



Stewardship in Forestry

# 2005 District Report

Astoria District – Oregon Department of Forestry

## District Forester's Comments

The mission of the Department of Forestry is to serve the people of Oregon by protecting, managing and promoting stewardship of Oregon's forests to enhance environmental, economic and community sustainability.

This annual report highlights the Astoria District's efforts to accomplish ODF's mission in 2005. I hope that it provides insight into the work that the District does and some of the important contributions of our employees.

First, I would like to recognize the contributions of our Administrative Unit, led by our Office Manager, Kathy Sasso, for their commitment to customer service. They are the first contact for many of our customers and exemplify the District's commitment to serve.

Next, I would like to recognize our District managers, who continue to help me

administer our Programs effectively and efficiently. Their commitment to planning using stakeholder input, working collaboratively with our many cooperators and their leadership and investment in developing their employees continues to make us successful.

All of the District's 45 permanent employees, listed on the Organization chart at the end of the report, deserve recognition for all of their efforts. Each one is doing their part to meet our mission on the District as well as participate in managing large fires around the state when fire emergencies occur.

I hope you enjoy our report; the following sections will describe the mission for each Program the District administers and some of the key activities that our employees were engaged in over the past year.

This report will be featured on the District's new website, which is located at <http://egov.oregon.gov/ODF/FIELD/ASTORIA/aboutastoria.shtml> along with additional District information and links to the Department's website.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISTRICT FORESTER'S COMMENTS .....	1
PROTECTION FROM FIRE .....	2
STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT .....	3
• RECREATION .....	4
• FOREST MANAGEMENT .....	4
• ENGINEERING .....	5
• REFORESTATION .....	5
PRIVATE & COMMUNITY FORESTS.....	6
DISTRICT ORGANIZATION CHART .....	8

*Tom Savage*

## Protection from Fire

Steve Wilson, the Protection Unit Forester and his Assistant Unit Forester, Neal Laugle provided leadership for this program. The program's mission is to safely prevent and suppress fires on forestland in a manner which minimizes costs and resource losses.

Steve and Neal met regularly with local members of the Northwest Oregon Forest Protective Association, which includes Association President Bud Henderson, Hampton Affiliates, along with Phil Penttila, Weyerhaeuser and Jay Holland, Longview Fibre Company. They also met regularly with the Clatsop County Fire Defense Board, the Coast Guard and members of the military at Camp Rilea to develop fire prevention and suppression plans and ensure cooperative assistance on mutual response fires.



Forest Officer, Clayton Kero working on Spotted Butterfly Habitat plot burn in Clatsop Plains

A big part of preparation for each fire season involves training for Department employees and our cooperators. The 2005 Northwest Oregon Fire School was held on June 20-23 in Jewell for Department employees and four Weyerhaeuser employees.

Fire season began on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July and remained relatively uneventful until the 31<sup>st</sup> of July.

The Watershed fire occurred above the town of Svensen at approximately 6:00 in the evening in moderate logging slash. The excellent size-up from Forest Officer Kurt Donaldson and his coordination of rural fire department resources proved to be the key in containing the fire to 8 acres and preventing it from jumping the road and spreading into the Astoria Watershed. The summer continued with short bursts of action followed by weeks with no fire runs. The next burst of action occurred on September 10<sup>th</sup> when a lightning storm passed through Clatsop County.

Clatsop county residents talked about the September lightning storm as being one of the worst they have ever seen in Clatsop County. Several homes were struck by lightning. Power was knocked out to thousands of customers and fires were being reported throughout the county. The good news is the storm came with rainfall and many of the lightning strikes were contained to single trees. The low cloud cover prevented air patrol from flying a detection flight so we contacted the United States Coast Guard for a flight and as always they were able to help. Using coordinates from our computerized lightning tracking system, we were able to identify three lightning struck trees and a fire on Weyerhaeuser ground. The use of the USCG helicopter allowed us to detect the fire before weather conditions improved and the fire caused any further resource damage. Another week passed until the last fire of the season, which occurred on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September.

The Sewer Lagoon fire occurred within the city limits of Astoria and threatened the east end of the Alderbrook neighborhood. ODF Astoria district engine crews assisted the Astoria City Fire Department along with

neighborhood fire departments to hold the fire at 2 ½ acres. The fire was started by an abandoned campfire and burned actively in scotch broom and canary grass.

As always, the Astoria District had some new experiences in 2005. With the help of Andrea Ruiz and a world famous sand sculptor we showcased the first sand sculpture of Smokey Bear at the annual sand castle competition in Cannon Beach. We continually look for new ideas and opportunities to spread the fire prevention message. In the spring, Astoria District acquired a Military 5½ ton, 6x6 dump truck to add to our fire suppression capabilities. The fire crew painted and applied prevention messages for its inaugural parade in the Astoria Regatta. This was a huge success receiving positive comments from the old and catching the eye of the young. Beginning with Sand Castle Days in May and ending with the United States Coast Guard family day, over 20,000 people came in contact with Smokey Bear and fire prevention.



