



"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY  
CENTRAL OREGON DISTRICT

# 2005 Annual Report



Awbrey Mountain, Prineville, Or — Photo taken by Adam Barnes

To serve the people of Oregon through the protection, management, and promotion of a healthy forest environment, which will enhance Oregon's livability and economy for today and tomorrow.

# A Message from the District Forester

Robert O Young

As I read through the Annual Report I was truly amazed at the amount and diversity of accomplishments the staff of the Central Oregon District produced this past year. There are a lot of talented employees in the district and I'm very proud to showcase all their accomplishments!

In particular, I'd like to highlight the John Day unit. I have never seen a more organized and experienced group during a significant fire event. To watch them in the dispatch office work together with the field crews, reminds me of what a true team effort really is!

The 2005 fire season was very challenging with fire danger indices reaching extreme for 56 days! There were five type three incidents in the district that proved to be demanding. The Park Fire at La Pine State Park required the evacuation of a few hundred residents and campers. Other fires like the Two Mile Canyon Fire in the Fossil sub-unit were very difficult because of limited access and the lack of local logistical support.

The Private and Community Forests Program and the Urban and Community Forests Program are both doing very well and have major accomplishments worth reading.

The success of the fire season and the rest of the accomplishments would not have been possible without the assistance of our cooperators and partners. We, in Central Oregon are very fortunate to have such wonderful working relationships that continue to improve and result in better service and products to all our constituents.

Thank you very much!

*Robert Young*

## From the Editor

The Central Oregon District of the Oregon Department of Forestry is a unique place to work. With unit and sub-unit offices, guard stations, and a satellite office covering 11 counties and 2.3 million acres of private forestland to protect; it offers both challenges and rewards.

It's the people that make the difference. Central Oregon District employees work hard and are dedicated to the work that they do.

I've seen budgetary challenges, geographical and staffing challenges, and many issues in between; all the while I've watched the employees continue to work with excellence, stay friends, become like family, and con-

tinue interagency partnerships to work as efficiently as possible.

Each program has its own distinctive values and everyone does their part to help ensure we move with the growth of the district's population. New residents mean more education and long-time residents call for a

message with new flavor; recreationists and visitors are a whole other educational need.

The dynamics of this district require a workforce that can handle adversity with a team mentality and look for a positive outcome, and we do it every day.

Christy Donham  
AR Editor

### Special points of interest:

- Central Oregon District provides fire protection on 2.3 million acres of private forest land.
- The District cooperates with over 100 interagency partners.
- Fall River Estates in Deschutes County was Oregon's first designated a "Firewise Communities USA" community.
- District employees managed over \$1,069,893.00 in National Fire Plan Funding during 2005.
- Sunriver Oregon is one of only 157 in the nation to receive the 25 year, Silver, Tree City USA recognition.

**"It's the people that make the difference."**

## Central Oregon District Safety

In 2005 the Central Oregon District implemented a district wide wellness program. The district wellness program provides nutrition and overall health information as well as granting all district employees an allotted amount of time during the work week to participate in physical fitness. Throughout the district personnel found a wide variety of activities including weight lifting, geo-cache, walking and running to provide physical fitness. Other wellness related programs that the district employees were involved in included hearing testing and health screenings prior to the work capacity test.

The district employees did well to stay safety minded throughout the year. COD has a high number of driving and exposure

hours due to the geography of the district. Although there was an increase in reported accidents/injuries from 2004 (a total of nine in 2005) the District had a considerably safe and productive year.

Driver training, first aid / CPR, hazardous materials, lockout / tagout, and sexual harassment are among many of the training opportunities within the district.

As the district moves into the next year we look forward to preventing accidents and injuries through the continued support of the safety program. Although some accidents or injuries can not be prevented the district will strive to reduce this number by continuing safety awareness and education for the employees.

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**Training is expensive, good training is more expensive, no training is most expensive.**

## Protection From Fire

The Central Oregon District experienced a more active fire season after a quiet 2004. The district had 94 fire starts involving 823 acres. A dry, windy weather pattern dominated the season; however of the 94 fire starts all but five fires (89) were controlled during initial action. Another positive note is that the district received very little lightning. In fact, the Sisters Unit did not have one single lightning caused fire which is a first that we know of back to 1960 according to the F.I.R.E.S. tracking system. Even though the district had fewer lightning strikes, in one storm the state of Oregon had 1,979 hits and 1,351 of them were in Central Oregon.

