

Monitoring Investments in Oregon's Federal Forest Restoration Program

2019–2021 Biennium

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About the Ecosystem Workforce Program:

The Ecosystem Workforce Program is a bi-institutional program of University of Oregon's Institute for a Sustainable Environment and the College of Forestry at Oregon State University. We conduct applied social science research and extension services at the interface of people and natural resources. Our publications aim to inform policy makers and practitioners, and contribute to scholarly and practical discourse.

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Executive Summary

The Federal Forest Restoration Program (FFR Program) is a partnership between the state of Oregon, federal forest managers, and public lands stakeholders to increase forest restoration and economic opportunity on federal forest lands across Oregon. The purpose of this working paper is to provide an update for the investments made by the FFR Program for the 2019–2021 state funding biennium as well as an assessment of the tangible and intangible impacts of those investments over the same period. Previous findings for Oregon state fiscal years (FY) 2014–2019, including a cumulative report, are reported elsewhere.¹ This report presents: 1) FFR Program expenditures, 2) economic impacts of FFR Program expenditures, 3) on-the-ground accomplishments of FFR Program expenditures, and 4) stakeholders' perspectives about FFR Program successes and current and future challenges.

Key findings

- The State of Oregon's FFR Program investments totaled \$3,335,555 for the 2019–2021 biennium. In addition, as part of the Oregon Legislative Emergency Board allocations to Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), the FFR Program made use of an additional \$1,084,339 of state funding for FY 2021. The program also strategically leveraged and invested contributions from project partners, most significantly the U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) and U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) who's contributions valued a total of nearly \$3.5 million through Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) agreements.

¹ Santo, A., H. Huber-Stearns, and E.J. Davis. 2019. Monitoring Investments in Oregon's Federal Forest Restoration Program FY 2014–2019. Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon. Working Paper # 91. Available at: <http://ewp.uoregon.edu/publications>.

- **State-Federal Implementation Partnership (SFIP)** investments provide services through a contract or agreement to federal forest restoration projects where federal agencies lack the capacities and efficiencies to accomplish project tasks ranging from planning to implementation to monitoring. As part of SFIP investments, the state's new **Planning Assistance Categorical Exclusions (PACE)** grant initiative is described by ODF as specifically targeting a key limiting factor to the restoration of federal forests, which is the availability of ready-to-implement projects that have successfully been approved through the required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. PACE investments accelerate the approval process for restoration projects by supporting the development of new business processes that lead to planning efficiencies, expand capacity for data collection, and contracted NEPA analysis. State investments in SFIP totaled \$984,415 for the 2019–2021 biennium and led to the completion of 2.2 million acres of LiDAR surveys, over 9,000 acres of NEPA surveys (heritage and botany), 1,550 acres of non-commercial fuels treatments, and two contracted NEPA Categorical Exclusion projects covering 9,093 acres.
 - **Crew work** funds are used to hire off-season ODF firefighters and to partially fund ODF employees working on GNA activities on federal forestlands. The State provided a total of \$810,362 for the 2019–2021 biennium, which includes Oregon Legislative Emergency Board funding. These investments led to the accomplishment of approximately 3,370 acres of restoration work such as thinning and prescribed burning as well as approximately 6,370 acres of timber sale and other project preparation work including layout and tree marking.
 - **Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS)** grants are designed to support forest collaborative groups in their efforts to gain technical or scientific expertise needed to build capacity and consensus around forest management.
- The FFR Program funded nine applied research and technical assistance efforts on eight national forests during the 2019–2021 biennium, which totaled \$266,418. Projects ranged from studies of fire history to workshops for forest collaborative groups.
- **Collaborative Capacity Grants** support forest collaborative groups in their efforts to find agreement and consensus among stakeholders for restoration projects. State investments totaling \$540,281 supported efforts of 12 groups on nine national forests and one BLM district for the 2019–2021 biennium. These grants helped collaboratives prepare project-level restoration plans for a total of 859,174 acres of federal forestland across 32 different planning areas. Forest restoration and timber sale activities were also implemented in collaboratively planned areas, including nearly 40,000 acres of commercial sales; pre-commercial thinning, piling of fuels, and pile burning on about 25,000 acres each; about 3,800 acres of broadcast burning; and approximately 210 million board feet of timber sales. Those timber sales supported about 486 jobs harvesting or processing timber and 610 jobs in other sectors, and the collaborative capacity grant funds themselves supported about five jobs each year of the biennium.
 - **FFR staff** facilitate program-related work and liaise between collaborative groups, agencies and communities. Approximately \$1 million was invested to fully support salaries for the FFR Program lead and regional coordinators, and partly support salaries for a GNA forester and a GNA timber sale mentor/unit forester.²
 - **Stakeholders' view of program success.** Interviews with FFR Program stakeholders indicated a number of areas where the program has been successful. This included a perceived increase in acreage ready for restoration implementation through completion of NEPA planning processes. Planning bottlenecks resolved by the FFR

² GNA foresters and a GNA timber sale mentors are ODF employees whose salaries are primarily funded by federal funds via GNA agreements. Partial FFR Program state funding allows these individuals to work on activities that do not have adequate federal funding to support, such as a thinning treatment with very little or no commercial value. State funding for GNA staff also allows these employees to participate in activities that federal GNA funds cannot support, such as attending forest collaborative meetings.

Program specifically included heritage surveys, which stakeholders said were otherwise difficult to fund and efficiently complete. Stakeholders also mentioned how the FFR Program's use of the GNA had increased federal agencies' capacity for and commercial viability of restoration timber sales on federal forests. The collaborative capacity grants were seen as an invaluable source of funding that sustain collaboratives' existence. Finally, several interviewees discussed how the FFR Program has helped agency personnel overcome "bureaucratic silos," thus allowing them to engage more with activities and priorities that cross physical property and agency cultural boundaries.

- **Stakeholders' view of program challenges and needs.** Several interviewees thought that frequent staff turnover and the lack of permanent staff positions were a problem for the FFR Program. Perhaps related to this, a few interviewees pointed to a need for clear program objectives and a more straightforward plan for program growth. Further, interviewees also saw a need to more closely align state and federal guidelines for project implementation. Lastly, interviewees thought that for areas with low value timber, it was unrealistic for the program to become self-sustaining through GNA timber receipts. One possible solution would be to provide more flexibility for moving funds from one forest to another (i.e., from forests with high value timber to forests with lower value timber) or utilize state funds to pay for treatments in areas with low timber value.
- **Program changes since the last biennium.** One of the most significant changes to the FFR Program over the last two years includes an increased use of two different types of **GNA agreements** to advance state restoration priorities on federal forests lands in Oregon.³ **GNA Restoration Services agreements** allow federal agencies to pay the FFR Program to perform in-house or oversee contracted restoration, planning, or project

work on federal lands. For the 2019–2021 biennium, the FFR Program used 17 different GNA Restoration Services agreements with the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region and seven national forests. **GNA Timber Sale agreements**⁴ allow federal agencies to transfer the preparation and administration of commercial treatments on federal forestlands to the FFR Program. For the 2019–2021 biennium the FFR Program used nine GNA Timber Sale agreements with nine national forests. The FFR Program also used program revenue generated from the sale of forest products associated with commercial treatments or timber sales (**GNA program revenue**) to cover its administration costs and to accomplish additional restoration. GNA program revenue is re-invested by the FFR Program into NEPA planning, forest or watershed restoration, or monitoring work on national forests. The specific uses of GNA program revenue are determined jointly by FFR Program priorities and national forest leadership, and are informed by forest collaborative groups. The revenue must be spent on activities that take place on the national forest where the revenue originated and cannot be redirected to activities on another national forest.