Sand Castle Days, Cannon Beach, Smokey Bear and friends

Astoria continues to build new relationships and strengthen old ones with its local

cooperators. In 2005 we entered into agreement with the Nature Conservancy to burn habitat plots for the silver spotted butterfly. The habitat plots were each one acre in size and scattered throughout the Clatsop Plains. The burning was a success in removing invasive plants, providing fire training opportunities for our fire crews and returning the ground to ideal butterfly habitat.

For the year, Astoria District had 11 statistical fires that burned a total of 12.52 acres which was lower than our five year average. We continue to be successful because of the relationships with our cooperators. Without their help we would have a difficult time keeping fires small to meet our goals.

### State Forest Management

State Forest lands are managed to provide healthy, productive and sustainable forest ecosystems that, over time and across the landscape, provide a full range of social, economic and environmental benefits to the people of Oregon.

The Astoria District manages 134,854 acres of Board of Forestry Lands and 2,060 acres of Common School Lands owned by the State Land Board for a total of 136,914 acres. These lands are managed by the following: two forest management units, a reforestation unit, an engineering unit and a support unit.

The Management Units are responsible for overall land management, including planning, administration, and timber harvest operations. The Reforestation Unit is responsible for stand establishment and maintenance of young stands. The Engineering Unit performs right-of-way and property line surveys, plans and administers road construction and improvement projects. The Support Unit manages all public

recreation in the district and coordinates forest law enforcement, threatened and endangered species surveys, forest inventory and computer systems administration.

During fiscal year 2005, Astoria District sold ten timber sales with an estimated 65.9 MMBF of timber and a bid value of \$24.8 million dollars.

Also during this time, twenty-seven timber sales were active, resulting in 85.5 MMBF harvested and \$23.9 million dollars in total revenue generated. The District also issued 401 public woodcutting permits, sold at \$10 dollars each.

Two-thirds of the revenues from Board of Forestry Lands are distributed to the counties in which the lands are situated for distribution to local taxing districts. The State retains one-third to cover land management costs. Revenues from Common School Lands go into the State Common School Fund.

***Forest Management***

Integrated forest management planning was utilized in the preparation of FY2005 Lost Fire Combination Timber Sale that was auctioned this year. The sale incorporated many resource values and is located around Lost Lake, a popular recreation location on the forest.

The Lost Lake recreation management plan, general area transportation plan, harvest plans and the contract preparation for the Lost Fire Combination Timber Sale were developed concurrently to integrate multiple resources to meet a balance of social, environmental, and economic values. This planning effort was a collaborative process involving all work units within the Astoria District State Forest Program.

The major Goals for these planned activities included:

- 1) Minimizing short-term impacts to recreational use during forest management operations.
- 2) Constructing and improving road systems in the Lost Lake area and the Lost Fire Combination timber sale to provide safe commercial forest hauling activities and public use.
- 3) Completing the Lost Fire Combination Timber Sale to meet FY2005 AOP and IP objectives.

***Reforestation***

David Kaspar, Reforestation Unit Forester, provided the leadership for the young stand management on the Clatsop State Forest.



Reforestation Forester, Dave Kaspar, on a forest tour near Nicolai Mountain

The Astoria District partnered with the Clatsop County Weed Advisory Committee for the purpose of addressing noxious weeds in the county. The group is comprised of multiple landowners in Clatsop County to increase public awareness and outreach education. Goals include survey and identification of priority weed species and prioritization for control and eradication of infestations.

Following harvesting, the land is prepared for replanting, according to a prescription which involves machine piling of slash and burning of the piles in late fall. Land is planted with a combination of tree species best suited to each site according to a stand pathway developed during the sale planning process.

The primary species planted are Douglas-fir, western hemlock and western red cedar, in addition to minor amounts of grand and noble fir.

The District reforested 468 acres with initial planting, 183 acres of interplanting and 795 acres of under planting.

**Engineering**

2005 was a year of transition for the Engineering Unit. Rick Thoreson, Engineering Unit Forester, retired after 31 years of service and leadership to the District. Rick leaves behind a legacy of exemplary forest roads stewardship while managing the Clatsop State Forest transportation system.

Leading the transition of the Engineering Unit is Frank Lertora, who was promoted to the Engineering Unit Forester position from his Project Specialist role. Frank will provide leadership for forest engineering activities on the Clatsop State Forest. In addition, Les Hannah was selected to fill a vacancy as a heavy equipment operator on the district road crew.

The Engineering Unit works collaboratively with district and department staff to provide recommendations and support on forest transportation planning, rock quarry management, fish passage upgrades, forest road infrastructure maintenance, land survey needs, district easements, special use permits and timber sale project plans.

As part of the Engineering Unit, the district road crew performed a wide range of projects, including road maintenance activities and recreation facility improvements.

Examples of special and unique projects completed in 2005 include geotechnical core drilling and exploration in the Shingle Mill area, field inspection of South County bridges by CH2MHILL, INC. and installation of an open bottom, slab culvert on Sterling Ranch road (pictured below) which reestablished fish passage on a tributary to Rock Creek.