**“For the first time in 45 years the Sisters Unit did not have a lightning caused fire.”**

Most fires were kept at one acre or less thanks to quick, aggressive and effective initial attack. Another positive factor in the quick suppression effort was the support from the ODF Air Tanker and Air Tanker Manger stationed at the Redmond Air Center. Having this air support, through severity funding, was critical to meeting ODF objectives in suppressing fire as well off-setting the budget.

Additionally our fire prevention program is gaining



**Fire retardant drop over an interface area on the Park Fire  
LaPine, OR**

traction which includes the Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Prevention Act of 1997. In August the district experienced a human caused fire that burned into a residential area in southern Deschutes County. During the post fire evaluation it was noted that most, if not all, of the homes that were threat-

ened by the fire met the standards of the new interface rules which contributed to their survival.

Even though it was an active fire season in Central Oregon, we were able to provide firefighting resources and overhead for priority incidents in other portions of the state.

### Fires for 2005

Cause	Number	Protected Acres
Lightning	26	308.51
Railroad	5	2.01
Equipment Use	16	212.09
Recreationist	9	142.82
Smoking	9	141.82
Debris Burning	22	12.62
Arson	1	.54
Juveniles	0	0
Miscellaneous	6	2.68

# Protection From Fire (cont)

## Unit Perspectives

### *John Day-Fossil-Monument*

The 2005 fire season brought again record setting indices for the John Day unit but the lack of lightning-producing summer storms and a low number of human caused ignitions limited the fire activity to 33 statistical fires for the unit burning only 504 acres of protected land of which 40 were timbered acres.

On the John Day Sub-unit, the largest of these incidents was the 167-acre Hell N Gone fire in southern Grant County on August 1<sup>st</sup>, which was caused by a holdover lightning strike from the previous day. Aggressive initial attack kept this wind-driven Type 3 incident from becoming a major project fire. This same aggressive strategy was employed throughout the season on the sub-unit's other incidents and was successful in limiting that burned acreage to 12.47 acres. The continued funding of an Air Attack platform and the addition of an organized six-person hand crew, a FEPP Dozer, and a Water Tender also aided in this suppression effort.

The Fossil sub-unit experienced its first lightning bust at the close of July which sparked several smaller fires with a couple reaching over 45 acres. The largest fire on the sub-unit didn't occur until mid-August when another lightning storm passed over the area.

Wills Canyon started after dark on unprotected lands outside the district boundary. The fire quickly grew and raced towards ODF protection. Given the inaccessible terrain the fire was 200+ acres before any crews arrived on scene. Suppression efforts lasted several days on this fire burning in tall dense bunch grass and junipers in rim-rock canyons. At the end, the fire scorched a total of 895 acres of which only 10 were on ODF protected land but as Wills Canyon was winding down, a single fatality aircraft crash sparked the sub-unit's other significant fire for the season.

The Twomile Canyon fire started August 24<sup>th</sup> in a very rugged and remote area of Grant Co. A single engine aircraft crashed into a ridgetop on the breaks of the North Fork of the John Day River. The afternoon winds quickly spread the fire to less accessible terrain. Initial attack crews were able to stop the spread of the fire during the first day at 207 total acres with the help of several aerial resources.

# Protection From Fire (cont)

## Unit Perspectives (cont)



**2005 Reforestation in the Awbrey Hall Fire area**

### *Prineville-Sisters*

The Prineville-Sisters Unit had 56 days of extreme fire danger through August and September; reaching record indices. Without lightning fires on the Sisters side of the unit there were only eight lightning caused fires for the entire unit in 2005 compared to 36 in 2004. Human caused fires were also down by one in 2005 from 24 in 2004.

Prineville-Sisters did have two Type III incidents; The Park Fire followed a few days later by the Awbrey Saddle Fire. Due to adverse weather (west winds 10-30 mph and low humidity) both fires utilized direct attack, supported by numerous aviation resources along with crews and heavy equipment. The two were held to less than 130 acres each which, based on weather, fuel condition and location, is considered very successful. District employees were utilized on both incidents filling both qualified and trainee positions. During this time there were many fires burning across Central Oregon, including federal lands and rural fire protection; to get this many resources so quickly was a positive factor in suppressing both fires.

The Park Fire, reported on Aug 27, was started by a transient's cigarette in a desolate area west of LaPine State Park. The fire did cause the evacuation of nearby subdivisions and campground visitors. A local, interagency, Type III Incident Management Team managed this incident. The quick, aggressive response from all resources and interagency coordination kept residents and recreationists safe while stopping the fire at 88 acres of Oregon Department of Forestry protected lands and 51 acres of USDA Deschutes National Forest land.