³ Ecosystem Workforce Program and Oregon Department of Forestry. 2020. Federal Forest Restoration Program Use of the Good Neighbor Authority: 2016–2020 Activities and Outcomes. Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon. Fact Sheet # 21. Available at: <http://ewp.uoregon.edu/publications>.

⁴ Currently GNA timber sale activities are occurring only on Forest Service lands and not BLM lands.

Introduction

The Federal Forest Restoration Program (FFR Program) is a partnership between the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), federal forestland management agencies including the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) and USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and public lands stakeholders. The FFR Program is administered by ODF and its mission is to increase the resilience of Oregon's federal forests by accelerating the pace, scale, and quality of forest restoration in a manner that leverages collaborative efforts and contributes to the long-term vitality of regional economies and rural communities.

The Oregon state legislature has funded the FFR Program since Oregon's FY 2014.⁵ The state has invested a total of approximately \$15 million in the program over the last four biennia (two-year budget periods totaling eight years), including \$2.6 million in the 2013–2015 biennium, \$4.8 million in 2015–2017 biennium, \$3.2 million for 2017–2019 biennium,⁶ and an allocation of \$4.4 million that is anticipated to be spent by the end of June 2021 for the 2019–2021 biennium.⁷

The FFR Program makes investments in six strategic program areas:

- 1. State-Federal Implementation Partnerships (SFIP)** are strategic investments that address federal agency capacity gaps, delays of implementation, or promote the development of innovative strategies or efficiencies at all stages of restoration projects. For the 2019–2021 biennium, the FFR Program introduced the **Planning Assistance Categorical Exclusions (PACE)** grant initiative. PACE is an SFIP initiative focused on expediting restoration project planning through data collection, planning innovations, and contracted National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) categorical exclusions (CE). NEPA CE are a class of actions that the federal agency (Forest Service or BLM) determines will not have significant impacts on the environment and thus will not require more involved environmental assessments or environmental impact statements.
- 2. Crew work** provides funding to hire off-season ODF firefighters and to partially fund ODF employees working on Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) activities on federal forestlands.
- 3. Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS)** helps forest collaborative groups gain technical or scientific expertise needed to build capacity and consensus to conduct science-based forest management. TASS projects include scientific research, outreach, and communication assistance.
- 4. Collaborative Capacity Grants (collaborative grants)** help forest collaborative groups build their capacity and increase the number, acreage, and complexity of collaboratively planned restoration projects on federal lands by developing or expanding “zones of agreement” around shared priorities and areas of concurrence.⁸

⁵ Oregon's fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30. FY 14, for example, spans July 2013–June 2014.

⁶ Santo, A., H. Huber-Stearns, and E.J. Davis. 2019. Monitoring Investments in Oregon's Federal Forest Restoration Program FY 2014–2019. Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon. Working Paper # 91. Available at: <http://ewp.uoregon.edu/publications>.

⁷ This amount includes supplemental funding from the Oregon Legislative Emergency Board.

⁸ Details about Collaborative Capacity Grants are reported in the following reports, available at <http://ewp.uoregon.edu/publications>:

Davis, E.J., A. Santo, and E. M. White. 2019. Collaborative Capacity and Outcomes from Oregon's Federal Forest Restoration Program. Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon. Working Paper #92.

Davis, E.J., and E. M. White. 2021. Monitoring the Collaborative Capacity Grant Outcomes of Oregon's FFR Program, 2019–2021 Biennium. Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon. Working Paper #108.



5. **ODF FFR Program staff** facilitate FFR Program-related work and liaise between collaborative groups, agencies, and communities.
6. **Project management** provides administrative, legal, and communication support. This also provides program evaluation and monitoring (such as this report).

The purpose of this working paper is to describe the investments made by the FFR Program during the 2019–2021 state funding biennium as well as highlight the tangible and intangible impacts of those investments over the same period. This report builds on previous monitoring of the FFR Program conducted by the Ecosystem Workforce Program and is intended as an update to the Monitoring

Investments in Oregon's FFR Program FY 2014–2019 report.⁹ In line with the previous report, we focus specifically on the FFR Program and report only metrics and outcomes that are linked to the Program. However, as the FFR Program has expanded, specifically with its use of GNA, funding streams that support program work have become more complex. For this monitoring update, we elaborate on these various types of funding and track how each funding type is used by the FFR Program to strategically invest in the restoration of Oregon's federal forests. This report contributes more broadly to efforts to track the progress of state, federal, and stakeholder programs engaging in forest restoration in an effort to inform management and policy for improved outcomes.

⁹ Santo, A., H. Huber-Stearns, and E.J. Davis. 2019. Monitoring Investments in Oregon's Federal Forest Restoration Program FY 2014–2019. Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon. Working Paper # 91. Available at: <http://ewp.uoregon.edu/publications>.



Approach

We collected and analyzed data from a number of sources. We report: 1) FFR Program expenditures, 2) economic activities within Oregon supported by FFR Program expenditures, 3) on-the-ground outcomes of FFR Program activities, and 4) stakeholder perspectives about FFR Program achievements and future challenges.

Calculating FFR Program expenditures

Cumulative expenditures of the FFR Program were calculated by summing expenditures in three different ways by: 1) biennium, 2) the FFR Program's six program areas, and 3) geographic distribution

(national forest or ODF District). Budgeted and actual expenditures were determined based on a review of different types of documentation, including budgets, grant agreements, and contracts. We separately report cumulative expenditures from the state allocations to FFR Program, Oregon Legislative Emergency Board funding, federal cash (federal appropriations, grants, and Forest Service trust funds including Knutson-Vanderberg funds¹⁰) and timber receipts. All federal contributions including cash and timber receipts were received via GNA agreements. Consistent with previous monitoring efforts, funds received from GNA agreements were not included in the economic analysis which is focused instead on the economic activity from the FFR Program.

¹⁰ Federal appropriations are funds annually allocated to the Forest Service and BLM by the US Congress. Federal grants include the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership, and other restoration-related federal funding opportunities. Knutson-Vanderberg funds are deposits made by timber sale purchases to cover the costs of reforestation and related work within timber sale boundaries.

Our reporting timeline was just prior to the end of the 2019–2021 biennium. As a consequence, some FFR Program funds had been allocated but not yet spent at the time of reporting. We have included those funds here as allocated funds rather than actual expenditures. All figures were reviewed and confirmed by financial administrators at ODF and were current as of May 2021.

Calculating economic activity from program expenditures

FFR Program investments support jobs and income across a broad set of sectors as they flow into the economy. We estimated the effects of the FFR Program on the Oregon economy using the economic model IMPLAN and tools and procedures developed by the Forest Service. We reviewed project budgets, collection agreements, and final expenditure reports to understand project activities and expenditures. Because our focus was on the Oregon economy, we removed any funds allocated to out-of-state cooperators. We categorized project activities into different types (e.g., on-the-ground work like technical forest surveys, or scientific efforts to synthesize the results of studies on forest ecology) and linked those types to economic sectors represented in IMPLAN using Forest Service analytical approaches. Our estimates of economic effects reflect outcomes across Oregon.

We describe the economic effects of the FFR Program in terms of annual jobs and gross regional product. Jobs figures represent 12-months of full or part time work. Two jobs lasting six months or three jobs lasting four months both represent one 12-month job as reported here. Gross regional product is equivalent to gross domestic product, but at the state level, and represents the “value added” by businesses and workers to the final good or service being produced. Value added can also be defined as the final price of the good or service minus the costs of the non-labor inputs to production. For both jobs and gross regional product, we estimate both the direct and secondary economic effects. The direct effects represent the effects from the initial infusion of program investment and the secondary effects

are those that result as businesses sell to each other in response to the direct effects, and employees buy household goods and services using their income.

