Ecosystem Workforce Program

DECEMBER 2024 FFR PROGRAM FACT SHEET

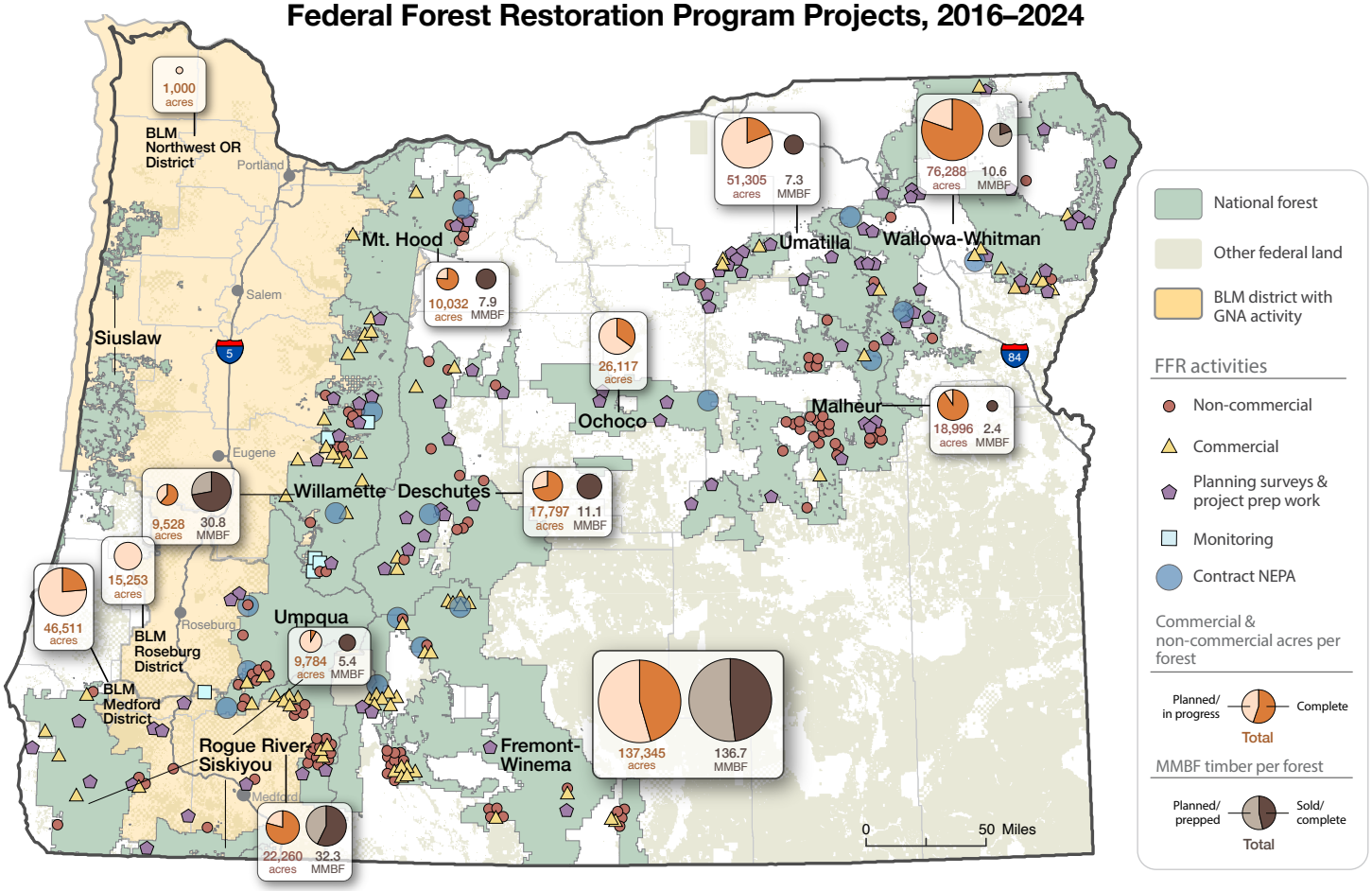
2016–2024 ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

