

Central Oregon District



2004 Annual Report

2004 District Forester Report

This year's annual report is dedicated to Larry Hoffman for all the wonderful times we shared together. Larry died last June while taking the pack test in preparation for fire season. Larry is greatly missed as his friendship and contributions were very important to the District and Department.

This past fire season was one of the slowest fire seasons in COD history. There were approximately 235 acres burned in the District when our 10-year average acres burned is just under 9,000. For the first time in a very long time, COD was able to send resources out of District in support of a project fire, in the middle of August.

There have been numerous success stories throughout the year. The implementation of SB360 under the leadership of Tom Andrade has been excellent. The Sisters thinning coop has had outstanding accomplishments for the past few years. National Fire Plan accomplishments continue to provide landowners with opportunities to develop defensible space around their homes.

The teamwork we use in the District, the partnerships we have come to depend on from our landowners and cooperators have made these accomplishments and others possible. Thank you for all your support!

Sincerely,

Bob Young

Protection from fire

For the first time in many years the Central Oregon District had a lighter than normal fire season. The total number of fires, dropped from 167 in 2003 to 143 in 2004 and the acres burned reduced from 3238 to 237. There were a number of contributing factors; wet weather patterns, aggressive initial attack, prevention, overall public awareness, severity resources, and luck all helped to bring the numbers down for 2004.

With a mild fire season and early summer rains, our District had the unique opportunity to send almost half of our engine crews to the Bland Mountain #2 Fire. This gave the crews some valuable experience and a chance to see some new country. Overall the summer provided some good experience for all of the crews and we were very successful in our suppression efforts.

The Dalles Unit Summary

The Dalles Unit had two dry lightning events this fire season. The most significant storm sparked the Panorama fire, which started at 6:30 pm August 2nd. This fire occurred in steep terrain with strong Gorge winds pushing the fire. Aggressive initial attack and a quick response from local cooperators, in conjunction with the use of severity resources and ODF contracted retardant planes were instrumental in keeping this fire from becoming a major project fire. Fire camp was set up at Hood River Fairgrounds when the decision was made to mobilize a type three team. The final size of Panorama was 94.93 Acres.

The second largest fire on the Unit was the Microwave fire. The Microwave fire was also fanned by strong Gorge winds, and was contained at 9.8 Acres. The fire size was minimized again by the quick initial attack from ODF, USFS and Rural Fire Districts. All other fires on the Dalles Unit were held at less than four acres.



Panorama Fire 8-2-04. Visible from I-84 on bluffs just east of Hood River. Photo Courtesy of Hood River News.

John Day Unit Summary

The John Day Unit hosted a Type II restricted category helicopter for water drops and a fixed wing aircraft for air attack and reconnaissance. These resources were invaluable in assisting the containment of numerous smaller fires. For the first time in several years, the unit had no significant fires requiring the mobilization of an incident management team.

The most costly human caused fires in 2004 were the result of holdover slash burns from the winter and spring of 2004. A flier was inserted in the 2004 notification renewal letter as a result of these fires reminding landowners and operators to the hazards of slash burning and encouraging them to thoroughly check their burning sites in the spring and early summer for any signs of residual heat and fire.

Prineville-Sisters Unit Summary

The Prineville-Sisters had lightning storms as well, and even with the storms were wet this season there were still a number of fire starts that were detected and suppressed on the unit. These fires were kept small due to good team work and rain with each lightning storm that passed.

On August 13 a lightning storm passed over igniting approximately 30-35 fires just north of Sisters. The fires were mixed between ODF protection and USFS protection. An interagency Type 3 team was mobilized from the local teams that had been organized earlier that spring. A unified command with the USFS and ODF was established which over saw the operations on what they named the Summit Springs complex. Move up resources were brought in from other ODF districts and were utilized for initial attack during this period. The severity air tanker out of Redmond was used on one of the fires just south of Sisters. The largest of the complex fires totaled 5 acres.

This season Sisters was able to incorporate a five-person hand crew in addition to the engine crews that worked on the thinning cooperative program with the Forest Service. This crew was also available for initial and extended attack on fires. The first couple of fire assignments for the crew entailed initial attack on three fires out of Prineville. Even though they were a newly formed crew they performed very well together. Throughout the summer the crew responded to many different fires assisting both the Oregon Department of Forestry and the US Forest Service. While not fighting fires the Co-op crew completed approximately 100+ acres of thinning on Public lands near Sisters.

Although the crews were kept busy by many small lightning fires during the season, during slow times the crew worked on a number of projects on the compound and in the field.

One important project was the development of a water source site in cooperation with Ochoco Lumber. A water tank salvaged from the demolition of the Ochoco Lumber Mill was refurbished by the Prineville crews. Once the tank was ready it was taken to a site on Ochoco Lumber land and set in place as a water source for future fire use.