Calculating on-the-ground accomplishments

On-the-ground accomplishments of FFR Program expenditures include: (1) SFIP and PACE-funded NEPA survey and other work completed by contractors, (2) project work completed by ODF crews and staff on federal forestlands, (3) technical assistance and science projects funded through TASS, and 4) restoration treatments and timber sales implemented from collaboratively planned projects. We obtained descriptions of the nature and extent of PACE and TASS accomplishments through outcome reports, grant contracts, and interviews with recipients (see SFIP and TASS results section below). We tabulated tangible, on-the-ground accomplishments of FFR project work using tracking information provided by FFR Program staff. We sought further clarification and supplemental information through directed communications with FFR Program staff. We used the Forest Service's Forest Activity Tracking System database and timber sale information from Forest Service staff to identify the quantity and types of implementation activities linked to input from FFR Program-funded forest collaborative groups.

Stakeholder perspectives

Between January and May 2021, we conducted 20 semi-structured interviews with 21 individuals including ODF staff and crew, federal agency partners, and FFR Program funding recipients. Interviews were designed to solicit qualitative feedback about the FFR Program and included questions on the program's successes, achievements, and challenges. We also asked interviewees whether or not the program presents a long-term solution for managing federal forests and gave them the opportunity to offer solutions to perceived problems or other improvements or efficiencies that they felt could be made to the program. A full list of the interview questions is available in the Appendix.

Results

Overview

Total FFR Program funding, 2019–2021

The state of Oregon allocated \$3.3 million to the FFR Program during the 2019–2021 biennium. The FFR Program made use of an additional \$1,084,339 of state funding for FY 2021, which is a portion (22 percent) of emergency funding that the state (Oregon Legislative Emergency Board) allocated to ODF for the purposes of creating fire adapted communities and restoring and maintaining resilient landscapes.¹¹ Thus, total state investments in the FFR Program equaled \$4,187,006 during the 2019–2021 biennium, allocated across each of the six program areas (Figure 1).

In most cases, state investments in SFIP/PACE, crew work, TASS, and collaborative grants can be directly linked to specific federal land management units, whereas FFR staff and administration are allocated to ODF districts or statewide. For this biennium, the State invested in work on all 11 national

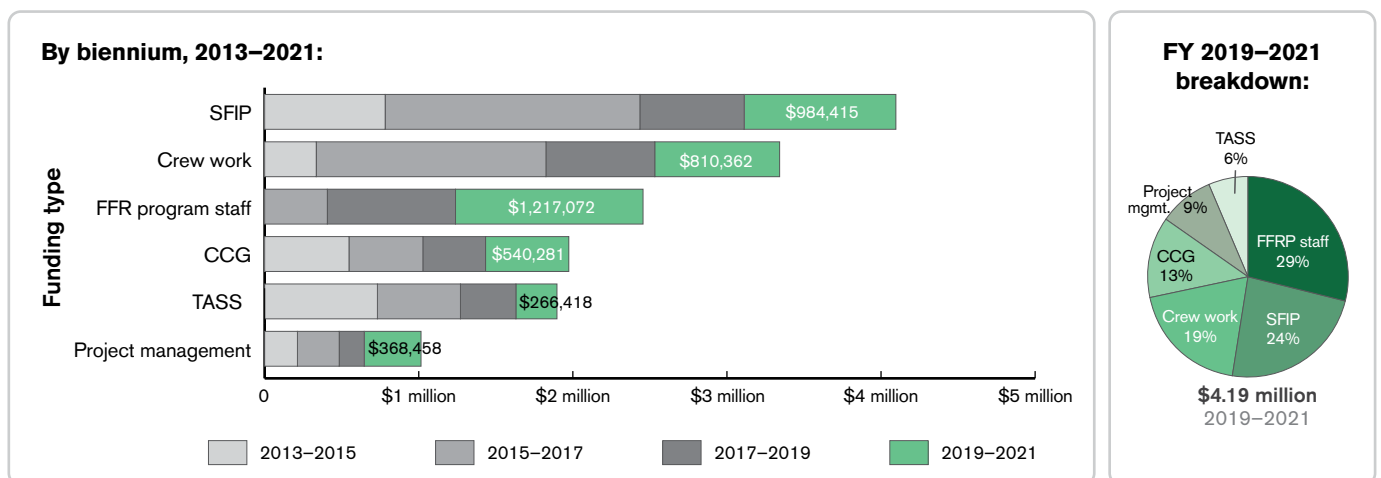
forests in Oregon and the BLM Medford district (Figures 2 and 3). The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest received the largest total FFR Program investment in a federal land management unit for the 2019–2021 biennium.

The state spent a total of \$3,455,869 in federal funds from GNA agreements during the 2019–2021 biennium. Of those funds, \$2,431,353 came in the form of federal cash sourced through the State's GNA Restoration Services agreements with the Forest Service and BLM and \$1,024,515 was sourced through the State's GNA timber sale agreements with the Forest Service.

State appropriations to the FFR Program

State of Oregon budget allocations dedicated to the FFR Program (\$3.3 million for the biennium) supported each of the six program areas. The largest FFR Program investment was made in permanent staff with just over \$1 million. These key investments ensure the coordination and oversight of restoration activities statewide and within ODF districts. SFIP investments through PACE awards accounted for the second largest state investment with nearly \$631,000 aimed toward increasing the pace and scale of restoration project planning efforts.

Figure 1 Total investments made through the FFR Program by program area, 2013–2021



¹¹ Oregon Legislative Emergency Board. 2021. January 8, 2021 Certificate. <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/lfo/eboard/EB%20Certificate%2001-08-2021.pdf>

Figure 2 FFR Program spending totals by federal land management unit during the 2019–2021 biennium