FACT SHEET 32 • DECEMBER 2024

The Oregon Department of Forestry's Federal Forest Restoration (FFR) Program continues to make progress toward its statutory responsibility[1] to promote shared stewardship, reduce wildfire risk, and expand critical activities such as forest thinning, prescribed burning, and habitat restoration. Guided by Oregon's 20-Year Landscape Resilience Strategy,[2] the FFR Program is concentrating efforts on 10-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC 10) watersheds identified as having the greatest need for ecological restoration. These efforts aim to bring forest systems within their natural range of variability while ensuring resilience to climate-amplified disturbance events in the future.

Oregon has treated more acres than any other western state,[3] and this prioritization framework enhances the state's ability to efficiently allocate resources to achieve the program's statutory objectives and fulfill the strategy's goals. This report fulfills the requirement of ORS 526.276 to report activities and outcomes of ODF's work on federal forestlands in Oregon.

Federal Forest Restoration Program Projects, 2016–2024



[1] *ORS 526.275 Policy regarding Good Neighbor Authority Agreement projects and ORS 526.272 Expanding activities under the Good Neighbor Authority Agreement.*

[2] *Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). Progress Report: Development of Oregon's 20-Year Landscape Resiliency Strategy. June 30, 2023.* https://www.oregon.gov/odf/aboutodf/documents/olrs-progress-report.pdf

[3] *Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF). Good Neighbor Authority Activities and Accomplishments: 2024 Synthesis Report. November 2024.* https://www.westernforesters.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/2024GNASynthesis.pdf

University of Oregon

ODF's work on federal lands in Oregon

The Federal Forest Restoration (FFR) Program uses the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) as a tool, in addition to other tools such as Cooperative Agreements, to work with federal forest management agencies in Oregon. The GNA is a tool in the toolbox to achieve the State's vision for federal forestlands.[4]

43 agreements – with – **10 national forests** (35 agreements) | **3 BLM districts** (5 agreements) | **Forest Service PNW Regional Office** (3 agreements)

RESULTS:

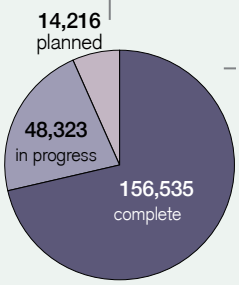
Restoration service projects

Activities — on — **10 national forests, 3 BLM districts**

BLM

covering

219,074 acres

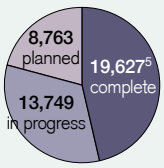


– including –

Planning surveys & project preparation work:
- Wildlife, botany, heritage, or other resource surveys
- Remote sensing, stand exams, or other forest inventory work
- Cruising, tree marking, unit layout, or other project preparation

175,602 acres

Non-commercial work:
- Non-commercial fuels reduction, thinning, or forest health treatments
- Prescribed fire
- Wildlife habitat restoration or improvement
- Stream enhancement or road improvement
- Invasive/noxious weed treatments



42,139 acres

Monitoring work:
- Post-implementation vegetation management and stream restoration monitoring

1,333 acres

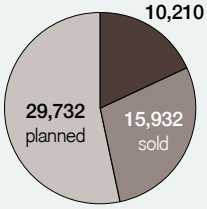
Commercial Projects

75 Sales — on — **9 national forests**

26 complete, 23 sold, 26 planned

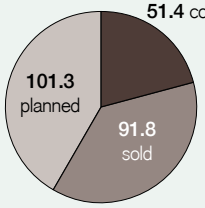
over an anticipated

55,874 acres



and

244.5 MMBF (millon board feet)



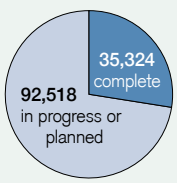
Contract NEPA projects

16 Projects — on — **9 national forests**

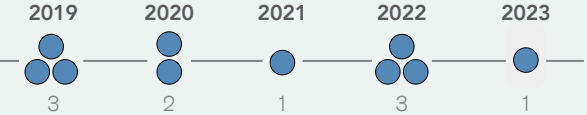
10 complete, 4 in progress, 2 planned

over an anticipated

127,842 acres



during



[4] https://www.oregon.gov/odf/working/documents/achieving-oregons-vision-for-federal-forestlands-report.pdf