Fires for 2004

Cause	Number	Protected Acres
Lightning	85	135.99
Railroad	5	.05
Equipment Use	9	48.78
Recreationist	7	1.90
Smoking	9	.97
Debris Burning	19	45.75
Arson	1	3.80
Juveniles	2	.21
Miscellaneous	6	.11
Totals	143	237.56
Non-Statistical	93	
Smoke chases	39	



National Fire Plan

In February 2004, The Dalles Unit hired Natural Resource Specialist Mel Gard to administer the several National Fire Plan Grants on the unit. Mel has done a great job in administering these grants and assisting the landowners in providing fuels treatment projects on their lands.

The Dalles administered six National Fire Plan (NFP) grants on the Unit during the year. Work was and currently is being completed either by the landowner or through local contractors. During the year landowners utilized twelve local contractors to accomplish much of the National Fire Plan work. In addition to the six active NFP grants, The Dalles is expecting additional grant funding by the Bureau of Land Management in 2005. A summary of workload and accomplishments for 2004 is provided below. We estimate that 2005 accomplishments will mirror that if not exceed that of 2004.

Using the Oregon Department of Forestry, chipper and Forest Officers the Prineville unit chipped material from 16 one-acre lots and home sites. These activities were all in Deschutes County. Numerous educational evaluations as well as community meetings were undertaken. Thanks to the Sisters sub-unit Forest Officers for their dedication and help the Prineville Unit achieved their goals for 2004.

Unit	Evaluations	Acres Accomplished	Amount Paid out to Landowners
The Dalles	317	503	\$ 249,613
John Day	925	5588	\$ 1,131,276
Prineville	304	245	\$ 73,760
<i>District Total</i>	1546	6336	\$ 1,454,649



Private and Community Forestry

In 2004 five Stewardship Foresters provided Forestry Assistance and Forest Practices Act administration on the Central Oregon District.

A slight increase in log prices and more fuel reduction thinning projects resulted in a 25% increase in overall notifications of operations processed on the District. Stewardship Forester involvement in the forest management process included reviewing notifications and written plans, pre-operation visits, inspections and issuing best management practices recommendations.

Stewardship Foresters continued to assist Oregon Associated Loggers to provide training to forest operators and landowners through basic forest Practice workshops and training seminars. These training opportunities keep operators informed on forest practices regulations and provide valuable interaction with peers.

The Districts Stewardship Foresters selected SDS Lumber Co (The Dalles) and Mel Plemmons (John Day) to receive merit awards for exemplary performance in exceeding Oregon Best Management Practices in the course of forest operations.

Fire prevention activities conducted by Stewardship Foresters included industrial fire inspections and administrative and technical support for the National Fire Plan Grants. The Departments fire suppression efforts continue to rely on the experience and skill base provided by Central Oregon Stewardship Foresters during the 2004 Fire Season.

The Private and Community Forestry Program continues to evolve with the changing availability of cost share assistance for forest management activities on private land. Current cost share programs utilized on the District include the Forestland Enhancement Program (FLEP), Bark Beetle Mitigation Grants (BBM), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Environmental

Quality Incentive Program (EQUIP), Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) and USFS Title II funds.

Stewardship Foresters provided technical assistance for the CREP and CRP programs regarding conifer and hardwood establishment along riparian areas, riparian fencing and off channel water sources for cattle. These programs dually help to implement the Oregon Plan with active conservation practices on the ground to enhance water quality, focusing a high percentage of the dollars in the riparian ecosystem.

2004 Private & Community Forestry Accomplishments

Notifications	1001
Stewardship Plan Acres	3154
Non Fire Plan Federal Assistance Acres	300
CREP/CRP Planting Acres	1102
CREP/CRP Riparian Fencing Miles	58
CREP/CRP Stream Enhancement Miles	65
CREP/CRP 2005 Planned Acres	1054



Bark Beetle Mitigation project using a Slash-buster mounted on a feller-buncher. Part of a 700-acre pre-commercial thinning on land owned by Richard Dodge in Wasco Co.

Fire Prevention

Central Oregon District staff, along with cooperators is committed to education and a successful fire prevention program. The number of human-caused fires was well below average for all the Units, for example Prineville/Sisters had 48 human-caused fires in 2002, in comparison to 24, in 2004. Fire prevention takes years to measure its success and this District is seeing the benefits of the steady work.

The Central Oregon District continues its active participation in Fire Prevention Cooperatives. Public information plays a large role in fire prevention and education, through community events, public service announcements, and news releases throughout the year.

Senate Bill 360

The Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Prevention Act of 1997 (SB 360) is in the final phase of implementation in Deschutes County. With few exceptions, our stakeholders view this new interface regulation as a positive step toward protecting fire prone interface areas. Currently we are working with our Information Technology section to develop a data system that will store certification information allowing managers easy access to data. The initial planning stages are underway to move the program into Wasco and Hood River Counties in 2005.

The District has also taken an active role in a number of Community Wildfire Protection Plans. These plans will strengthen our partnerships with communities by preparing them to address their wildfire protection needs.