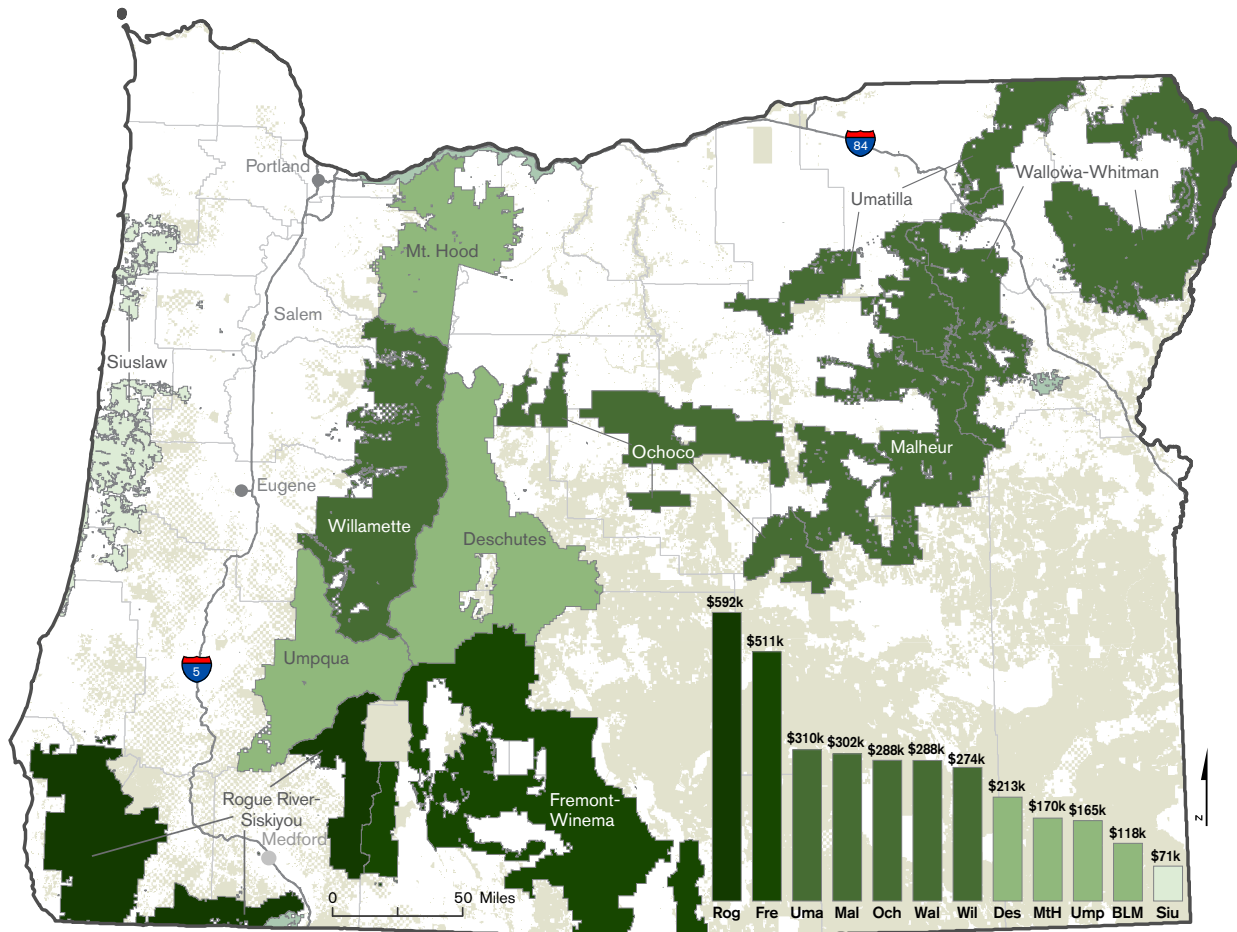
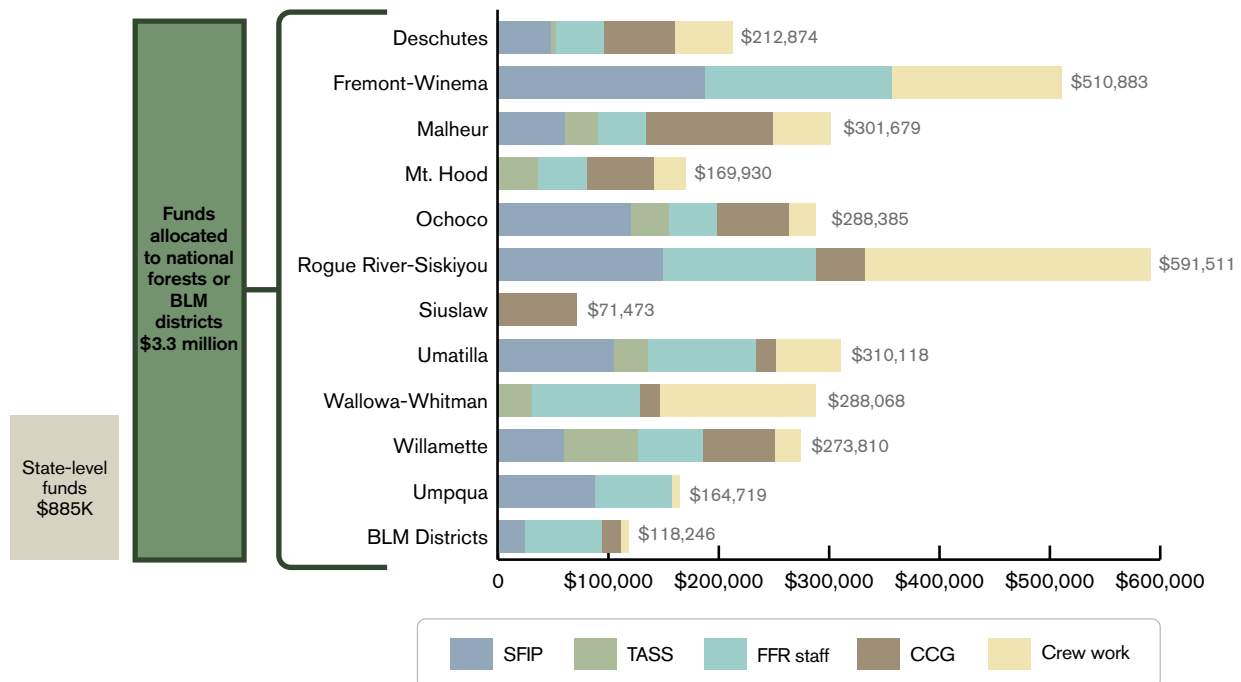


Figure 3 FFR Program spending by federal land management unit and program area during the 2019–2021 biennium



Oregon invested \$885,000 in efforts that had a state-wide focus and \$810,362 in crew work administered by ODF Districts. Eight national forests received PACE grants, the largest of which went to the Ochoco National Forest. TASS grants funded technical service providers supporting collaboratives working on seven national forests. Lastly, \$540,281 in collaborative grants supported 12 groups engaged with nine national forests and the BLM Medford District.

Oregon Legislative Emergency Board investments in the FFR Program

As mentioned above, the FFR Program also invested \$1,084,339 of funding provided by the Oregon Legislative Emergency Board into restoration efforts on federal lands. These funds paid for equipment for FFR staff and crew; fuels reduction and prescribed burning project work; commercial sale preparation work on the Deschutes National Forest; as well as NEPA-related heritage surveys, post fire monitoring, and other SFIP contracted work. We discuss Oregon Legislative Emergency Board contributions to these activities within the appropriate program area summaries.

Federal funding and GNA program revenue

Federal contributions to the FFR Program, in the form of federal cash (\$2,439,564) and GNA program revenue facilitated through GNA agreements (\$1,016,304), totaled over \$3,455,868 for the 2019–2021 biennium. The FFR Program used these federal funds to accomplish additional restoration work on federal forest lands. Work performed with these funds ranged from contracted non-commercial fuels reduction to NEPA surveys to scientific monitoring of restoration sites. For the purpose of this report, we considered the federal contributions to the FFR Program to be matching contributions to state investments in FFR staff, administration, crew, and SFIP. Although we did not include these investments in our economic analysis (which was limited to state investments), we report the outcomes of this funding within their appropriate program area summaries.

Economic impact

Oregon's 2019–2021 biennium investments in the FFR Program have resulted in the generation of an estimated 33 jobs and annual gross regional product of about \$3.5 million per year. Estimated jobs and economic impacts per year from FFR Program investments both increased in comparison to the previous biennia (Figure 4, Table 1).

On-the-ground accomplishments

FFR Program funds resulted in on-the-ground restoration accomplishments on federal forestlands, including: increasing capacity and zones of agreement through support of Oregon forest collaborative groups, generation of new scientific insights in restoration ecology, commercial and non-commercial fuels reduction, implementation of prescribed fire treatments, and completion of NEPA-related data collection and planning processes. Notably, NEPA-related data collection included inventory of cultural and biological resources, which contributes significantly to federal land managers' overall understanding of the lands they manage and their ability to implement restoration treatments.



Figure 4 Average annual GRP and jobs supported by FFR Program investments during the 2019–2021 biennium, by program area.