[5] *This figure is lower than the Jan. 2024 report because some survey work was mis-categorized as non-commercial work.*

FFR Program priority landscapes:

Oregon's 20-Year Landscape Resilience Strategy Priority Landscapes
23 million acres

↓

Federal ownership
14 million acres

↓

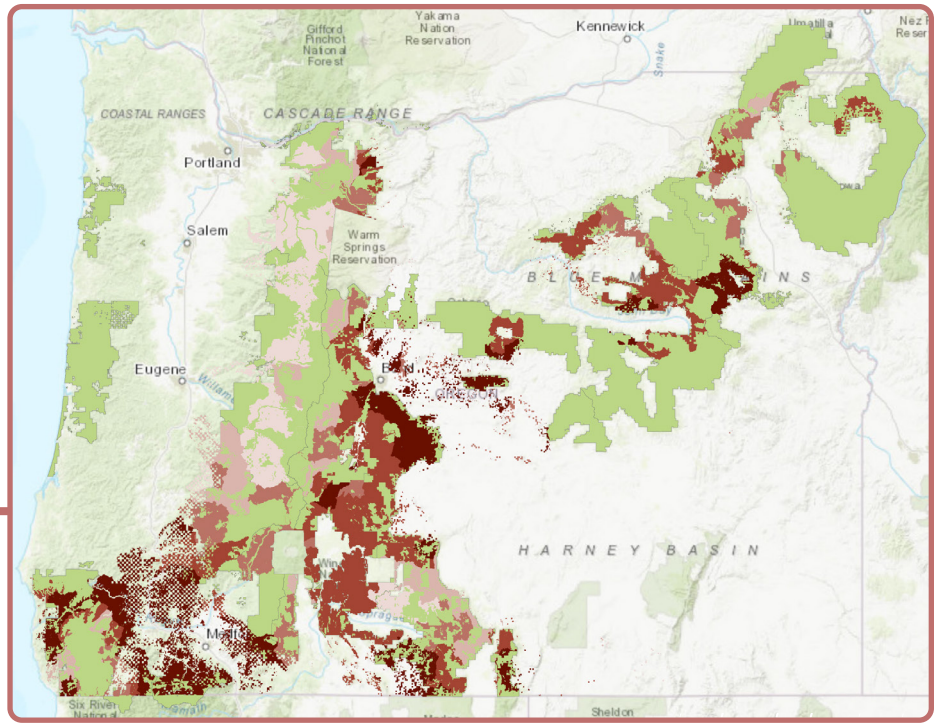
Forested
9 million acres

↓

Operable (outside of wilderness, roadless, wild & scenic, etc. areas)
8.3 million acres

↓

Areas in need of disturbance
2.8 million acres



The diagram and map above refine the geographic priorities outlined in Oregon's 20-Year Landscape Resilience Strategy by excluding non-federally owned lands, non-forested areas, and inoperable land management designations. This process identified 8.3 million acres of federal forests eligible for restoration treatments. These remaining forests were further prioritized using an ecological departure analysis[6] to assess the proportion of each watershed requiring some form of disturbance, such as mechanical treatment or wildfire. The analysis pinpointed 2.8 million acres of operable federal forest in need of disturbance.