The Awbrey Saddle fire was reported on Aug 30. The cause is unknown but likely recreationists related to the use of shotguns. The steep forested terrain was an issue early on in fire suppression activity but thanks to severity resources and interagency support, the fire was contained at 129 acres with no injuries.

The Prineville-Sisters Unit continues to prepare, and partner with other agencies to meet the department's objectives to protect life, resources and property; making the most of available firefighting resources and personnel to keep fires small.

# Protection From Fire (cont)

## Unit Perspectives (cont)

### *The Dalles*

In 2005, The Dalles Unit spent 38 days in extreme fire danger; 24 of those set all time record fire indices, yet the unit had few fire starts. Unit personnel made a total of 53 responses, 30 of which were stat-fires, 11 non-stat fires, and 12 smoke-chases.

The statistical acres burnt on the Unit were 28.59 with only 13.23 of those being paying acres. The largest fire on the Unit was the Gate Creek at 6.5 acres. This fire occurred on July 17 on the breaks of the White River. IA resources included 3 ODF engines, 3 USFS engines, 2 BLM engines and the BLM helitack ship from Prineville. District severity dollars were used to put an additional dozer on standby for two weeks of extreme fire danger.

The Dalles Unit experienced only two lightening storms producing only one fire. Human-caused fires remain to be the leading cause this year, but due to good prevention methods and aggressive initial attack, minimal acreage was burned this year.



Helicopter bucket work on the Park Fire

# Private and Community Forests

The districts five stewardship foresters continued to provide service to the landowners and operators throughout the district in 2005. While the number of notifications stayed relatively flat after several years of increases, a continued emphasis on assistance related projects saw several projects implemented over the past year.



Tree tops from a commercial thinning project on Deschutes Basin Land Trust Properties

become more widely available to landowners in the district. ODF's role in CRP/CREP is to provide technical assistance for planting riparian areas in cooperation with the Farm Services Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**"Cost share programs provided assistance to landowners on nearly 900 acres throughout the district."**

Operators working on the district continued their exceptional stewardship while complying with the Forest Practices Act. Stewardship Foresters continued to review notifications and written plans, and meet with operators and landowners on site prior to and during operations, assisting them with meeting and exceeding the Oregon Forest Practices Act. Compliance with the act continues to be outstanding. Both Tony Hauth and Jerome Natural Resource Consultants received letters of commendation for their exceptional work on the district.

Cost share programs provided assistance to landowners on

nearly 900 acres throughout the district. This included funds from programs such as Bark Beetle Mitigation, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, the Reforestation Tax Credit, and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program. The Prineville-Sisters unit was successful in securing \$300,000 in Bark Beetle Mitigation funds for work in 2006, which will add to work already being done in The Dalles and John Day units with similar funds.

In addition to the programs listed above, the Conservation Reserve and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Programs (CRP/CREP) are popular programs that continue to

The Stewardship Foresters continued to take an active role in the protection from fire program by conducting industrial fire inspections and assisting communities and landowners with national fire plan projects. In addition, the stewardship foresters continued to serve as an integral part of the districts firefighting force, as well as filling several off district assignments on larger incidents.

Notifications	1012
Stewardship plan acres	8909
Assistance acres (non fire plan)	899
CRP/CREP planting acres	1189
CRP/CREP fencing miles	9.2
CRP/CREP stream enhance mi	66.2
CRP/CREP 2006 planned acres	1984



# Urban and Community Forestry

**“Eleven of the 18 Eastern Oregon Area counties Katie works with are within the Central Oregon District.”**

The Oregon Department of Forestry recognizes the important contribution trees make to Oregon communities. The Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program provides technical, financial and educational assistance to cities, other state and local agencies, schools and universities, and non-profit and civic organizations urban forestry information to cities. Katie Lompa is the Eastern Oregon Area's Community Assistance Forester. She is available to assist communities within the 18 counties located east of the Cascades, including the counties within the Central Oregon District: Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Morrow, Sherman, Wasco and Wheeler.

