



2006
Year in Review

Ochoco
National Forest

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Welcome

2006 was a rewarding year for the Ochoco National Forest and the Crooked River National Grassland. With the help of many partners, we completed some important stream restoration and hazard fuel reduction projects in Central Oregon. We launched the Travel Management planning effort with the public, conducting five community workshops. Early in 2006, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and our neighbor agencies to address biomass supply for the future.

We look forward to another exciting year in 2007. As always, we invite you to visit the Ochoco National Forest and Crooked River National Grassland, and enjoy the magnificent lakes, trails and mountain vistas.

Jeff Walter
Ochoco National Forest Supervisor

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*Please call us at: 541-416-6500
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We worked closely with many other agencies, non-profit organizations, school districts, and community groups to accomplish conservation work. We stretched funding by engaging people in activities on the public lands surrounding their communities. Local communities teamed up with the Ochoco National Forest and made the partnership program a success. Some of the specific areas include:

Grants and Agreements

The agreements process is the tool whereby we share costs to accomplish mutually beneficial projects. We currently have more than 100 agreements in place, representing relationships with more than fifty partners that worked with us to develop, plan and implement dozens of projects. Our partners contributed an estimated \$634,000 in cash towards projects and an additional \$600,000 of labor, supplies and equipment in 2006.



Youth crews participated in many natural resource projects such as building and maintaining fences and trails, eradicating noxious weeds, reducing hazard fuel in high risk areas such as near campgrounds.

Youth Programs

350 young people between the ages of 15-18 participated in employment, job training and volunteer programs providing 21,000 hours of labor on a variety of projects; Eleven partners provided in-kind contributions of more than \$500,000 in support to these youth programs.

Senior Community Service Employment Program

Three individuals were enrolled in this Department of Labor funded program, which provides job training and supplemental income to people over 55 years of age that are on a limited income. They received 3,900 hours of training at our front desks and recreation departments.

Thank You to All Our Volunteers!

More than four hundred individuals contributed thousands of hours of valuable time to natural resource projects. These projects included maintaining hiking and horse trails, cross country ski trails and snowmobile trails; hawk, eagle and songbird surveys, as well as other wildlife surveys and wild horse surveys; help with environmental educational projects and stewardship for archaeological sites. Some of the less glamorous projects were garbage pickup (1,000 hours spent on the Crooked River National Grassland alone) and noxious weed eradication.

Partnerships

Tomorrows' Conservation Leaders - Contributing Today



Crews help reduce the risk of wildfire through hazard fuel reduction projects.



As an added educational benefit - all youth crews participate in three full days of hands on science activities, provided by Wolfree, an award winning science education organization.



Members of the YCC carried 15 poles 2 miles uphill for fence construction.

The Ochoco National Forest hosted nine Youth Conservation Corps crews, serving fifty-four young people from seven communities and three counties in Central Oregon. The crews, consisting of five crew members, one youth assistant crew leader and an adult crew leader completed natural resources projects on the Lookout Mountain and Paulina Ranger Districts, as well as the Crooked River National Grassland.

Their accomplishments include, but are not limited to:

- ✿ Maintained 45 miles of trail
- ✿ Constructed and maintained 40 water bars to prevent trail erosion
- ✿ Constructed and maintained 10 springs and spring developments
- ✿ Maintained 75 water guzzlers for wildlife
- ✿ Hand piled 100 acres hazardous fuels
- ✿ Lopped/eradicated 550 acres juniper
- ✿ Maintained 75 miles of fencing to protect riparian areas
- ✿ Obliterated old roads
- ✿ Pulled 280 extra large bags of noxious weeds

The Central Oregon Conservation Youth Corps is made possible through a partnership between Heart of Oregon Corps (HOC), Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC) and the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests. Thank you Partners!

Conservation Education

More than four thousand people participated in conservation education outreach activities. These activities included:

- ❁ Wildlife presentations and Eagle Watch activities
- ❁ "Fish Fest", a two day environmental education program that provides more than nine hundred K-2 students with hands-on soil and water science education. This event began more than ten years ago and is considered a highlight of environmental education to the school districts in Crook County. More than one hundred volunteers and ten agencies help put on this event. This is a great partnership event for the community.
- ❁ Paulina Environmental Education Day, an annual event at Cottonwood Reservoir, serves the K-8 Paulina Elementary School. For 2006, the Fisheries, Fire, and Hydrology staff from both the Ochoco and Deschutes National Forests provided learning opportunities for the students.. Free Fishing Day followed at the reservoir, which was stocked by ODFW for the occasion. Paulina Elementary School had about twenty-eight children at the event. The Crook County Sheriff's Department provided lunch, and angling expertise was provided by parents, volunteers, Forest Service personnel and the children. This event has been a part of the elementary school's science curriculum for several years.

