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For Immediate Release

Do Your Homework Before Hiring a Contractor...

It's in Forest Landowners' Best Interests Many forest landowners are salvaging timber from the 2002 fire season and thinning stands of trees. Both activities help prevent hazardous fire and control pests and disease, which promotes forest health. Some of this work has been encouraged through conservation incentive programs. The organizations listed below,

**The Oregon Department of Forestry
The Oregon State University Extension Service
The Oregon Small Woodlands Association
The Oregon Tree Farm System
The Oregon Forest Resources Institute
The Oregon Society of American Foresters
The Association of Oregon Loggers, Inc.
The Oregon Forest Industries Council
The Association of Consulting Foresters of America, Inc. - Oregon Chapter
Douglas Timber Operators
The Southern Oregon Timber Industries Association
and Malheur Timber Operators,**

applaud such efforts and encourage landowners to keep up the good work and continue using the various conservation incentive programs that are available. We want to see you thrive as forest landowners. Putting high quality practices on the ground often means using specialty contractors.

For this reason, we would recommend that forest landowners who are preparing to hire contractors carefully examine the credentials and experience of service providers. This includes contractors hired to conduct harvest operations or to do fire rehabilitation work that includes tree planting, thinning and salvage operations, and site preparation work like spraying trees.

Forest Landowners should consider the following checklist of questions BEFORE they hire contractors. This vital step will help to ensure high quality service and value for the money you invest:

1. How long has the contractor been providing this service? Are her/his experiences in situations similar to yours? Is their primary business delivering the specific service you require?
2. What do others who have used the contractor say about her/his work performed? Will they allow you to view some of the work they have performed?
3. Is the contractor licensed and bonded with insurance to protect your interests and liability?
4. Does the service provider hold active membership in professional associations?
5. Have the necessary permits and notifications been filed before work begins?
6. Will the contractor visit your property and discuss your specific goals, objectives and constraints? (Most contractors will make a brief initial visit without charge.)
7. During a declared fire season, will the contractor observe all necessary prevention, training and fire suppression requirements?
8. Does a written agreement exist that specifies exactly the conditions, location and payment terms for the work to be performed?

9. How does the contractor's stated bid or estimate compare to the bids of others' who can provide similar services?

Forest landowners who desire assistance in avoiding common pitfalls may want to consider hiring an experienced Professional Consulting Forester. Additional information, educational materials and advice in identifying helpful resources can be obtained from an Oregon State University Extension Forester. Landowners can also seek advice from peers through the Master Woodland Manager Program or associations such as the Oregon Small Woodlands Association or the Oregon Tree Farm System. In addition, ODF service foresters may be available to lend technical advice.

The following web pages and phone numbers provide additional contact information for the above organizations:

The Oregon State University Extension Service -

<http://www.cof.orst.edu/cof/extended/extserv/>

Master Woodland Managers - <http://extension.orst.edu/mwm/>

The Oregon Small Woodlands Association - <http://www.oswa.org>

The Association of Oregon Loggers, Inc. - <http://www.oregonloggers.org>

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute - <http://www.oregonforests.org>

The Oregon Forest Industries Council - <http://www.ofic.com>

The Oregon Society of American Foresters - <http://www.forestry.org>

The Oregon Tree Farm System - <http://www.point-a.com/treefarm>

The Oregon Department of Forestry - <http://www.odf.state.or.us>

Douglas Timber Operators - <http://www.doug timber.org>

The Association of Consulting Foresters - <http://www.acf-foresters.com>

Southern Oregon Timber Industries Association - (541) 773-5329

Malheur Timber Operators - (541) 575-2711

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