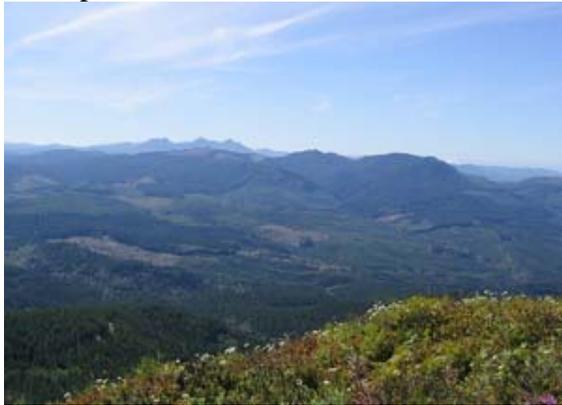
Sterling Ranch Road, open bottom, slab culvert

**Recreation Management**

Since 2002, the recreation program has made significant strides towards achieving the goals set forth in the recreation plan for the Clatsop State Forest. Support Unit Forester, Larry Sprouse, has been overseeing the recreation staff for a year and a half. Bryan Nielson, Recreation Coordinator on the District since 2002, has worked closely with Larry to develop and lead the recreation program, providing the diverse set of recreational opportunities that exist today on the District.

Hiking trail development on the forest included layout of the trail from Henry Rierson Spruce Run Campground to Lost Lake (5 miles). Construction of the first one mile of that trail was completed with South Fork inmate crews. Trail layout from the Gnat Creek Fish Hatchery to the Lower

Gnat Creek Falls (4 miles) was also accomplished.



View from Nicolai Mountain

A sub-committee consisting of members of the Recreation Advisory Committee and local OHV clubs was created to begin development of a recommendation for potential development of OHV trails and staging areas in the Nicolai Mountain area.

Significant progress was made in the development of equestrian trails in the Northrup Creek area.



Northrup Creek Horse Camp

Campgrounds on the District received significant attention by recreation staff during fiscal year 2005. Construction of the Northrup Creek Horse Camp was started with an anticipated Grand Opening planned for the spring of 2006. Improvements to

Henry Rierson Spruce Run Campground included construction of a wood bin for firewood storage, and the installation of a well to replace an antiquated drinking water system. Volunteer efforts increased largely through a significant trail layout project and installations of fences at the Gnat Creek Campground to increase visitor safety.



Newly Constructed Wood Bin at Henry Rierson Spruce Run Campground

Not far from Henry Rierson Spruce Run Campground, four dispersed camping sites along the Lower Nehalem River received improvements including picnic tables and fire rings.

These developments and improvements were efforts to enhance the camping and recreational experience on the Clatsop State Forest as well as provide additions to the social aspect of the “greatest permanent value” rule.

### Private and Community Forests

Steve Wilson, Protection Unit Forester, provides leadership to this program and our two Stewardship Foresters.

The mission for this program encompasses various aspects of promoting forest stewardship and supporting forest landowners. Stewardship foresters

administer the Forests Practices Act to ensure that operators and landowners are using the best management practices on forest operations. They also provide assistance on improving forest health, timber, fish and wildlife habitat, soil and water quality, recreation opportunities and aesthetics of private and community forests through information, technical assistance, financial incentives and regulation.

2005 was a year of changes and challenges for the program. Mid year, Jenny Laughman accepted a career development opportunity in our State Forests Program and since that time, Ashley Lertora has handled a large portion of the forest practices, landowner assistance and smoke management duties for the district.

This situation provided developmental opportunities for two State Forests foresters to serve in the Stewardship Forester role. Kevin Berry and Kraig Kirkpatrick each spent three months as stewardship foresters in the east half of Clatsop County.

One of the big challenges for the Stewardship Foresters, as Clatsop County continues to build and grow, is administering the Forest Practices Act in and around the Wildland Urban Interface. Ashley is to be commended for her efforts to work with our cooperating agencies to define the roles of each agency and assist the landowner through the development process. Ashley has worked with county and city planning departments, the Department of Environmental Quality, Division of State Lands, the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The stewardship foresters were involved in many community outreach programs with the citizens of Clatsop County. These include educational programs involving OSU Extension, 6<sup>th</sup> grade forestry day, ODF's Clatsop County fair booth, Smokey

Bear kindergarten fire prevention, Sand Castle Days in Cannon Beach and Tree City USA in Seaside.

Ashley nominated F&B Logging Co. for NWOA's Operator of the Year, in which they received a merit award. Warrenton Fiber Co. and Forrest Shelters Falling received letters of commendation.

The district processed 455 Notifications of Operations and administered smoke management regulations on 66 units covering approximately 2,664 acres.

Year	Notice of Operations	Units	Complaints	Citations
2001	475	730	4	1
2002	552	858	2	0
2003	505	778	1	2
2004	498	727	7	1
2005	455	763	5	0

Table 1: Five-year summary of Astoria District Forest Operation

Astoria District  
Organization  
2005

