

PURPOSE: To conserve forest lands for forest uses.

Clatsop State Forest

Before the 1930s, nearly all of the land that is today part of the Clatsop State Forest was in private ownership. Logging camps, railroads, and lumber mills were prevalent due to demand for lumber during World War I.

As tracts of timber were cut, the logged lands were given to the counties in exchange for paying taxes. In 1936, Clatsop County became the first county in Oregon to deed its forestlands to the state to manage in exchange for part of the revenue generated from timber sales.

The Forest Acquisition Act, passed in 1939, further encouraged counties to deed the foreclosed lands to the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), giving rise to the state forest system in place today. By 1957, Clatsop County had transferred 141,000 acres to the state.

In 1973, the Oregon Board of Forestry formally dedicated 154,000 acres of forestland as the Clatsop State Forest. Today, the forest provides timber products important to local economies, wildlife habitat, and recreational areas. Like all of Oregon's state forests, these lands are actively managed under forest management plans to provide economic, environmental, and social benefits, offering recreation and educational opportunities, and provide essential wildlife habitat and clean water. Timber sales from these forests produce jobs and revenue that funds counties, local districts, and schools throughout the state.

The Forest Practices Act (FPA) was approved by the Oregon Legislature in 1971. The 136-page act, most recently updated in February of 2018, is codified in the Oregon Administrative Rules and can be found online on the State of Oregon's website.

Under state laws, Clatsop County is required to allow FPA-permitted activities on forest resource lands. See specifically OAR 660-006-0025(2). Concerns regarding the FPA should be addressed to DLCD and the Oregon State Legislature.



Private Forestlands

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Another 200,000+ acres are owned and managed by private landowners, mostly large timber companies. Like the state forests, private forests are managed under the FPA. ODF works with landowners and operators to help them comply with the requirements of the FPA.

Reforestation goes hand-in-hand with timber harvest planning. Reforestation rules are intended to make sure new trees are replanted and successfully growing after an area is harvested. Landowners must complete replanting of harvested ground within two years of a harvest. Within six years of harvest, the young trees must be "free-to-grow", meaning they are vigorous, well-distributed, and ready to grow successfully into a young forest. Depending on site productivity, a minimum of 100 to 200 trees per acre must survive following replanting. A landowner may be required to replant additional seedlings to ensure a sufficient number of trees per acre following selective harvest or thinning.

Clatsop County's Forest Lands

Clatsop County covers about 843 square miles, or roughly 540,000 acres. Approximately 80% of the county's acreage is timberland, far exceeding the state's overall 47% average. The county's generally mild year-round temperature and average 87 inches of annual rainfall make it home to a significant temperate rainforest, part of the Pacific Temperate Rainforest system that stretches from the Central California coast, along the Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and southern Alaska coastlines. The system is one of the largest temperate rain forests in the world. In Clatsop County, a spruce hemlock forest-type predominates along the west-facing slopes of the Coast Range and westward to the ocean, as well as upriver along the Columbia, toward the Brownsmead/Knapapa area; a Douglas-fir forest type predominates in the county's interior.

Oregon is known worldwide for its high-quality softwoods, predominantly Douglas fir. Most Oregon logs are purchased by wood product manufacturers in Oregon. Oregon's timber harvest today comes primarily from private timberlands. In 2014, 79% of Oregon's timber harvest came from private lands. Some logs from private lands are exported, but that market represents a very small share of total logs harvested in Oregon.

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Forestry is an important source of high-paying jobs for many rural communities, and Clatsop County, which is home to one of the most productive state forests in Oregon is no exception. In 2017, this forest generated \$27.5 million in timber for processing at local sawmills. Of that, Clatsop County’s taxing districts received roughly \$18.3 million for schools, roads, and other services. The Department of Forestry received the remaining \$9.2 million to help cover its costs, including maintenance and wildfire prevention and response.

