

Frequently Asked Questions about College of Forestry Research Forests

FOREST PURPOSE, MANAGEMENT, 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?

Pursuant to ORS 352.113 (1) and (2), legal title to all real property acquired by Oregon State University is held in the name of the State of Oregon, acting by and through the Board of Trustees of Oregon State University. By this statute, the real property is to be managed and maintained for university purposes. The College of Forestry manages the Research Forests under the OSU Board of Trustee's authority, to further university purposes by using the land to advance the University's research, teaching, and outreach missions.

- How do the 10 College of Forestry Research Forests differ from the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest or the proposed Elliott State Forest?

- The [H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest](#) is a 16,000-acre research forest owned by the U.S. Forest Service, located near Blue River, Oregon. The [Elliott State Forest](#) is an 82,000-acre publicly owned state forest, located near Reedsport, Oregon. The 10 [College of Forestry Research Forests](#) (Blodgett, Cameron, Collins, Dunn, McDonald, Marchel, Matteson, Oberteuffer, Ram's Dell, Spaulding) comprise 15,000 acres combined, are located across the state, and are managed by the College of Forestry with the intent of filling the university's mandate to provide opportunities to learn through research, teaching and outreach.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- Who conducts research on the forests?

- Research on the forest is undertaken by undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, and individuals external to the university (agencies and other educational institutions). During 2017-2022, at least 5 OSU Honors College theses, 15 MS theses, and 8 PhD dissertations involved data collection from the McDonald-Dunn Forests.

- What topics does research on the forests cover?

- The forests provide opportunities for research on a wide variety of topics, including wildlife ecology, aquatic/riparian ecology, hydrology, plant community ecology, disturbance ecology, soil science, forest engineering, harvest operations, recreation, remote sensing, wood products, silviculture and forest management.

- Are the research forests used for classes?

- The close proximity of the McDonald and Dunn Forests to the main OSU campus in Corvallis enables regular visits to the forests by students during classes. Some of the classes that report visiting the forests with students include *Ecological Biogeography, Forest Biology, Forest Ecology, Forestry Experiential Learning, Forest Mensuration, Forest Policy, Forest Road Engineering, Forest Route Surveying, Forest Soils, Forest Surveying, Global Context of the Forest Sector, Harvesting Operations, Harvesting Process Engineering, Introduction to Forestry, Recreation Resource Management, Renewable Materials Manufacturing Experience, Silviculture Principles, Socio technical Aspects of Water Resources, Soil Morphology for Professionals, Terrestrial Vertebrate Identification and Natural History, Wildland Fire Science and Management.*

- Do the research forests get used for outreach and Extension?

- The forests are used regularly for recurring trainings through programs that teach woodland owners such as the *Master Woodland Manager* program and also for continuing education (fieldtrips, workshops) for professional forest managers. One-time trainings have recently occurred on topics ranging from pollinator enhancement to prescribed burning to timber cruising. The forests also serve as a location for teaching youth through avenues such as the Get Outdoors Day, the Environmental Leadership for Youth program, and the Discovery Trail in Peavy Arboretum.

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. Carefully designed timber harvests are used to manage forest health, through such means as limiting insect and disease outbreaks, and reducing risk of wildfires.

- Do you plant new trees after every harvest?

- 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. Research is currently underway to determine whether pyrolysis units could be used to convert slash to bio-oil or biochar.

- 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 set aside?

- Currently, approximately 3% of land in the McDonald-Dunn Forests are old forest reserves. These patches are permanently set aside with no active management. In addition, individual old trees (known as "legacy trees") within younger forests are retained when younger forests are harvested.

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 (scheduled early in the planning process) and community input sessions (scheduled later in the planning process). Written comments on the research forest management plan can be provided any time using this [web form](#). Questions on the research forest management plan can be sent to this [email address](#).

- How can community members learn more about college's research forests?

- Community members are encouraged to sign-up for College of Forestry's e-research forests [updates](#) distribution list, 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 and community input sessions are open to public participation. A 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 but not comment via Zoom, and recordings of these meetings are posted online. Community members can provide written input at any time through this [web form](#).