Central Oregon District Highlights for the 2005 year:

- Congratulations to Sunriver Owners Association on being recognized as a Tree City USA for the 25th year! Only three other Oregon communities (Salem, Portland and Eugene) and a total of only 157 communities nation-wide have reached this silver accomplishment. (2,500 communities in 2005 had Tree City USA status).
- Congratulations to the City of Bend on being reinstated as a Tree City USA after a multi-year absence and to the City of Madras for celebrating their 12th year as a Tree City.
- With the aid of a Focused Technical Assistance Grant through the

U&CFA Program, the City of Redmond adopted a public tree ordinance in December. This is first of many more important components of the city's urban forestry management program to be developed in the next year.

- For the third year, the Sisters High School Interdisciplinary Environmental Expedition Class received educational assistance through the U&CFA Program. After learning about the importance of the forest where they live, student's focused on a community issue that they felt effected their urban forest and reported their findings to the city council.
- The Cities of Madras and Redmond can both be proud of having someone on staff who recently graduated from the U&CFA Program's Community Tree Management Institute. Rick Torassa, City of Redmond and Sandy Toms, City of Madras were accepted into the 2005 year long course and graduated in November 2005. The Community Tree Mgt Institute is a course in urban forest management for municipal employees who have tree related responsibilities.



**John Salzer (rt), President, Sunriver Owners Association Receives 25th Annual Tree City USA award from Marvin Brown State Forester and Katie Lompa, Community Assistance Forester**

# National Fire Plan



Juniper Canyon Demonstration Site  
**BEFORE**

Juniper Canyon Demonstration Site  
**AFTER**

The District continues to implement projects funded by National Fire Plan grants. These grants are available to eligible landowners to help offset the cost of reduce fuel loading on their properties. Practices that are typically cost shared are thinning trees, removing ladder fuels (brush and high grass), pruning trees and disposing of the slash or debris.

This year has been a particularly good year for finishing Community Wildfire Protection Plans. Plans have been completed for Wasco, Grant, Crook, and Jefferson Counties and for communities of Sunriver, LaPine and the Greater Sisters area in Deschutes County. Wheeler, Morrow and Harney Counties, plus Bend are in progress. These plans are critical for identifying priority treatment areas on the ground.

Unit	Evaluations	Acres Accomplished	Grant Dollars Dis-
The Dalles	17	433	\$207,699
John Day	39	1136	\$242,696
Prineville/Sisters	61	76	\$ 33,057
District Totals	117	1645	\$483,452

The Pineville unit also has a grant that offers chipping services to neighborhoods and individuals. In 2005 this grant funded a number of chipping grants in support of Central Oregon Fire Free Campaign. This year approximately 992 households serviced, 32 acres and 2618 yards of material chipped under this grant. Two demonstration sites were also completed in both Deschutes and Crook counties to help residents see the process and outcome of completed defensible space.



**Smokey Bear Hot Air Balloon  
Balloons Over Bend 2004**

## Fire Prevention

The Central Oregon District had another strong year in fire prevention. Successful awareness and education programs were carried out toward both children and adults, residents and recreationists.

Interagency efforts continued in all fire prevention programs making the most of available resources within the district's 11 counties.

Deschutes County alone has grown over 60% in the last ten years requiring careful monitoring of programs to make sure we are targeting the right audience with the right fire prevention message. In 2005 the district started using the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies program as an overall fire prevention plan - with great success. Using this process, fire prevention programs were evaluated, beneficial programs continued, and any necessary changes to other programs were implemented.

Overall, the total number of fire starts is down within the district. Thanks to programs like Team Teaching, signing, media use, hunter booths and more, many of the cause categories are down in number. Even with the various programs debris burning continues to be the districts number one human fire cause. Fire personnel continue to look at the facts and do what they can to eliminate escaped fires.

**"Overall, the total number of fire starts is down within the district."**

### Oregon Forestland Urban Interface Fire Protection Act

The District is continuing to implement the new interface rules in Deschutes County, where 30,000 homeowners are affected by the provisions of the Act. We are currently utilizing an "off the shelf" data software program to enter approximately 10,000 property certification cards that have been returned to ODF to date; more come in every day.

COD personnel have been working with Deschutes County realtors to inform them of the rules and to provide certification guides to each reality company to be included in sales packets when lands covered by the Act change hands.

Additionally over 80 certified assessors have been trained in Deschutes County; approximately half are active members of homeowner associations and as such are helping other residents develop prescriptions to meet the interface rules. "The use of assessors is an effective and exciting aspect of the new Act, I am very encouraged by the positive response from so many community leaders," said Robert Young, District Forester.