Forestry-related jobs – logging and associated industries that include pulp and papermaking, quarrying, millwork and cabinetmaking, environmental consultants, state and federal employees, nurseries, machinery manufacturing, wood and paper products wholesalers, and transportation of logs, chips and goods (trucking) – provide family-wage incomes in Clatsop County. Economists estimate that each million board feet of timber harvested creates or retains about 11 forest sector jobs. Private forestry and logging in 2018 accounted for an average of 169 jobs directly, and the total payroll was \$9,273,960, or an average of \$54,875 per person. (This does not include the State Forestry Department; those employees are counted under state government figures.) However, jobs across the full forest-related sector numbered 1,351. Wages averaged more than \$70,000 for the full sector, almost twice the annual average of \$37,000 in the county for employees covered by unemployment insurance.

The Forest Practices Act (FPA)

The FPA sets standards for all commercial activities involving the establishment, management, or harvesting of trees on Oregon’s forestlands. The Oregon Board of Forestry’s primary responsibility is to interpret the FPA and set rules for forest practices. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) is responsible for enforcing those requirements by:

- Reviewing pre-operations plans
- Overseeing operations
- Ensuring reforestation

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- Investigating complaints
- Enforcing corrective actions when violations occur

ODF is responsible for working with landowners and operators to help them comply with the requirements of the FPA.

Management and Planning

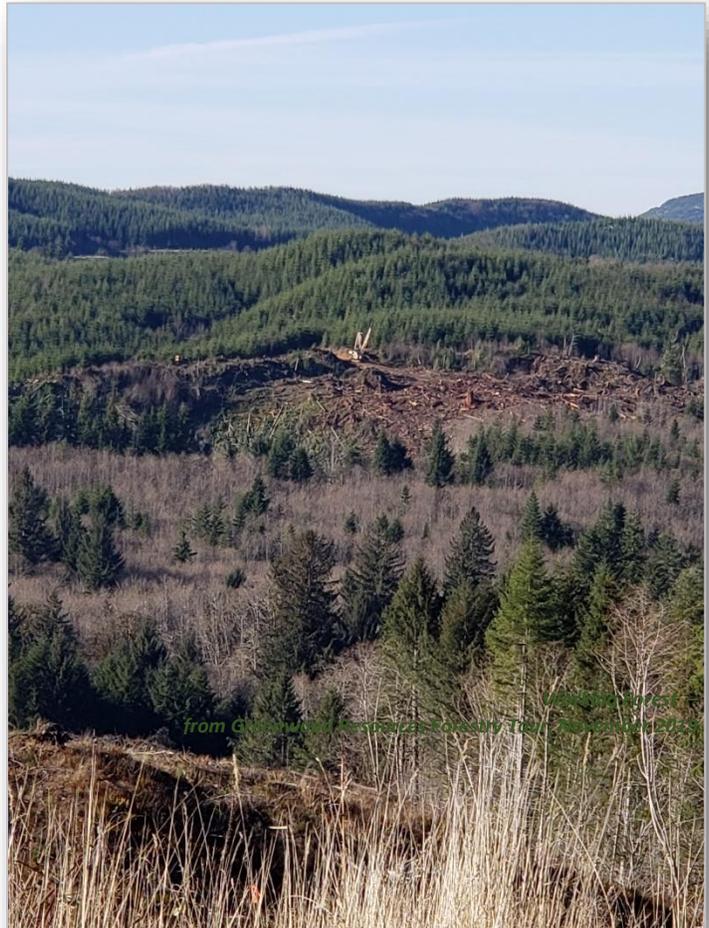
Forestland Classification

Forestland classification is a process by which a committee studies all lands within the fire protection district boundary to determine which lands are "forestland." Once lands have been determined to meet the definition of forestland, they are further classified as lands primarily suitable for timber production, grazing use, or a combination of the two. For planning purposes, counties rely on OAR 660-006-0010 to identify forest lands.

State forest resources such as streams, recreation sites, and unique wildlife habitat are managed and protected under state forests' policies and forest management plans. These areas are highlighted through the Forestland Management Classification System (FLMCS) (OAR 629-350-005) adopted by the Board of Forestry in 1998 to ensure a range of benefits would result from an area's management emphasis. Clatsop County's most recent classification was updated in 2016.