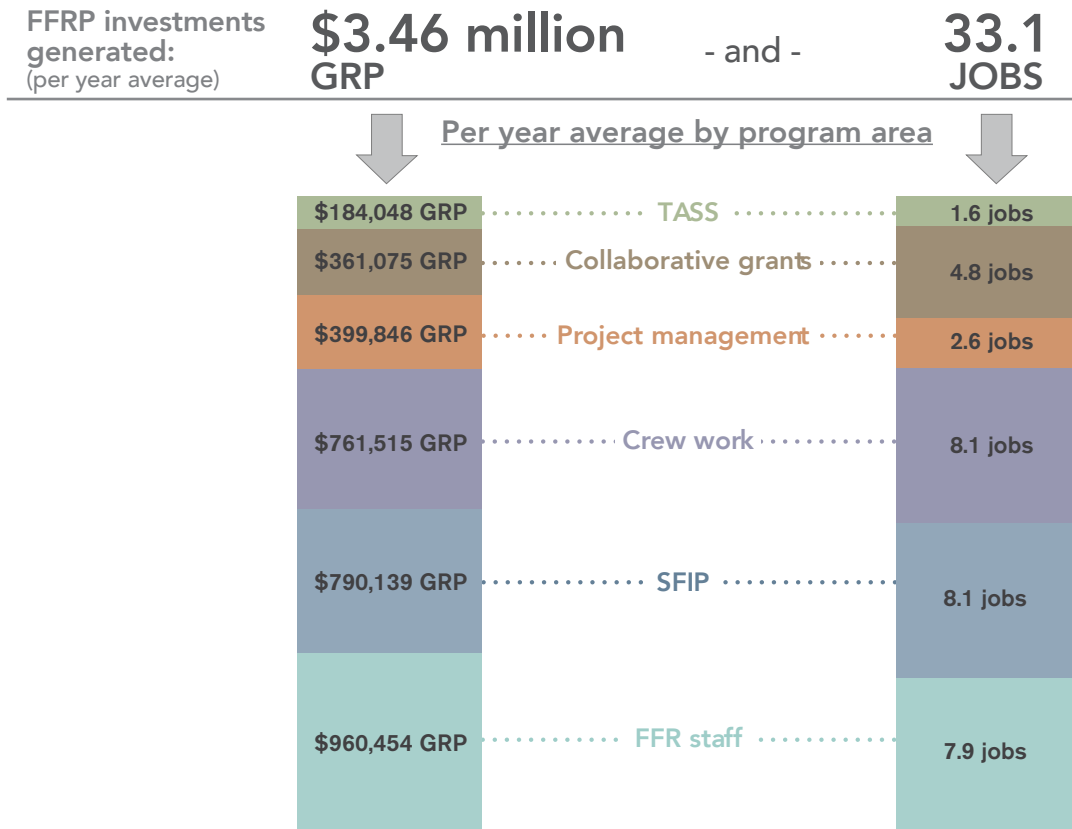


Table 1 FFR Program investment impact on jobs per year and annual GDP by biennium, 2013–2021

	2013–2015	2015–2017	2017–2019	2019–2021
Investment per year	\$1.3 million (actual)	\$2.4 million (actual)	\$1.6 million (actual)	\$2.1 (anticipated)
Jobs per year	36.6	49.3	32.9	33.1
GRP per year	\$2.7 million	\$3.9 million	\$2.6 million	\$3.5 million



Program area summaries

In the following sections, we provide an overview of investments in each of the six FFR Program areas and highlight selected outcomes.

State-Federal Implementation Partnerships (SFIP)

"[SFIP] is designed to address bottlenecks in NEPA ... and we [Forest Service] have really appreciated and benefited ... wildlife surveys and heritage surveys, in particular, are hard to fund with any other color of competitive funding. So, this has been a huge benefit for that NEPA bottleneck around heritage surveys ... now we're working with the state on getting the state to locate those [heritage survey] contractors for us and that's an added efficiency that's been really helpful."

For the 2019–2021 biennium, the FFR Program introduced a new grant initiative, titled **Planning Assistance Categorical Exclusions (PACE)**. The PACE grant initiative provides competitive funding opportunities for federal land management units (in

collaboration with FFR staff and administrative support) to complete surveys, analysis, and documentation for restoration planning processes required under NEPA. To develop projects and apply for PACE grants, Forest Service and BLM staff work directly with FFR District Coordinators to identify program priorities. Following submission of the proposal by the applicant, the FFR Program staff review and prioritize projects for funding. The focus of PACE grants is to support federal agencies' efforts to develop new business processes that lead to NEPA planning efficiencies, expand capacity for surveys within large planning areas and associated NEPA Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements, and to contract all necessary surveys and documentation for NEPA Categorical Exclusion projects. An example of a project that tests a new business process that leads to NEPA planning efficiencies is the innovative eDNA sampling project (described under on-the-ground accomplishments, below) which replaces conventional biological survey methods.

PACE was initially intended to replace the SFIP grants and contracts from prior years, which were

defined as investments designed to increase the pace, scale, and quality of restoration on federal forestlands by filling capacity gaps across all stages of restoration (e.g., planning, implementation, and monitoring). However, some work conducted through the FFR Program in the 2019–2021 biennium—namely non-competitive (“strategic”) contracts using Oregon Legislative Emergency Board funds—were used in the same manner as SFIP from prior years. These SFIP investments, summarized below under “Other, non-PACE SFIP”, supported the hiring of contractors to conduct surveys, exams, timber sale layouts, monitoring, and other restoration work to fill federal agency capacity gaps.

Investments and economic activity

For the 2019–2021 biennium, state investments in SFIP totaled \$984,415 and funded projects on

eight national forests (Figure 5). The PACE initiative accounted for nearly 65% of FFR Program SFIP investments (\$630,915). Non-PACE SFIP was supported by Oregon Legislative Emergency Board funding. This additional funding supplied \$353,500 toward five different projects.

State funding for SFIP activities (not including Oregon Legislative Emergency Board funds) has supported an average of 8.1 jobs across Oregon’s economy each year of the biennium and contributed an average of \$0.79 million in gross regional product each year of the biennium (Table 2). Slightly more than half of the job effects supported on-the-ground positions and the remainder supported jobs in other sectors of the economy (e.g., providing goods and services for doing the work and to employees spending their earnings).

Figure 5 SFIP investments by federal land management unit during the 2019–2021 biennium

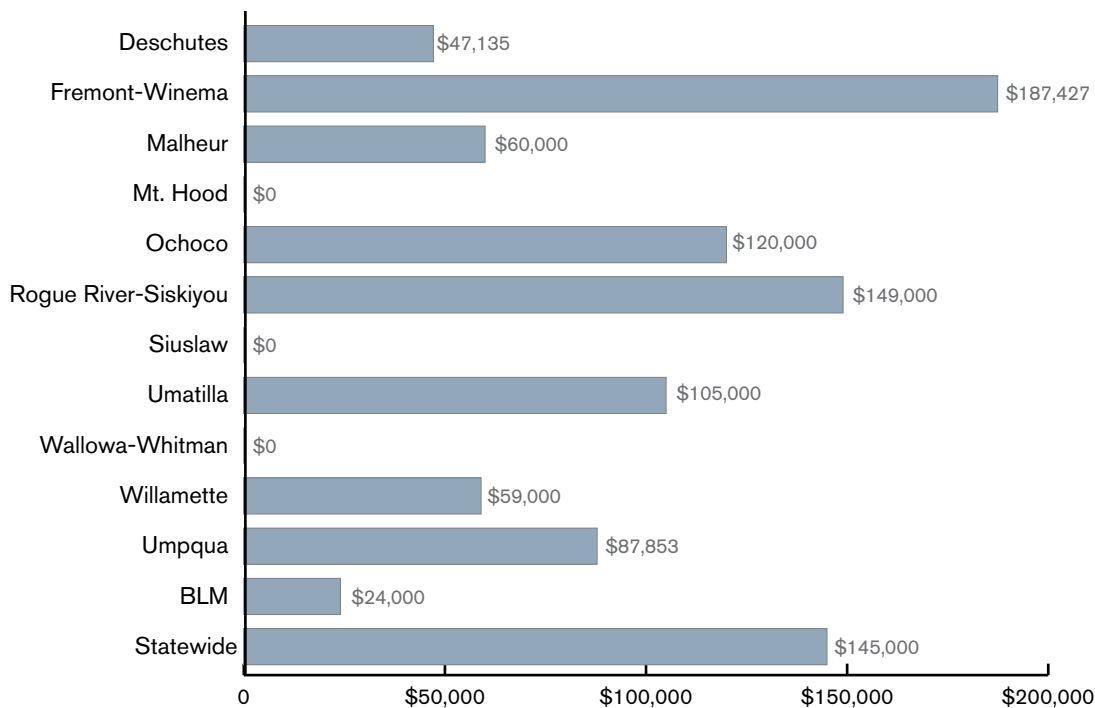


Table 2 Statewide economic activity from SFIP investments during the 2019–2021 biennium

