

Northwest Woodlands

A Publication of the Oregon Small Woodlands, Washington Farm Forestry, Idaho Forest Owners & Montana Forest Owners Associations

FORESTLANDS AROUND THE WEST: WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING

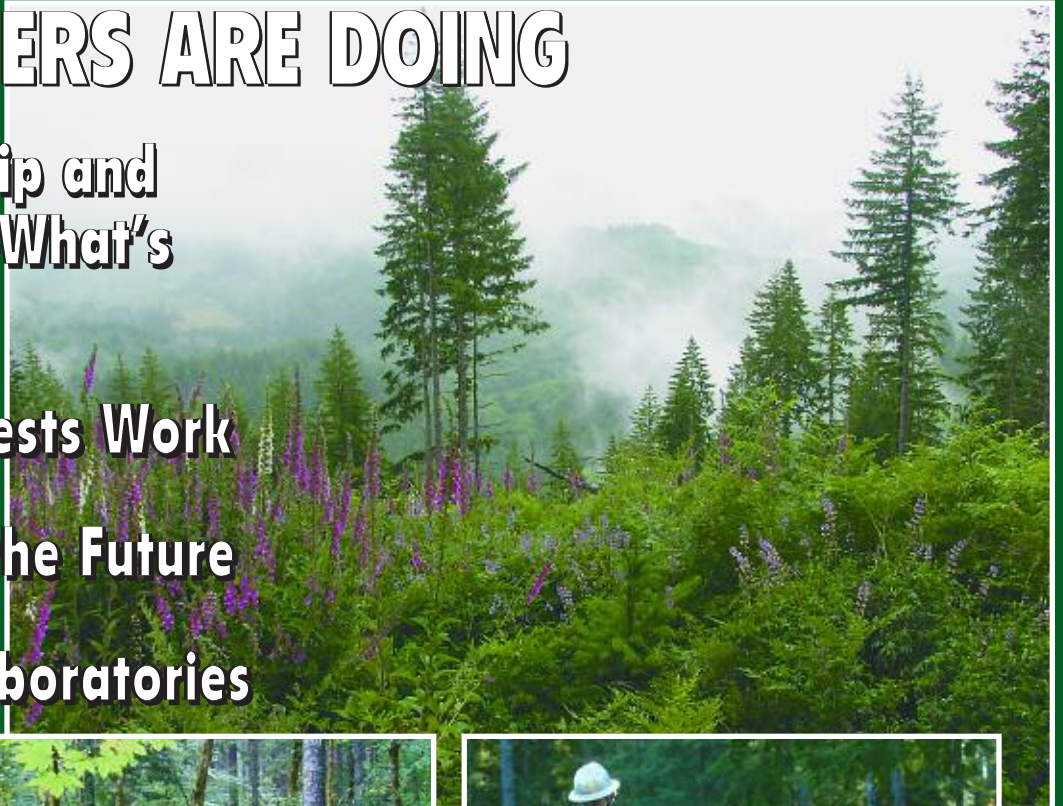
Forest Ownership and Management—What's Your Style?

Why Indian Forests Work

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Under state of Oregon management, older trees are left after a regeneration harvest to promote diversity. Photo courtesy of Oregon Department of Forestry. Inset photos: Horseback riders enjoy a day in the forest. Photo courtesy of ODF. Forester Orv Mowry conducts a plantation evaluation. Photo courtesy of Port Blakely Tree Farms.

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Forest Ownership and Management—What’s Your Style?

By **LISA A. DeBRUYCKERE**

A leisurely drive along most scenic byways in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana is likely to yield one thing—landscapes rich with trees. These four western states are known for the amount and diversity of forests, owners and land management goals, all of which provide for healthy social, environmental and economic forest values.



These three legs of the forest sustainability stool are balanced primarily because of the diversity of landowners and their objectives. Who are these landowners? In the United States, family forest landowners—35 percent of all forest landowners—rub elbows with the second largest manager of forestlands, the federal government (33 percent). Private landowners, plus TIMOs and REITs (21 percent), and state governments (9 percent) manage the other third of forestlands, with local landowners such as cities and counties (1 percent) rounding out the total.

Because of the large amount of public forest ownership in the West, the percentage of land owned by family forest landowners is smaller—Washington

(12 percent), Montana (15 percent), Oregon (14 percent) and Idaho (6 percent) [see Table 1]. Still, contribu-

tions family forest landowners make is critical to the overall health and well-being of the forest industry.

Landowners have different perspectives and goals for managing forestlands because of individual objectives, federal regulations governing land management decisions (endangered species, for example) or state statutes. Some landowners are driven by personal goals, such as managing family lands for their beauty or recreation values, while others, including federal, state and local land managers, primarily manage for multiple-use values—conservation, wildlife habitat, parks, recreation, wilderness, clean water and timber production, to name a few.

State agencies, such as the Oregon Department of Forestry, manage state forestlands for structure (see article from the Oregon Department of Forestry)—active harvesting techniques help forests more quickly evolve into older stages to provide the widest range of wildlife habitats as well as economic and recreation benefits. The bottom line is that different landowners managing for a variety of outcomes equates to diverse, healthy forests. Let’s take a closer look at each forest landowner group and their management practices.

