



- BACKGROUNDER -

Oregon's Forest Resource

Promoting and practicing sustainable forestry

Oregon's forests – a diverse, renewable resource that's essential to the state's prosperity and quality of life.

An overview

Forests cover 30.2 million acres, or 49 percent of Oregon's land area.

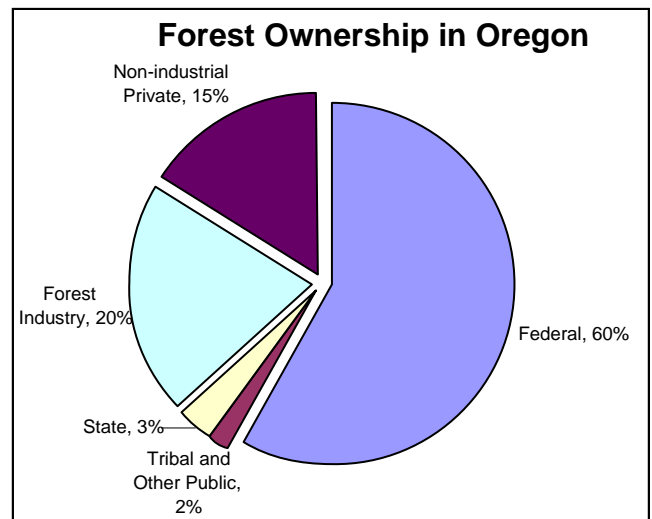
As a whole, Oregon's forests are integral to the state's identity, its economy and its quality of life. Forests produce clean water – cleaner than water flowing from land in other uses – as well as wildlife habitat, timber products, jobs, recreation, scenic beauty, revenue for public services, and other benefits. They have a role to play in addressing key issues facing the state, including the vitality of rural communities, school funding, growth, climate change and renewable energy.

Some forest areas in the Coast Range receive more than 100 inches of rainfall each year, and are among the most productive forestlands in the world.

While many states have experienced substantial loss of forestland to development, agriculture and other uses, Oregon's land use policies have largely been successful in maintaining the forestland base in recent decades. However, given the state's population growth, rising real estate values and other factors, fragmentation and loss of working forestland are growing concerns.

In addition to the 28 million forested acres, Oregon's forest resource includes **urban forests** – trees in neighborhoods and other developed landscapes – which have tangible benefits in property value, retention of storm runoff and other values.

Oregon is the nation's no. 1 producer of lumber. Although harvests have dropped sharply on federal lands since the late 1980s, and jobs and industry infrastructure have been lost, the forest sector remains vital, particularly in rural communities. The sector provides 190,000 direct and indirect jobs and accounts for about 11 percent of Oregon's economic output. Forest sector wages are above the statewide average, enhancing the sector's economic contribution.



Forest ownership is diverse

Owners of forestland in Oregon include the federal, state and local governments, Indian tribes, industrial landowners, families and individuals. Ownerships vary from a few acres to hundreds of thousands. Forest owners have widely differing management goals and face differing circumstances – factors such as the location, health and productivity of the land, and funds available to invest in forest management. The primary ownership groups:

- The **federal government** is the largest forestland owner, primarily through the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Large proportions of these lands currently are managed with a “reserve” approach intended to conserve or restore the characteristics of older forests. Many of these lands, particularly in drier regions, face serious forest health problems, including increased vulnerability to insect and disease activity and to unusually hot, destructive wildfires that may also affect neighboring lands or communities.
- **Private forestlands** are divided between industrial holdings managed primarily for environmentally sustainable timber production, and family forestlands whose owners have widely varying desires and goals for their lands.
- **State, tribal and other lands** are managed for a variety of purposes. **Oregon State Forests** account for about three percent of Oregon’s forestland, and are managed to produce a range of economic, environmental and social benefits for Oregonians.

Forest sustainability: moving beyond conflict

Sustainable forest management means that forest resources across the landscape are used, developed and protected in ways that enable us to meet current environmental, economic and social needs, while ensuring that future generations can meet their needs.

The state’s forest policy, as expressed in the Board of Forestry’s *Forestry Program for Oregon*, holds that keeping forests sustainable means recognizing the relationship among economic, social and environmental values. **Although these values are often viewed as being in conflict, they are in fact interdependent.**

Maintaining **environmental** values protects the forest’s health and productivity – the basis of its ability to provide all benefits. **Economic** benefits are necessary to retain forest use in the face of growing pressure to convert to other uses, and to pay to protect and enhance forest resources. **Social** values include recreation, revenue for public services, and stability of rural communities; these help sustain public support for forest management.

The state’s forest policy recognizes that every acre of forest is not managed in the same way. It is a mosaic of responsible management approaches that produces a healthy, resilient and sustainable forest landscape.

Oregon's Forest Practices Act regulates forest activities

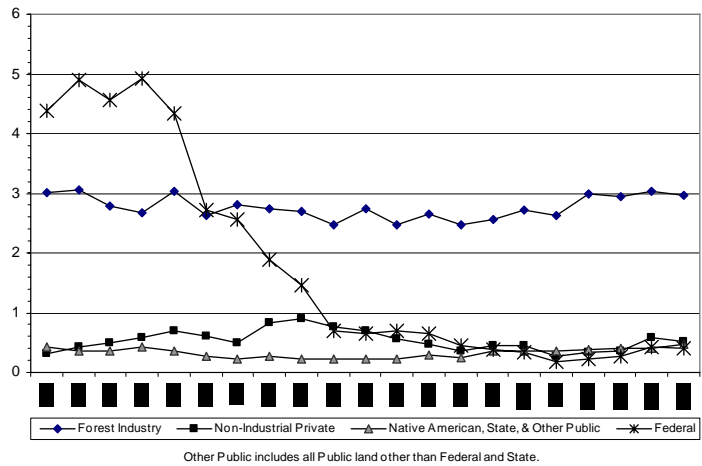
Timber harvest

This law provides for timber harvest consistent with environmentally sound management of water, soil, air quality, fish, wildlife and scenic resources. **The Act's requirements include leaving streamside buffers and successfully reforestation after harvest.** Although forest practices rules have evolved considerably since the Act's passage in 1971, they still reflect the original focus on results and on collaboration among the department, operators and landowners.

Oregon's yearly timber harvest has averaged about 4 billion board feet in the past five years.

Federal harvests have dropped sharply in recent years while harvests from other sources have remained fairly steady.

Annual Timber Harvests for All Oregon, by Ownership Group, 1985-2005 in Billion Board Feet



For more information

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