Planning Incentives

The Comprehensive Plan and the county's zoning provisions are key to conserving forest lands for timber, habitat and recreation by limiting permitted uses to those consistent with Goal 4. However, privately-owned forested lands can receive help to prevent them from being converted or developed into non-forested land and protect environmentally sensitive forest lands. Landowners are encouraged to obtain long-term conservation easements and implement sustainable forestry practices. To maximize the public benefit this achieves, ODF can help landowners access incentives through the federal Forest Legacy Program, the Community



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Forest Program, and the Conservation Reserve Program. These programs are voluntary and provide a variety of strategies for landowners, governments and nonprofit groups to acquire land to grow and sustain a community forest; and protect soil, water, fish, and wildlife.

To help conserve soil, water, and related natural resources on working lands, ODF can help landowners access funding through the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program. ODF also can help forest landowners obtain incentives through the federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands on private property which provide habitat for diverse wildlife and plant species, including those that are endangered and threatened.

Forest Management Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan

In 2019, the ODF began a process to update the Western Oregon State Forest Management Plan (FMP). A draft of the revised plan was released in 2020. In conjunction with the updates to the FMP, a draft companion Western Oregon State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) was also prepared. In October 2020, the Oregon Board of Forestry voted to move the HCP forward into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process. After review of the draft implementation plan in the fall of 2022, the Board of Clatsop County Commissioners formally opposed the HCP draft under consideration at the time at the Board's October 12, 2022, meeting.

FUTURE CONDITIONS

Wildfire

Wildfire is a continuing and increasing threat to Clatsop County's forestlands, both public and private. Forest landowners are required by law to provide protection from fire for their lands. Rather than having their own firefighting force, most private landowners have ODF or their local fire protective association protect their lands. To fund this service, they pay a forest patrol assessment to the state. Forestland classification is done at the local level. Each county within a forest protection district has a committee that meets periodically to determine which lands meet the definition of forestland and are subject to the forest patrol assessment.

During wildfire season, ODF Meteorologists and the Fire Environment Working Group monitor factors that can influence the ignition and behavior of wildfires. Tools and strategies to prevent or reduce wildfire destruction include the ODF Lightning Tracker, satellite imagery, restrictions and closures on forestland uses, and fire prevention regulations. Siting standards for structures in areas zoned for forest use include standards requiring defensible space. Future legislation likely will encourage or require minimizing development in the wildland/urban interface.

As residential development pressures continue to increase nationwide, statewide and within Clatsop County, many property owners and potential property owners are seeking approvals to contract forest dwellings. Encroaching development closer to or within forest resource lands increases the risk of property loss and/or loss of life and wildfire risk increases.

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Recreation

Clatsop County's forestlands are popular for a variety of recreational activities, from hunting and fishing to hiking and horseback riding. Private landowners, depending upon fire risks, often allow day use for recreational purposes. The Clatsop State Forest, a mix of mostly second growth hemlock, Douglas fir, and western red cedar with many associated hardwoods, shrubs, ferns, and flowers, ranges in elevation from near sea level at Gnat Creek to 3,000 feet on Nicolai Mountain. Visitors often find warm, sunny weather in the summer, especially at higher elevations. October can be a transition month with dry weather or rain. The rainy season usually starts in November and continues through early spring. Winter snow occurs occasionally in the higher elevations. County residents and visitors enjoy a variety of facilities, including trails, campgrounds, fishing access, boating and beach accesses, and horseback riding opportunities more fully detailed in Goal 8; however, recreation opportunities specifically found in forestlands include: Nicolai OHV Viewpoint Campground; Clatsop State Forest; Gnat Creek Campground; Northrup Creek Horse Camp; Viewpoint Campground; Beaver Eddy Campground; county parks, including David Douglas and Lee Wooden Fishhawk Falls; and state fish hatcheries.

Drinking Water and Watersheds

Clatsop County's forestlands are also often the source of potable water for many downstream communities. The majority of Clatsop County residents obtain potable water and irrigation water from surface and ground water sources that originate as precipitation deposited on forest land. The water resources of forest lands provide for the health and prosperity of residents, wildlife, and aquatic organisms