National forests

Portion of forested area in need of disturbance

- 0-11%
- 11-23%
- 23-35%
- 35-46%
- 46-66%

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: Post-Fire Restoration in South-Central Oregon

Following the third-largest wildfire in Oregon's history—the 413,765-acre Bootleg Fire in 2021—Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) Federal Forest Restoration (FFR) Program staff, Fremont-Winema National Forest personnel, and private landowners recognized the urgent need to replant burned areas to prevent their conversion from forest to shrubland or grassland. However, in south-central Oregon, there was a critical shortage of seedlings and tree seed required for reforestation, particularly in areas where the fire burned most intensely. In response, a large-scale cone collection effort was launched to gather sufficient seed to produce the seedlings needed for replanting.

This effort brought together non-industrial and industrial private landowners, as well as state and federal agencies, to achieve the shared goal of collecting as many cones as possible across all land ownerships. ODF FFR Program staff partnered with NW Tree Climbers, a second-generation family-owned business based in Ashland, Oregon, to collect 801 bushels of cones. Of these, 594 bushels are designated for the Fremont-Winema National Forest, expected to yield 594 pounds of seed and potentially produce 4.1 million seedlings. These seedlings could reforest approximately 14,000 acres damaged by the wildfire.

Did you know?

The FFR Program collaborates with 12 other western states through the Council of Western State Foresters Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) committee to exchange information, share resources, and provide technical guidance to western state foresters and their federal partners.
Learn more at:
https://www.westernforesters.org/committees/good-neighbor-authority-committee

Western states GNA committee in Oro Valley, AZ, 2024.

[6] *Laughlin, Madison M, S.S. Kruszka, S.M. Greenler, M. Gregory, C. Ringo, T. DeMeo, J. Bakker, and B. Harvey. 2023 iteration of the terrestrial ecological departure map for the Pacific Northwest. USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, and University of Washington, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences. https://teui-region6-usfs.hub.arcgis.com/pages/ecological-departure*

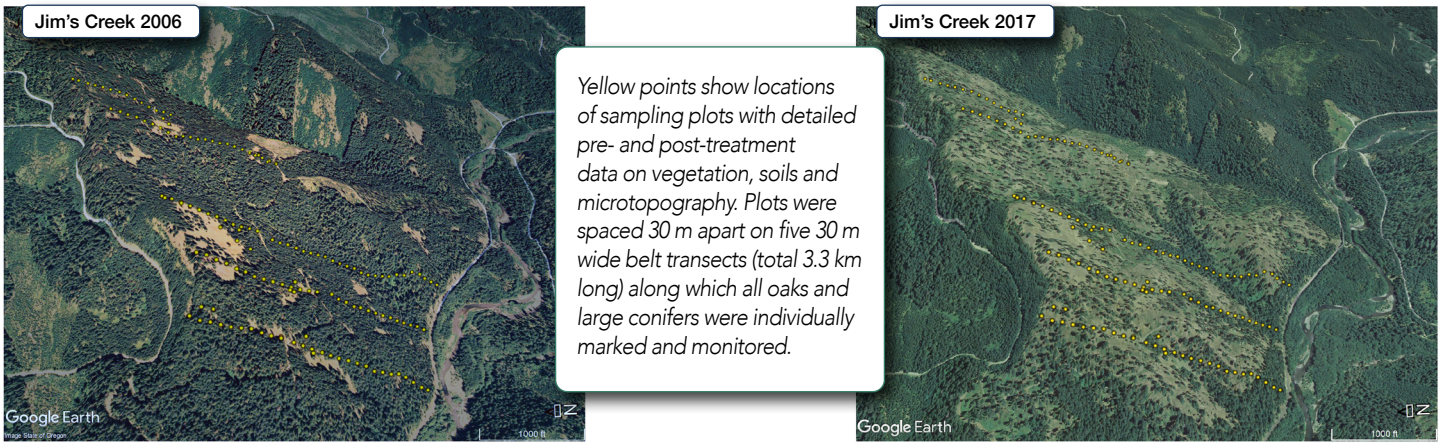
Project Spotlight: Forest Restoration Monitoring on the Willamette National Forest

Jim's Creek savanna restoration assessment: Key Lessons for restoring oak-pine-fir savanna after dense forest infill