Table 1. Area of forestland in Washington, Montana, Oregon and Idaho by ownership category, 2006. (Note: Listed by acreage in thousands of acres)

	Washington	Montana	Oregon	Idaho
Private				
Family	2,717	3,638	4,257	1,186
Other Private	7,088	3,398	6,802	1,367
Total Private	9,806	7,026	11,059	2,553
Public				
Federal	9,536	17,175	17,960	17,342
State	2,580	799	969	1,535
Local	358	---	13	181
Total Public	12,474	17,987	19,111	18,877
Total	22,279	25,014	30,169	21,430

Family Forest Landowners

A 2006 U.S. Forest Service survey (www.fs.fed.us/nwos) indicated that about 10.4 million family forest landowners manage 264 million acres of land in the United States. There is a great deal of diversity within this pool. Family forest landowners own property for a number of reasons, rating beauty/scenery, passing land on to heirs, privacy, nature protection and part of home/cabin as important or very important.

The reasons family forest landowners harvest trees are equally varied, the top five being trees were mature, improving the quality of remaining trees, removing trees damaged by natural catastrophes, part of a management plan, and wood for personal use.

What types of activities do family forest landowners engage in? Private recreation, posting land to prevent trespassing, road/trail maintenance, timber harvest and tree planting are the top reasons, with wildlife habitat improvement close behind.

Yet with all of this activity, few (4 percent that own 17 percent of all family forestland) family forest landowners have a forest management plan. Family forest landowners like to receive information about managing their land, preferring to get that information from talking with foresters, books and pamphlets, newsletters and magazines, talking with other owners, and videos.

What concerns family forest landowners? Insect and plant diseases, keeping land intact for heirs, fire, trespassing or poaching, and high property taxes lead the priority list of concerns.

Federal, State and Local Landowners

Federal forest landowners primarily include the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of

present and future generations. Land management priorities include treating acres of hazardous fuels (particularly in the urban wildland interface), reducing the impacts of invasive species, providing high-quality recreation, considering opportunities for alternative energy and its associated infrastructure, and improving watershed condition.

Both the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management manage forestland in western Oregon and Washington and northern California based on the Northwest Forest Plan, a plan that attempts to balance supply of timber with protection of fish and wildlife habitat on a total of 22.1 million acres. The Healthy Forests Initiative, a joint effort between the U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, helps to reduce the threat of wildland fires on federal lands in the West, including Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana manage trust lands as part of their state forestland management. These states actively manage state forestlands to provide economic, environmental and social benefits. Depending on the type of state forestland (trust land versus non-trust land), revenue from timber sales goes to county governments, local taxing districts or, in the case of Oregon, the Common School Fund to benefit schools throughout the state.

Local landowners, such as cities and counties, also manage some public lands.

Private Industrial Forest Landowners

Of the private and publicly owned and managed forestland in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana, private industrial forest



A hiker crosses a log bridge in the Tillamook State Forest.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

landowners, TIMOs and REITs manage about 19 percent of these lands. Private industrial forest landowners seek to maintain stable business environments while encouraging long-term investments in healthy forests, ensure sustainable timber supplies and protect environ-

mental values.

Regardless of landowner type, it's in the best interest of all forest landowners to maintain the health of their forests and the forestland base. Different landowners may have different priorities for their land parcels, but when packaged together, the mosaic of land ownerships and the associated management styles and approaches benefit all and contribute to the diversity of our forests in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. ■

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Forest Facts

- An estimated 11 million private forest owners (\pm 3 percent) collectively control 56 percent of the forestland (423 million acres \pm 0.4 percent) in the United States.
- Family forest owners account for 92 percent of the private forest owners and 62 percent of the private forestland (35 percent of all forestland) in the United States.
- A total of 61 percent of family forest owners in the United States own less than 10 acres of forestland, but 53 percent of the family forestland is owned by people with 100 or more acres.
- The average land tenure for family forest owners is 26 years.
- Two out of every five acres of family forestland are owned by absentee owners.
- A total of 58 percent of family forestland is owned by people who have commercially harvested trees.
- One in five acres of family forestland is owned by someone who has a written forest management plan. Two in five acres is owned by someone who has received forest management advice. The most common sources of this advice are state forestry agencies and private consultants.
- Most family forest owners plan to do relatively little with their forestland in the next five years. Of those who intend to actively do something with their land, harvesting sawlogs or pulpwood and harvesting firewood are the most commonly planned activities. One in five acres is owned by someone who plans to sell or transfer some or all of their forestland in the next five years.
- Compared to the general population, there are a greater proportion of family forest owners who are older, white, male, more educated and wealthier. One in five acres of forestland is owned by someone who is at least 75 years of age.
- There are 6.2 million family forest owners (\pm 4 percent) with forest holdings of one to nine acres in the United States. There are 19.2 million acres of forestland (\pm 6 percent) that are owned by family forest owners with forest holdings of one to nine acres in the United States.
- A total of 61 percent of the family forest owners in the United States have forest holdings of one to nine acres. Eight percent of the family forestland in the United States is owned by people with forest holdings of one to nine acres.

Source: Butler, Brett J. 2008. Family Forest Owners of the United States, 2006. Gen. Tech. Rep. NRS-27. Newtown Square, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station. 73 p.