Payments to Counties (Payco)

In 2006, over 1.2 million dollars were allocated to projects funded through Payco Title II funds recommended by the Deschutes-Ochoco Resource Advisory Committee. Projects included replacing trail bridges, forest thinning, fuel reduction, noxious weed treatments, water monitoring, stream restoration, repairing stream headcuts, and funding local youth crews through the Oregon Youth Conservation Crew (OYCC) program. OYCC employed nineteen crews comprised of 105 young adults who accomplished an impressive amount of work for both the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests. Much of this work was accomplished on the Crooked River National Grassland. A summary of accomplishments follows:

- ❁ Treated 1000 acres of noxious weeds, plus \$154,000 went to Crook, Jefferson and Wheeler Counties to assist with weed education and control programs.
- ❁ Reduced hazard fuels on 385 acres
- ❁ Replaced Wildcat Picnic Area Bridge
- ❁ Completed McKay Creek Restoration
- ❁ Placed boulder and wood barriers to move eleven dispersed camp sites back from the stream channel and protect the sensitive riparian area
- ❁ Reduced soil compaction adjacent to the stream channel to encourage native plant growth and placed large wood in stream structure to improve habitat
- ❁ Seeded disturbed soil areas with a grass/forb mixture and planted riparian shrubs along four miles of stream to increase stream shading
- ❁ Installed three information boards near McKay Creek

Partnerships

Tribal and Archaeology

We worked with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in their “First Foods” program to identify and document root gathering areas. These could lead to special management area designations in the Ochoco Forest Plan revision. Rich archaeological sites exist on public land in Central Oregon. The Archaeology Society of Central Oregon (ASCO) contributed 450 volunteer hours monitoring these sites.

Biomass

In January of 2006, the Pacific Northwest Region Forest Service and BLM in the State of Oregon signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) to offer residual woody biomass from approximately 8,000 acres per year of thinned forests within the geographic scope of the MOU. This converts to approximately 80,000 “bone dry tons” of biomass per year. A proposed biomass energy generation plant collocated at the Warm Springs mill site would remove and utilize the woody biomass material from forest projects (and other wood waste sources) to generate up to 15.5 megawatts of renewable energy available for sale. The CTWS estimates that is enough power generation to provide over 15,000 homes with renewable electricity.



High efficiency boilers such as this one have very clean emissions, are in mass production and used in thousands of buildings in Europe.



Benefits of using biomass include: wood is plentiful, carbon neutral and costs less than fossil fuels, supports the local economy, and creates a market for hazard fuel reduction.

Natural Resources

Wildlife

We had another banner year with natural resources partners. Eight thousand acres of habitat were enhanced and restored. Partners contributed nearly \$90,000 toward these projects along with thousands of volunteer hours.

✿ In partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Forest was the first in the nation to complete a post pilot stewardship project, the South Aspen Project, completed under an agreement rather than a contract.

✿ The Centennial of Service Challenge contributed \$81,000 in funding toward the Crooked River National Grassland Sagebrush Steppe Restoration Project and the Paulina Hounds Tongue Control Project

✿ Congratulations to Anne Roberts, Crooked River National Grassland Wildlife Biologist, who received the Answer the Call national award for her partnership work with Quail Unlimited at the 2006 National Convention.

Silviculture

Continuing to improve forest health, this year we planted trees and reforested nearly 1,000 acres. Stand improvement work, such as thinning and pruning, was completed on 7,642 acres. Thanks to a successful partnership with the Crooked River Watershed Council we planted 51,500 trees and riparian shrubs.

Timber

The Ochoco National Forest timber and forest products program continues to focus on improving forest health and reducing fire risk by means of commercial vegetation removal (10.1 million board feet), Christmas tree harvest (1,210 permits sold), and firewood removal (3,245 cords), biomass, and other forest products removal projects.



Thinning juniper is one method of stand improvement work. It improves forest health and wildlife habitat.



Rows of young trees help with reforestation in areas burned by wildfire.

Natural Resources

Range Management



The primary goal of the Range Management Program is to maintain a sustainable, healthy ecosystem for generations to come.



Rancher watches over the herd



The Ochoco National Forest is one of only two national forests in Washington and Oregon with wild horse territory.

Since the late 1800s, when the surrounding area started attracting settlers, ranchers have been grazing livestock (cattle, sheep, and horses) in the Maury Mountains.

Range management has been an important emphasis since the establishment of the Ochoco National Forest. The ultimate goal is to maintain a sustainable, healthy ecosystem. Range management specialists monitor range condition and health, work closely with

permittees to issue grazing permits, implement allotment management plans, battle noxious weeds, and manage wild horse territory on the Lookout Mountain Ranger District.