Jim's Creek assessment and monitoring began in 2003, funded by USDA Forest Service, University of Oregon (UO), and the Joint Fire Science Program. Monitoring the effectiveness of the treatments associated with the project was a high priority for the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative in order to build consensus for future projects, therefore ODF FFR Program made an investment of Good Neighbor Authority timber sale revenue totaling $95,793 ($74,668 in 2020 and $21,125 in 2022). Led by UO Prof. Bart Johnson, data was collected by UO faculty and students, and USFS personal, both pretreatment (2003-2005) and post-treatment (2011-22). Prior to Euro-American colonization, the site was largely a native grassland with scattered oak, pine and Douglas-fir. Rapid forest infill began circa 1850. By 2005, most of the site was forested and half the legacy oaks and pines were dead.

The prescription for the 433-acre Jim's Creek restoration project aimed to shift the site to a state closer to that of the oak-pine-fir savanna that existed prior to Euro-American settlement. Tree harvest and related activities began in 2007 and were completed by 2010, including planting young oaks throughout the site. Native grasses and forbs were seeded in 20 randomly selected permanent plots in fall 2010. Portions of the site received prescribed burns in 2010 and 2018-20. Pre- and post-treatment site images below show locations of monitoring plots and associated 30-m wide belt transects. The Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative monitored the progress of the to help shape their perspective on the 6,600-acre Youngs Rock Rigdon project, which involved similar treatments in a comparable ecosystem. Observations from the Jim's Creek project supported agreement and consensus-building efforts for the Youngs Rock Rigdon project.

Jim's Creek Pre(2006) and Post (2017) Treatment. 3-D air photo rendering (Google Earth):



Yellow points show locations of sampling plots with detailed pre- and post-treatment data on vegetation, soils and microtopography. Plots were spaced 30 m apart on five 30 m wide belt transects (total 3.3 km long) along which all oaks and large conifers were individually marked and monitored.

KEY LESSONS AND FINDINGS:

1. Recruiting the next generation of oaks and pines is crucial to vegetation recovery and renewal

- Large savanna legacy trees weakened by decades of dense forest succession may continue to decline and die following thinning, especially if exposed to exceptional drought or windstorms.
- Younger oaks and pine in relatively good health responded more successfully to the open conditions post-thinning.

2. Seeding native grasses and forbs is essential following thinning

- Native grasses did not recolonize thinned areas on their own unless living plants were present prior to restoration.
- Seeding the native bunchgrass Roemer's fescue produced dense cover that dramatically reduced colonization by invasive annual grasses.
- In some mesic areas, suppressed individuals of the semi-shade tolerant bunchgrass California fescue recovered after thinning to achieve dense cover that resisted invasion. Seeding could have expanded this benefit to other mesic areas.
- Without seeding, annual invasive grasses could quickly colonize bare soil with nearly continuous cover. Once established they may be impossible to control with prescribed fire.

3. Prescribed fire is a two-edged sword for savanna recovery after dense forest infill

- Using fire to reestablish a savanna grassland after reducing forest infill is more difficult than using it to sustain established savanna trees and ground layer.
- Invasive annual grasses can produce dense, continuous fuel beds that create greater risk of prescribed fire burning too hot. Any remnant logging slash can exacerbate the problem.
- Oak and pine seedlings needed for recruitment, as well as established trees, can suffer high mortality if prescribed fires burn too hot. Without fire however, dense Douglas-fir seedlings can quickly establish and reinitiate successional infill.
- Without prescribed fire post-thinning, some mesic areas quickly colonized with dense monocultures of deerbrush shrubs that excluded grasses, forbs and tree seedlings. When some of these areas were subsequently burned, deerbrush resprouted to quickly reestablish dense cover.

Contributors: Kyle Sullivan-Astor, Michael Coughlan, Stephanie Schneider, Bart Johnson, Autumn Ellison. Funded by Oregon Department of Forestry.