Two-year biennium allocation	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$984,415	4.2	8.1	\$552,410	\$790,139

On-the-ground accomplishments

PACE investments resulted in a variety of on-the-ground accomplishments including:

- LiDAR modeling of forest vegetation structure across 361 plots on the Mt. Hood, Rogue River-Siskiyou, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests covering 3,484 square miles or 2.2 million acres. The models will be used by resource specialists for virtual reconnaissance, expediting the NEPA compliance and planning process in these areas.
- Testing a new business process of environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling of Red Tree Vole and aquatic species in an effort to increase the efficiency of determining their geographic distribution. Utilizing eDNA sampling instead of traditional, labor-intensive sampling could lead to increasing the pace of survey completion and subsequent restoration project implementation.
- 8,470 acres of heritage surveys for NEPA projects on the Deschutes, Malheur, and Umatilla National Forests.
- 539 acres of botany surveys on the Deschutes National Forest.
- Two contracted NEPA Categorical Exclusion projects totaling 9,093 acres on the Fremont-Winema and Ochoco National Forests.

Other SFIP (non-PACE) outcomes as a result of Oregon Legislative Emergency Board funding, include:

- 1,550 acres of non-commercial fuels reductions treatments on the Mt. Hood, Willamette, Rogue River-Siskiyou, Fremont-Winema, and Umatilla National Forests.
- Field and contract preparation of two commercial thinning projects on the Deschutes National Forest.
- 1,000 acres of prescribed fire on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.
- 750 acres of NEPA heritage surveys on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.
- A fire effects and recovery study analyzing the Beachie Creek, Holiday Farm, and Archie Creek fires.

Stakeholder perspectives

Some interviewees suggested that PACE investments enabled the state to increase its involvement in the management of federal forestlands by streamlining and increasing efficiencies at the project planning stage.

Several interviewees specifically discussed how capacity to complete NEPA is the limiting factor for accomplishing restoration work on federal forests. They pointed out how PACE funding had added to Forest Service capacity and increased efficiencies by resolving NEPA “bottlenecks”, as well as through the completion of Categorical Exclusions for restoration work. In relation to this point, interviewees also discussed how PACE investments had increased “NEPA-ready acres”, meaning that with the NEPA process complete, restoration work could move forward. Several interviewees also suggested that PACE investments were specifically instrumental for completing heritage surveys (for which the Forest Service lacked capacity and funding). They suggested that, without PACE funds, these projects would otherwise not have moved forward. Lastly, interviewees discussed how PACE, and SFIP investments more broadly, provided important data to the Forest Service.



Crew work

In the 2019–2021 biennium crew work funds were used to hire off-season ODF firefighters, to partially fund one GNA forester on ODF's Northeast Oregon District and one GNA crew on the Central Oregon District, and to fund natural resource specialists from ODF's State Forests and Private Forests divisions to implement on-the-ground work on federally managed forestlands. FFR crew work funding supported a variety of restoration projects such as: fuels thinning, piling, scattering, or burning; timber sale preparation; planting inspections; and fencing. FFR crews added capacity to national forests, often at key times of the year, and were often transferred between projects on short notice to address emergent needs. This type of “on-call”

flexibility allowed the FFR Program to increase the Forest Service's ability to conduct prescribed burns which rely on intermittent and difficult-to-predict alignment of weather, fuels conditions, and personnel availability.

Investments and economic activity

State investments in FFR crew work totaled \$810,362 for the 2019–2021 biennium with \$323,412 in regular FFR funding and \$497,950 from Oregon Legislative Emergency Board funding for FY 2021. FFR crew work funding is allocated by ODF district (Table 3). The ODF Southwest Oregon District received the most funding during this biennium (Figure 6). The regular FFR Program budget for crew work investments decreased substantially from the last biennium to less than half the amount

Table 3 Federal land management units associated with the Oregon Department of Forestry's administrative units

ODF Administrative Unit		Federal Land Management Unit(s)
Area	District*	National forest/BLM District
Eastern Oregon Area	Central Oregon District	Deschutes National Forest Malheur National Forest Ochoco National Forest Mt. Hood National Forest (Barlow and Hood River Ranger Districts) Prineville BLM District
	Klamath-Lake District	Fremont-Winema National Forest
	Northeast Oregon District	Umatilla National Forest Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
Southern Oregon Area	Coos Forest Protective Association (FPA)	Coos Bay BLM District
	Douglas FPA	Umpqua National Forest Roseburg BLM District
	South Cascade District	Willamette National Forest (Middle Fork and McKenzie Ranger Districts)
	Southwest Oregon District	Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest Medford BLM District Roseburg BLM District
	Western Lane District	Coos Bay BLM District
Northwest Oregon Area	North Cascade District	Mt. Hood (Clackamas and Zigzag Ranger Districts) Willamette National Forest (Detroit and Sweet Home Ranger Districts)
	Tillamook District	Siuslaw National Forest
	West Oregon District	Siuslaw National Forest

* Two additional districts, the Northwest Oregon District and the Walker Range FPA, do not have any federal land management units associated with them and are not included in this table.

previously allocated, in part, because some crews were funded through GNA project revenue and federal appropriations from GNA agreements.

Funding for FFR crew work has supported an average of 8.1 jobs and an average of \$0.76 million in gross regional product each year of the biennium across Oregon’s economy (Table 4). More than half of the job effects supported on-the-ground positions and the remainder supported jobs in other sectors of the economy.

On-the-ground accomplishments

Crew work was conducted on 10 national forests and one BLM district. FFR crews are specifically intended to help boost the capacity of federal agencies to complete on-the-ground restoration projects and to facilitate pre-sale layout work, often associated with GNA projects. Accomplishments of FFR crews for the 2019–2021 biennium included:

- Approximately 3,370 acres of on-the-ground restoration project work including thinning, brushing, scattering, piling, prescribed burning, and pile burning.
- Approximately 6,370 acres of timber sale and other restoration project preparation work including cruising, marking, layout, and other project preparation activities

Stakeholder perspectives

Stakeholders explained that the state’s support of FFR crews allowed ODF to keep fire crews employed year-round. They described how this not only creates jobs but can help retain a highly motivated and skilled workforce. Some interviewees pointed out that FFR Program not only offers an opportunity for ODF fire crews to work during the off-season, but that off-seasons additionally coincide with prescribed fire seasons, thus the FFR maintains capacity for assisting the Forest Service

