests. Major services:

- **Protecting forest resources from wildfire** is of high priority. The Department protects 15.8 million forested acres – more than half of Oregon's forest land base. The agency protects privately owned forestland as well as some public lands, including state-owned forests and forests owned by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Forest landowners pay for fire protection costs through taxes and assessments. The state also contributes to the cost, reflecting a recognition that private lands provide public benefits, such as clean water, and that wildfire suppression contributes to public safety.



#### **Key elements of the Fire Program's work include:**

- Assignment of employees from across the agency to specialized fire duties during the summer.
- Close cooperation with landowners, other land management agencies, structural fire protection agencies and other partners.
- An emphasis on prevention.
- Rapid "initial attack," which seeks to put fires out while they are still small.
- Working with communities to develop wildfire protection plans.

## How the Department protects and manages forests (Cont.)

- **Working with private landowners.** The Private Forests program offers on-the-ground guidance and other services to improve and maintain forest health and productivity. The tasks of field foresters, who work directly with landowners, include:
  - Administering the Forest Practices Act, which provides for environmentally sound timber harvest and other activities.
  - Helping landowners identify and address insect and disease problems and other forest health issues.
  - Connecting landowners with cost-share programs and other financial resources.
  - Helping landowners with projects such as establishing new forests on marginal farmland and improving fish passage and habitat.



An ODF forester helps a landowner with tree-planting

Other services include joining with partners in research and monitoring of insect and disease trends, the effectiveness of forest practices rules, the potential of forests to offset greenhouse gas emissions, and other topics.

- **Managing state forests.** The state owns 781,000 acres of forestland, about 3 percent of Oregon's forestland base.

Management of these lands produces a range of benefits, including clean air and water; timber revenue, products and jobs; wildlife habitat, and recreation. Depending on the type of land, revenue from timber sales goes to counties that deeded lands to the state – and to schools and other government units within those counties – or to the state's Common School Fund.

Timber sale revenue also supports the department's management of the state forests. No General Fund tax dollars are used.

The largest state-owned forest, the Tillamook State Forest, was extensively replanted after a series of large fires between 1933 and 1951. Today, in addition to its environmental and economic benefits, it is an important source of recreational opportunities readily accessible from the Portland metropolitan area.

- **Other Department activities include:**
  - Helping cities, community groups and others to manage urban forests.
  - Joining with partners in monitoring projects to assess forest insect and disease activity, to better understand the effects of forest management activities and rules, and to accomplish other goals.
  - Supporting the Board of Forestry in addressing long-range policy issues.

## For more information

Dan Postrel, Director  
Agency Affairs Program  
503-945-7420