COD is now moving the Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act to four other central Oregon counties; Hood River, Wasco, Crook, and Jefferson. The district's goal is to have these counties classified by the end of 2006; helping to meet or exceed the expectations of the State Forester's Strategic Plan, "have all Oregon Department of Forestry protected lands in COD covered by the provisions of the new interface rules by 2011."

# Administration

## A Personal Perspective on COIDC

The summer of 2005 turned into a wonderful learning experience for me as I had the opportunity to wear two hats. In addition to my Office Specialist duties I also took on a part-time position as an Initial Attack Dispatcher at Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center here in Prineville, Or. The season started off slow and I was grateful to be able to “get my feet wet” and have time to adjust to the tools of the trade used in a dispatch center. The many maps, run cards, and tracking devices are quite overwhelming and unique, and can be a bit intimidating

until you become familiar with the overall procedure; not to mention talking on the radio and the many frequencies associated with tracking where people are throughout their daily activities. For the most part things go smoothly until a lightning bust or fires break; demanding immediate attention. Then the worker bees kick it into high gear and the action starts. I was lucky enough to experience both aspects from different angles with combining my two positions and learned a great deal and am thankful of my experience.

Tracy Mizer Office Spec

## Building and Grounds

Much needed facilities work was accomplished in The Dalles; heating, cooling, power and water hook-ups to a trailer on the main compound, as well as a new radio building and site on Stacker Butte.

The Prineville, Sisters, and John Day facilities are also being evaluated for much needed repairs and improvements.

## Personnel

### Promotions

Matt Hoehna—FUS1, TD

### New Hire

Mike Greene—Mechanic, COD

### Service Awards

15 year (2004) George Ponte, PS  
15 year (2004) Christy Donham, PS  
10 year (2004) Ryan Karjala, Sisters  
15 year Robert Young, DF  
20 year Steve Drake, Prineville

### Transferred

To EOA Rangeland Fire Protection Association Coordinator—Gordon Foster Sr, JD

“State Employees give personal time and donations to help their community.”

## State Employee Food Drive

Central Oregon District employees go above and beyond; giving of themselves throughout the year toward community efforts.

One way employees choose to give is through the Governor’s State Employee Food Drive. In 2005 the District raised \$1032.00 and 100 lbs of food for Central Oregon’s needy.

One way funds and food get donated is through the Green Bean Cup. 2005

marked the first of this annual event. Retired Unit Forester John Jackson and Stewardship Forester Stu Otto won the cup in 2005. Each year the winners have to add something food drive or forestry related to the trophy and have it ready for the next year’s event.

Employees give of their own personal time and money toward any food drive event and proceeds go to the local St. Vincent DePaul.



2005 Green Bean Cup winners  
John Jackson, Retired Unit Forester  
Stu Otto, Stewardship Forester

**Oregon Department of Forestry  
Central Oregon District**

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<http://oregon.gov/ODF/FIELD/COD/aboutus.shtml>



**"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"**

The Central Oregon District, Prineville Unit, and Eastern Oregon Area office has a new mailing address:

PO Box 670, Prineville, OR 97754

A new, much needed, phone system has been installed at the Prineville office complete with voice mail! Just dial (541) 447-5658 and you will get a live person however if the employee you are calling for is in the field you can be transferred to their voice mail to leave a detailed message.

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## Rangeland Protection Associations

**"Many agencies are involved in helping the unprotected landowner help themselves."**

Two areas adjacent to the Central Oregon District are in the process of forming Rangeland Fire Protection Associations, a third is investigating the options. Brothers/Hampton area has received approval from the Board of Forestry for a Public Hearing; the hearing took place and the formation of the Brothers Hampton Rangeland Fire Protection Association will be approved by the Board of Forestry. The Post/Paulina area has sent a request to the Board of Forestry to hold a Public Hearing; that will be approved soon. The landowners in the Ashwood area are investigating the options in forming a Rangeland Fire Protection Association.

Why is this important to the Central Oregon District? These lands are adjacent to the Forest Protection District and have had little or no fire suppression capability or organization to suppress wildfires on private lands. By the formation of Rangeland Fire Protection Associations the Board of Forestry is able to support the efforts of private landowners in providing fire prevention and suppression for themselves. This in-turn works to prevent fires and keep them small. The board of Forestry is able to support the landowners with equip-



photo from the Rangeland Protection Assoc brochure

ment, training, grant funding, and technical support. By preventing and suppressing fires when they are small, these fires pose less of a threat to the lands of forestland owners.

Gordon Foster  
Rangeland Fire Protection  
Coordinator