Figure 6 Crew work expenditures by ODF District during the 2019–2021 biennium

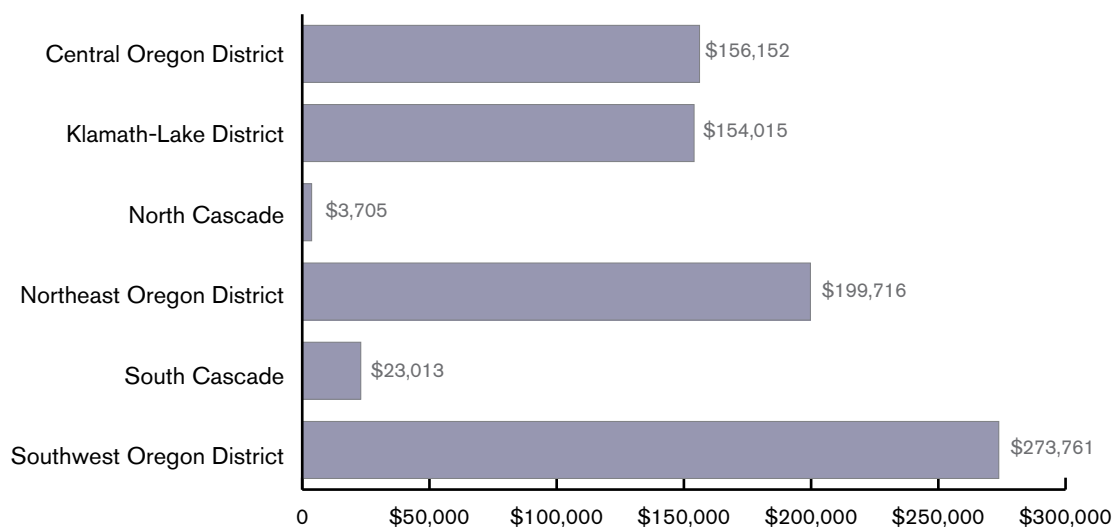


Table 4 Statewide economic activity from crew investments during the 2019–2021 biennium

Two-year biennium allocation	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$810,362	4.6	8.1	\$534,322	\$761,515

and BLM in conducting prescribed fires. Stakeholders also described how FFR Program crew often filled crucial gaps in federal forest management capacities for accomplishing on-the-ground restoration work. For example, crew pre-sale support has ensured that specific commercial restoration projects would be accomplished on a timely basis.

Although most interviewees were satisfied with the FFR crew work model, two individuals expressed different suggestions for changes to the model. One interviewee suggested that the FFR Program should rely solely on contract crew and not maintain its own workforce. They felt this would free FFR staff to be more involved as inspectors and to provide technical oversight to restoration projects on federal lands. Another interviewee suggested that the “shoulder season” (outside fire season) crew model, or using fire crew members for restoration work outside of fire seasons, was insufficient because the seasonal availability of the crew was too short, especially given that fire seasons are growing longer. Instead, they thought that the FFR Program should have a year-round crew dedicated to restoration work.



Technical Assistance and Science Support

“The science-backed decision-making has been really great [for restoration efforts].”

Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS) grants funded a range of applied science research and technical assistance efforts. The purpose of the grants is to support forest collaborative groups in their efforts to build common understanding and consensus around forest management. To develop proposals for TASS grants, applicants work with their local forest collaborative groups as well as the FFR District Coordinators according to the geographic scope of their project. During the 2019–2021 biennium, FFR Program team members reviewed proposals in coordination with three external reviewers who were familiar with the technical assistance and science needs of the forest collaborative groups.

Investments and economic activity

FFR Program investments in TASS for the 2019–2021 biennium totaled \$266,418 for nine individual grants. These grants involved eight national forests and ranged in size from just over \$9,000 to nearly \$68,000 (Figure 7). Approximately \$64,000 of TASS funding went to out-of-state entities and are therefore not included in the economic analysis of Oregon-specific impacts.¹²

TASS investments of more than \$200,000 over the biennium have supported an average of 1.6 jobs across Oregon’s economy each year of the biennium and contributed an average of \$0.18 million in gross regional product each year of the biennium (Table 5). Nearly 60 percent of the job effects supported by these funds resulted from secondary effects in the economy.

On-the-ground accomplishments

TASS investments supported nine initiatives led by eight technical assistance providers during the 2019–2021 biennium (Figure 8). Projects included:

¹² \$36,000 went to Columbia Land Trust (located in Vancouver, Washington) for oak treatment monitoring. \$28,000 went to RW Gray Consulting (located in Chilliwack, BC, Canada) for a study on Fire History, Disturbance Patterns, and Stand Structure in NE Oregon Blue Mountains.

- Development of a pilot project to understand environmental and economic issues related to implementing dry forest restoration on steep terrain on the Ochoco National Forest
- Three historic fire and forest structure studies on the Wallowa-Whitman, Malheur, and Willamette National Forests.
- Development of baseline data and test-standardized monitoring protocols for effects of disturbances (wildfire, prescribed fire, thinning) within oak woodland restoration areas on the Mt. Hood National Forest
- Technical assistance to three forest collaborative groups for outreach, communication, and storytelling support.
- The annual Pacific Northwest Forest Collaboratives Workshop, which provides a venue for forest collaborative groups in Oregon and Washington to come together and discuss key issues and lessons learned each year.

Stakeholder perspectives

Interviewees expressed concerns over several areas related to TASS projects. In particular, one stakeholder explained that the reduction in funding allocated toward TASS has greatly disadvantaged collaborative groups in terms of their ability to obtain needed technical assistance. They described how this problem was particularly evident for more recently established collaborative groups that lacked the capacity and experience necessary to navigate required business processes. Some interviewees expressed concern that the biennium funding cycle did not allow for scientific research and monitoring projects to establish and mature to the point of producing reliable data. One interviewee also advocated for the TASS program opportunity to be more widely disseminated and for the review process to be more transparent and clearly competitive.

Figure 7 TASS investments by federal land management unit during the 2019–2021 biennium*
(Note: Investments per unit are adjusted proportionally for grants involving multiple national forests)

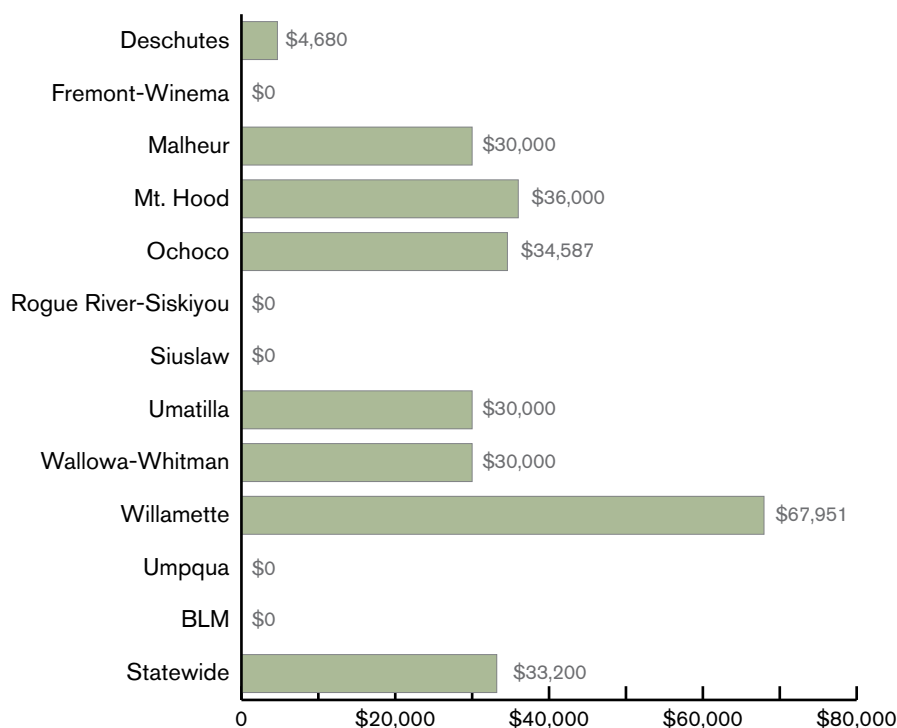
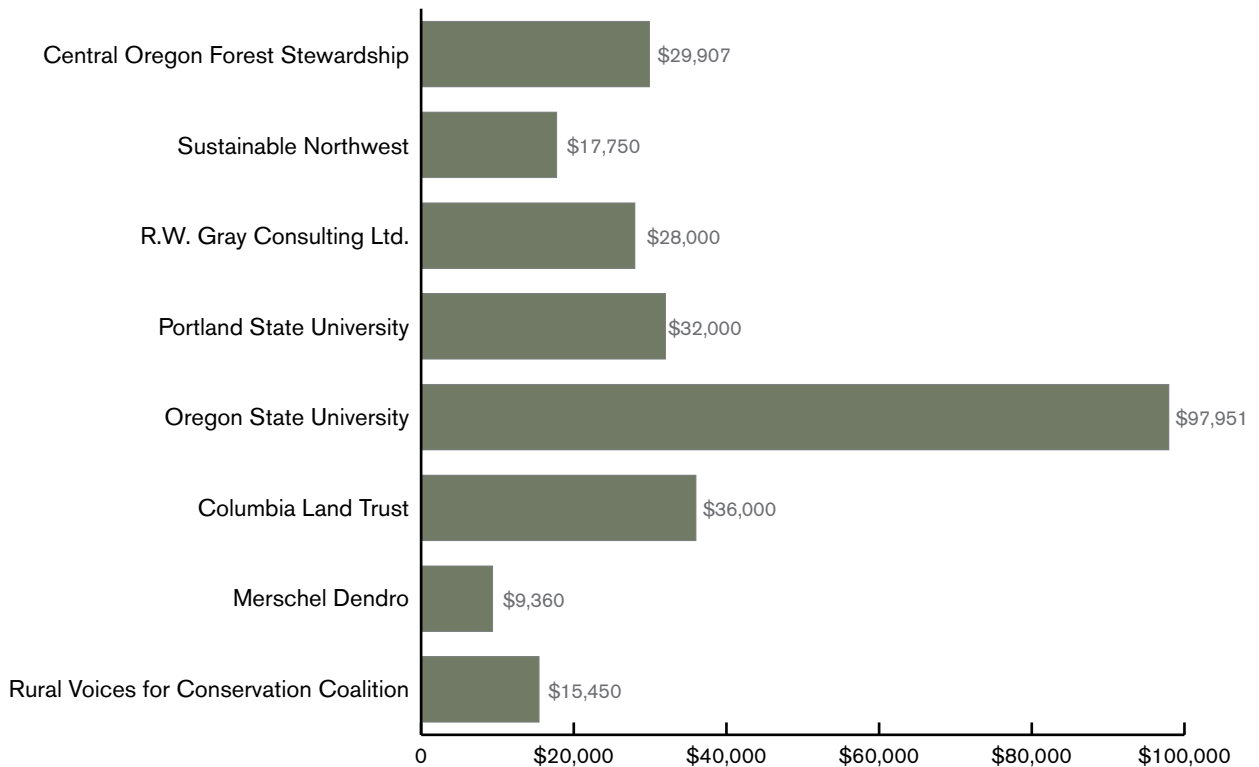