The Ochoco National Forest and Crooked River National Grassland manage seventy-two grazing allotments (areas) and fifty-six grazing permits. This equals 55,000 Animal Unit months (AUM). An AUM is the amount of feed or forage required by an animal equivalent to a mature 1,000-pound cow based on an average daily forage consumption of twenty-six pounds of dry matter per day for one month.

Fisheries—Improving Fish Habitat One Project at a Time

"Restoring part of a stream and seeing the fish move back in is the best part of my job"

- Fisheries Biologist, Ochoco National Forest

The headwaters of the John Day River, Trout Creek and North Fork Crooked River are located on the Ochoco National Forest. These drainages provide critical habitat for the myriad of fish species that live in the 2,500 miles of streams on the Forest. You can find:

✿ Redband trout – native Oregon species whose populations have dropped below ten percent within the Crooked River Basin - listed as Sensitive by the R6 Regional Forester

✿ Bull trout, listed as Threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

✿ Mid-Columbia River steelhead trout, listed as Threatened by the National Marine Fisheries Service

In spring, steelhead migrate for one purpose – to spawn, from the ocean up the Deschutes River to the Trout Creek Watershed and from the ocean up the John Day Basin. Spawning surveys are done in the spring with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). The ODFW also collects brood stock for its hatchery stocks from Deep and Wolf Creeks to improve the genetics of all trout released into State waters.

Restoration efforts are focused on Trout Creek and Deep Creek. Numerous projects have been implemented on Trout Creek over the past twelve years, and restoration is just beginning on Deep Creek. Culverts have been replaced, allowing fish passage and increasing stream habitat; 178 acres of range exclosure maintenance is complete. Exclosures prevent disturbances to streams and springs. Riparian plants such as willow, alder, aspen, currant and rose are planted to create shade and hiding cover as well as a place for bugs, a food source for the fish. Floodplains are repaired and deep pools are constructed by building pool structures out of rock and wood. These deep pockets of water offer a place for fish to hide, rest and feed. They also provide cooler water when the streams warm up during the summer.

Restore and they will come - Before dams, there were steelhead in all of the local streams. Portland General Electric and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs agreed in a licensing agreement to provide fish passage over the Pelton-Round Butte dam complex. Thus there will again be steelhead coming through Prineville up McKay Creek. We are completing fish habitat improvement projects to prepare for steelhead reintroduction, and in the next few years, ODFW will provide the fish.



Students from Crook County High School plant trees to help restore McKay Creek.



During Trout Creek restoration, equipment helped repair flood plains, build deep pools and place structures in the Creek to improve fish habitat.

Recreation and Travel Management

At the Edge of Solitude-Recreation on the Ochoco

Nearly 650,000 visitors come to the Ochoco in search of recreational opportunities. Scenic drives, hiking, biking, horseback riding, and designated motorized routes attract many, while rustic camping provides opportunities for that “get away from it all” experience. Hunters search out big game, turkey and upland birds. And those seeking a connection to the past can experience & discover the rich mining, homesteading, and grazing history.



Rimrock Springs offers great walking and birding opportunities.



Cold Springs Guard Station also served as a switchboard station connecting phone calls between Prineville, Paulina, fire lookouts and guard stations. It is a very popular overnight destination available through the Recreation Lodging program.

In an effort to meet the growing and changing demands of our visitors and the need to provide healthy, safe, and well-maintained recreation opportunities, the Ochoco is currently developing a Recreation Site Facility Master Plan (RSFMP). RSFMP is an analysis tool; the fundamental premise is to maintain recreation sites which are sustainable and flexible enough to adapt to changes in public demand, available resources and opportunities. This local process reflects a national effort, as every national forest will complete the process. To gather additional public input on recreation values we will also be participating in a pilot “Landscape Values Mapping” study.

RSFMP guides us through a thorough evaluation of every developed recreation site, considering alignment with the niche, financial efficiency and environmental and community stability. As the population of central Oregon grows, our intent is to manage recreation sites to provide the best value for the public within our available resources.

Travel Management

We had a very successful start to the Travel Management planning process. Well managed motorized access is important to public use of the National Forests and Grasslands. In 2005, the Forest Service published a new rule for providing motor vehicle access to National Forests and Grasslands. The Rule states: “Each unit or district shall designate those roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use by vehicle class and, if appropriate, by time of year”

Madras and Prineville hosted two of the six public workshops throughout central Oregon. During the workshops we discussed the new rule, what it means, and how it will affect motorized use of the National Forests and Grassland. We also asked the public for help mapping special places on the Ochoco National Forest and the Crooked River National Grassland, and for information that will help us understand what is most important to visitors about motorized access. Our focus is to coordinate with a diverse representation of local citizens to develop a proposal for an updated travel map for the Ochoco National Forest.