Firewise Communities

Fall River Estates, located outside of Bend, was nationally recognized by *Firewise Communities USA* as a Firewise Community and are Oregon's first community to be recognized as such. Fall River Estates has done an outstanding job

transforming an interface community with wildland fuel overload into a pristine example of a "Firewise" community in the wildland urban interface. Fall River partnered with the Bureau of Land Management to create a buffer zone around their neighborhood, and with the Oregon Department of Forestry and the LaPine Fire Department for National Fire Plan funding and home assessments. They then worked hand-in-hand with community members to put the funding to work on the ground and recruited many volunteers to do the actual labor. Central Oregon District congratulates Fall River Estates.



Fall River Estates - BEFORE



Fall River Estates - AFTER

District Administration

Facilities

Overall, the District had a relatively quiet fire year, which allowed us to pursue some much-needed tasks that had been put on hold for several years. Facilities improvements were accomplished on the District including a new roof on the Mt Hood Guard Station and The Dalles truck bay garage, new shop doors in The Dalles, a new sewer line was run in front of the Prineville office complex. In addition the District took the initiative to develop a strategic plan that will provide guidance for the employees in the setting of goals and priorities for their jobs.



Personnel

There was significant movement and changes within the District this past year. We welcome the new employees and hope they have a productive career with the District.

Promotions

Bart Lee – Forest Unit Supervisor I – Prineville
David Jacobs – Unit Forester – The Dalles

New Employees

Tom Andrade – SB-360 Coordinator – Prineville
Mel Gard – NFP Coordinator – The Dalles
Tracy Mizer – Office Specialist I - Prineville

Transfer In

David Bailey – Permanent Forest Officer - Fossil

Service Awards

Lee Ellison – Equipment Op II - The Dalles – 10 years

Passed Away

Larry Hoffman – Unit Forester – The Dalles
1976 - 2004

In Memory of Larry Hoffman



Some 800 friends and firefighters from throughout the Northwest gathered in The Dalles on June 11 to pay final tribute to Larry Hoffman, Oregon Department of Forestry's Unit Forester for The Dalles. Larry died on June 5th while taking the Work Capacity Test (pack test) prior to fire season. He was 51 years old, and is survived by his wife Karen and daughter Teri.

A Michigan Native, Larry was born in Detroit and earned a bachelor's degree in forest management from Michigan Technological University. Larry then attended the University of Idaho and earned a master's degree in silviculture. He was

hired in 1976 to be a service forester on ODF's Klamath-Lake District. Larry also worked as a forester on the Astoria District (1978), the Pendleton Unit (1979) and the Prineville Unit in (1987). Larry became the Unit Forester in The Dalles in 1989.

Larry is fondly remembered by those who worked beside him for his enthusiasm, leadership and his expertise as a forester. As Unit Forester, Larry provided leadership, and instilled a teamwork ethic in those around him. Larry fulfilled critical fire planning needs during fires as well as all aspects of fire management. No matter what the need was Larry always was willing to help with a smile and laughter. Larry had a particular passion for predicting wildland fire behavior; as well as fire investigations. Larry was a very conscientious hard-working professional. He enjoyed all aspects of forestry and sharing his knowledge with landowners, peers, and cooperators. He took special pride in providing assistance to anyone who needed help. Larry was a good friend, husband, and father.

As an active member in the Oregon Society of American Foresters, Larry was chair of the local Columbia Gorge chapter.

The "Larry Hoffman Scholarship Fund in Wildfire & Ecosystem Health" has been established which commemorates the life of Larry and provides scholarships for Oregon State University College of Forestry students in Wildland Fire / Ecosystem Health. Contributions in memory of Larry can be made to Oregon State University Foundation in his name or by contacting The Dalles Office.

The Memorial service consisted of a motorcade for fire and police agencies, and Oregon State Fire Marshall honor guard, drum and bagpipes. A plaque was placed at the Wildland firefighter Foundation in Bosie Idaho. He will also be honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation memorial weekend in Maryland in 2005 (www.firehero.org). A final memorial was dedicated to Larry on April 8th 2005 at The Dalles unit office on the front lawn. A Kousa Dogwood in remembrance of him was planted by his fellow employees and friends.

Larry was taken from us all too early and is greatly missed. He will, however, be remembered in our hearts and minds as a forester, firefighter, leader and a true friend to all who knew him.



Safety

The Department is taking a close look at the Work Capacity Test, so in the future we can ensure the safety of employees while taking the test.

The District realized a significant reduction in injuries and accidents for 2004, for this accomplishment the District received the statewide safety award. **Congratulations** to all District employees! Everyone continues to project safe attitudes in all phases of their work. Constant awareness by all employees is a major reason this honor was given to the district. Overall The Dalles had the best safety record for 2004 and was recognized with the District Safety Award.

Below you see the accident trend of the last six years. In general, the trend is downward with an annual goal of reaching no accidents. This challenging but reachable goal will be attained.

Central Oregon District Safety Summary

