Frequently Asked Questions about College of Forestry Research Forests

FOREST PURPOSE, OWNERSHIP, AND USE

- **What is the purpose of OSU College of Forestry research forests?**
  - College research forests provide a living laboratory and outdoor classroom for students, researchers and others to learn about forests and their management. A collective vision, mission, and set of goals guides the management of all 10 research forests under the purview of the College of Forestry.

- **Who owns the research forests?**
  - Oregon State University owns the research forests, and forest operations are led by the OSU College of Forestry.

- **What intended use of the research forests was dictated by those who donated forests to OSU?**
  - The history of each research forest acquisition is unique. For example, the parcel forming the core of the MacDonald Forest was acquired through donations (of land and funds) from Mary McDonald, who conveyed an interest in youth education and forest research. The Dunn Forest was acquired from the government following World War II, with the stipulation that it be used initially as a teaching laboratory and later allowed for timber harvest using sound forestry principles.

- **Are the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest or Elliott State Forest included in the OSU research forest system?**
  - No. Each of these forests is owned and managed by entities other than OSU. The H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest is a 16,000-acre research forest owned by the U.S. Forest Service and is located near Blue River, Oregon. The Elliott State Forest is an 82,000-acre publicly owned state forest, located near Reedsport, Oregon.

FOREST MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING

- **What principals and goals guide research forest management?**
  - The College of Forestry aspires for its research forests to be recognized as models for actively and sustainably managed forest systems. The McDonald and Dunn research forests are guided by a forest management plan that aims to support a broad set of goals and values. The goals include providing opportunities for learning, discovery, and engagement; demonstrating sound stewardship; providing opportunities for research; promoting forest resilience; serving as working demonstration forests; providing opportunities for recreation; fostering community connections; showcasing financial sustainability; demonstrating accountability; and striving for continuous improvement through adaptive management. Revenue generated through timber harvest is used to meet these objectives, as well as to support the College of Forestry's education, research and outreach mission.

- **Why does timber harvest occur within OSU research forests?**
    - The College of Forestry aspires for its research forests to be globally recognized as models for actively and sustainably managed forest systems. Timber harvest is one component of active forest management. Harvest revenues also contribute to the college's mission of providing teaching, research and demonstration opportunities within the forests for students, faculty and the public. Harvest operations serve as learning opportunities to foresters, civil engineers, wildlife biologists, ecologists, silviculturists, social scientists, community members and others. Timber harvests also are a tool for managing forest health, such as limiting insect and disease outbreaks and reducing risk of wildfires.

- **Do you plant new trees after every harvest?**
    - Yes, all harvested stands within college research forests are replanted as reforestation is an essential component of sustainable forest management. Operations on all research forests comply with reforestation guidelines stipulated by the Oregon Forest Practices Act. On average, 5-10% of revenue generated through timber harvest each year is used to plant 75,000 – 125,000 seedlings within OSU's research forests.

- **Why are slash piles burned within research forests?**
    - State of Oregon Forest Practices rules and regulations recognize slash treatment as a tool for wildfire risk reduction, protection from insect and disease outbreaks, and as a process to prepare a recently harvested site for planting. Slash can be treated through chipping and mastication, or through burning. Research forest staff use different approaches for each harvest site. For example, mastication (chopping) is used in areas where it is desirable to limit smoke. In areas where slash piles are burned, staff follow Oregon's Smoke Management regulations, which are overseen by the Oregon Department of Forestry.

- **Why is herbicide used on the research forests?**
    - The College of Forestry's philosophy is to use the least amount of herbicide possible to meet specific needs. Recently harvested sites are treated with herbicides to temporarily reduce competing vegetation and allow tree seedlings to establish after being planted, and to meet state of Oregon reforestation requirements. Herbicides are also used to control or reduce invasive plants like false brome, Himalayan blackberry, English hawthorn, and Scotch broom. Herbicides are used in some restoration efforts to reduce invasive plants and allow the seeding or planting of native vegetation into meadow, prairies, oak woodlands and other areas. Herbicide applications are conducted in compliance with state of Oregon and federal regulations under the supervision of a licensed pesticide applicator.

- **Is all old growth within the research forests protected?**
    - Currently, approximately 3.6% of land (421 acres) in the McDonald-Dunn Forests are old forest reserves. These patches are permanently set aside. In addition, individual old trees (known as "legacy trees") within younger forests are retained when younger forests are harvested.

- **How are the research forests funded?**
    - A foundational College of Forestry principal is that the research forests must be self-sustaining. Funds required for restoration, wildfire risk reduction, invasive species removal, road maintenance, wildlife surveys, recreation and other forest management expenses are not provided by the College of Forestry, Oregon State University, the state of Oregon or taxpayers. Funding needs must be generated through sustainable timber harvests. Other minor sources of revenue include natural gas royalties and rent from communication towers located within some research forest tracts.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH THE RESEARCH FORESTS

- **How can the community be involved in forest management planning?**
    - The community is invited to participate in the development of a new management plan for the McDonald and Dunn Forests in a number of ways. Input can be provided at planned community listening sessions. Written comments on the research forest management plan can be provided using this web form. Questions on the research forest management plan can be sent to this email address.

- **How can the community members learn more about college's research forests?**
    - Community members are encouraged to sign-up for College of Forestry's electronic research forests newsletter, follow us on social media, and regularly check our website to learn about research forest activities, and how to engage, provide feedback and ask questions.

- **Are all meetings regarding forest planning open to the public?**
    - All community listening sessions are open to public participation. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) and Faculty Planning Committee (FPC) have been created to advise the dean of the College of Forestry. SAC and FPC meetings are open to listen in via Zoom, and recordings will be posted online along with written summaries. Community members can provide written input to the Stakeholder Advisory Committee and Faculty Planning Committee by using this web form.