

# Recreation and Engagement Program Mission, Goals and Objectives

*OSU College of Forestry  
McDonald, Dunn, and Cameron Forests*

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## **Introduction**

In 2013-2014, extensive community engagement resulted in recommendations<sup>1</sup> from the visiting public regarding the desired future direction of the OSU College of Forestry Research Forests (Research Forests) Recreation and Engagement Program. Faculty and staff from the College of Forestry and the Research Forests met and reviewed these recommendations alongside internal needs and mandates. This group developed the following set of goals and objectives for the future of the Recreation and Engagement Program.

This set of goals and objectives is designed to serve as general guidance and does not address timelines, budgets, or other considerations necessary to assure completion of these goals. This document outlines the College of Forestry's intent in managing recreation into the future to serve as a backbone for developing specific plans associated with recreation development and management. Specific plans will focus on outlining logistical considerations, timelines, and budgets for trails, hunts, education, events, volunteers, and other programs on the Research Forests.

*This document is a "living document," meaning that it may be revised or changed as conditions change or additional guidance is provided.* Revisions of the overarching Research Forests Land Management Plan will be occurring within the next several years. The goals identified in this document will influence the development of that plan, and the development of that plan may result in revisions to this document.

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<sup>1</sup> [Gustavson, E., Brown, R. and Olsen, C. \(2014\). Collaborative Community Recommendations for Oregon State University College Forests Recreation Planning](#)

## **Recreation and Engagement Program Direction**

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Research Forests Recreation and Engagement Program is to support and promote an integrated community made up of residents, schools, organizations, the College of Forestry and OSU by offering a high quality local recreation destination and interactive opportunities to learn about forests.

### **Vision**

The vision of the Research Forests Recreation and Engagement Program is to offer a variety of enjoyable opportunities for a diverse set of forest visitors to participate in close-to-home recreation and learning activities in a forested environment; a place where people feel comfortable engaging in outdoor activities as individuals or with their neighbors and friends, and come away learning something new about forests.

### **Our Niche**

The niche of the Research Forests Recreation and Engagement Program is to provide recreation opportunities close to home, appropriate for integrating into busy schedules. General recreation opportunities are not intended to provide a 'mecca' for any one type of visitor, nor to draw large numbers of out-of-town visitors. Organized events are appropriate to support outdoor engagement and learning, physical fitness, and positive relationships with the community, and may draw out-of-town visitors.

## **Recreation and Engagement Program Goals and Objectives**

### **Goal 1: The Research Forests are, and will continue to be, an integral part of the local community**

- A. Use the Research Forests as a setting for the community to learn about forest resources, ecology, management, research, societal benefits, and the College of Forestry mission (Also supports Goal 3)
- B. Improve transparency and quality of information regarding activities on the Research Forests (Also supports Goals 2 and 3)
- C. Create and maintain positive partnerships with community organizations, businesses, media, elected officials, tribal governments, and agencies that are mutually beneficial and have clear roles (Also supports Goal 2)
- D. Continue to develop the volunteer program as one approach for securing community involvement (Also supports Goal 2)
- E. Develop and promote a fundraising program for the Recreation and Engagement program (Also supports Goal 2)
- F. Provide opportunities for forest use by groups who have been traditionally underserved in outdoor recreation (also supports Goals 2 and 3)

## **Goal 2: Offer a diversity of high quality, safe, and sustainable recreation opportunities**

- A. Strategically plan to protect and enhance current recreation experiences and offer new recreation opportunities in a manner that is environmentally, economically, socially, culturally, and managerially sustainable (Also supports Goals 1 and 3)

### **Communication, Education and Interpretation**

- B. Improve quality and distribution of on-line and printed materials, including signs, maps and brochures, in part by working with partnering organizations (Also supports Goals 1 and 3)
- C. Develop Peavy Arboretum into a focal point of natural resource education (Also supports Goals: 1 and 3)

### **Trails Management**

- D. Develop a trails plan for future development of a sustainable trail system that provides high quality opportunities for Research Forests' visitors while minimizing environmental impacts
- E. Maintain and construct trails to a variety of set standards designed for protection of forest resources, visitor enjoyment, and long term maintenance of the trail
- F. Design and implement primary use trails and trail segments as appropriate to protect visitor safety, prevent conflict, and offer unique close-to-home recreation opportunities, while maintaining the majority of forest trails as multi-use
- G. Prohibit specific uses on trails only as necessary to protect resources, trail tread, visitor safety, and recreation opportunities
- H. The number and use of unauthorized trails will be reduced through the development of a system of authorized trails offering higher quality opportunities, including the incorporation and/or redesign of some unauthorized trails in alignment with OSU Research Forests Trails Plan (in development) (Also supports Goal 3)

### **Recreation Uses**

- I. Allow recreation use of the Research Forests during set hours year-round (5:00am-9:00pm) for the purposes of participation in exercise routines during short daylight hours of winter months and to eliminate confusion (Also supports Goal 1)
- J. Continue to allow dogs to be under vocal command (off-leash) on trails and roads. Monitor conflicts associated with off-leash dogs and dog refuse, and consider improving signage, installing additional baggie/garbage stations, implementation of on-leash areas, or other management actions as needed to address issues (Also supports Goals 1 and 3)

### **Facilities Management**

- K. New or updated facilities will be designed in accordance with guidelines for accessibility as defined through the Americans with Disabilities Act
- L. Reduce traffic congestion and improve safety at trailhead access points
- M. Maintain high quality trailhead facilities to provide services for visitors (Also supports Goal 3)

## Goal 2 (Cont.)

### Organized Events Management

- N. Develop a special uses plan that provides opportunity for organizations to host events, while protecting opportunities for individual recreation, meeting Research Forests' goals, and being considerate of neighboring landowners (Also supports Goals 1 and 3)
- O. While awaiting the completion of the special uses plan, continue to host historically allowed large community events and continue to evaluate smaller community event proposals for appropriateness (Also supports Goal 1)
- P. Continue to sponsor Research Forests' events and support College of Forestry events in a way that is consistent with limits set for other large events on the Research Forests (Also supports Goals 1 and 3)

### Hunting and Fishing

- Q. Provide a system for applying for permission to hunt on the Dunn Forest that is administratively efficient, fair and easy to use for hunters (Also supports Goal 3)
- R. Maintain a hunting and fishing program that does not impact the safety of recreationists and adjacent landowners, and is sustainable for natural, cultural and social resources, including game populations

### Program Sustainability

- S. Provide adequate staffing to efficiently leverage volunteer, partnership, grant-writing and fundraising activities, and utilize OSU Foundation account to support the growing recreation program (Also supports Goals 1 and 3)

## Goal 3: Recreation use is to be consistent with College of Forestry and Research Forests goals

- A. (Repeated from Goal 1, Objective A): Use the Research Forests as a setting for the community to learn about forest resources, ecology, management, research, societal benefits, and the College of Forestry mission (Also supports Goal 1)
- B. Use and promote the recreation and engagement program as an avenue to actively engage and teach students in the College of Forestry, other departments in OSU (business, graphic design, cartography, engineering, etc), and students of other institutions about practical components of sustainable recreation management (Also supports Goal 1)
- C. Minimize impacts to research, forest management activities, and natural and cultural resources from unauthorized recreation uses of the Research Forests (Also supports Goal 2)