Table 5 Statewide economic activity from TASS investments during the 2019–2021 biennium

Two-year biennium allocation	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$266,418	0.7	1.6	\$129,439	\$184,048

Figure 8 TASS funds received by each technical assistance provider during the 2019–2021 biennium



Collaborative Capacity Grants

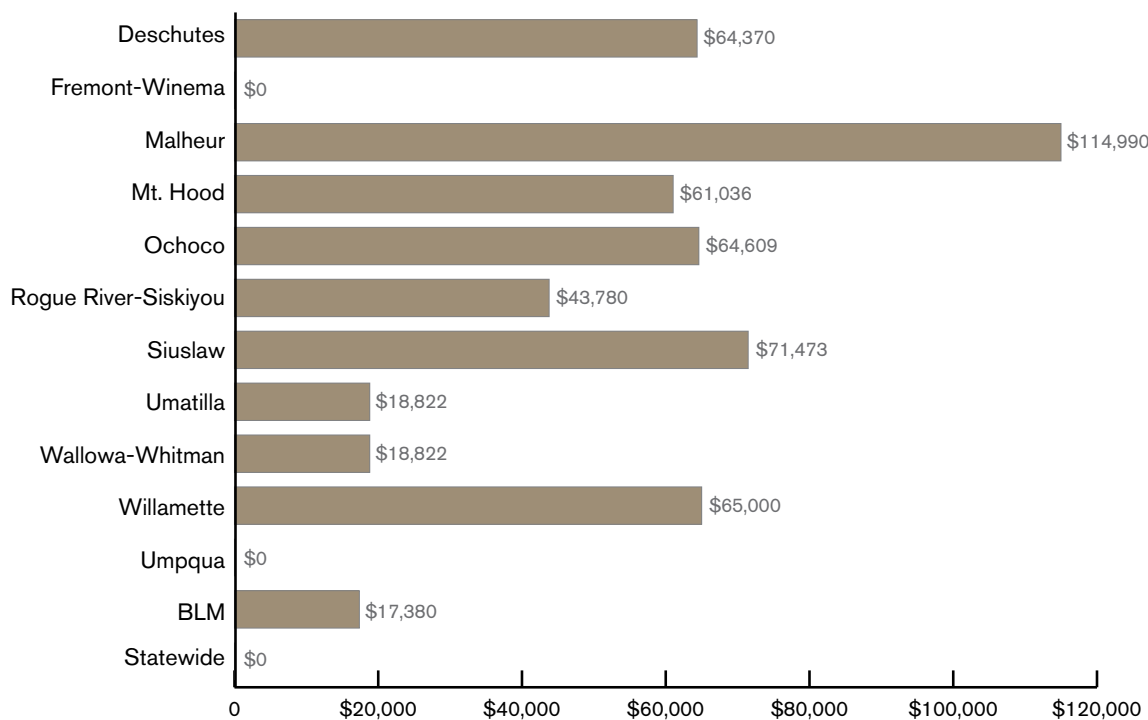
Collaborative Capacity Grants (collaborative grants) have supported forest collaborative groups to increase restoration efforts on federal forests statewide by enhancing and strengthening their effectiveness. These grants are funded by the FFR Program and administered by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The goal of these grants is to increase the number, acreage, and complexity of collaboratively planned restoration projects on federal lands by developing or expanding zones of agreement (ZOA). ZOA are statements of shared priorities and concurrence that may focus on a project, Forest Plan allocation unit, forest type, or ecological function. A secondary goal of the program is to build capacity to accomplish ZOA. Grants were

awarded to groups working on either ZOA or improvements to collaborative governance capacities during the 2019–2021 biennium. More detailed analysis of grant activities and impacts is provided in separate working papers for this biennium and for the 2014–2019 biennia.¹³ Several collaboratives requested extensions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this report does not provide a final account of all funded activities and outcomes.

Investments and economic activity

The 2019–2021 grant cycle provided a total of \$540,281 to 12 collaborative groups engaged on nine national forests and one Bureau of Land Management (BLM) district in Oregon (Figure 9; Table 6). The grants also leveraged an additional \$387,661 in documented matching funds or in-kind support

Figure 9 Collaborative Capacity Grants by federal land management unit during the 2019–2021 biennium



¹³ Details about Collaborative Capacity Grants are reported in the following reports, available at <http://ewp.uoregon.edu/publications>:

Davis, E.J., A. Santo, and E. M. White. 2019. Collaborative Capacity and Outcomes from Oregon's Federal Forest Restoration Program. Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon. Working Paper #92.

Davis, E.J., and E. M. White. 2021. Monitoring the Collaborative Capacity Grant Outcomes of Oregon's FFR Program, 2019–2021 Biennium. Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon. Working Paper #108.

Table 6 Collaborative grants in 2019–2021 grant cycle

Group	Federal forest unit(s)	Collaborative governance focus	ZOA focus	Grant \$ awarded	Leveraged funds and in kind
Blue Mountains Forest Partners (BMFP)	Malheur National Forest		√	\$65,000	\$30,300
Clackamas Stewardship Partners (CSP)	Mt. Hood National Forest	√		\$16,062	\$3,002
Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project (DCFP)	Deschutes National Forest		√	\$64,370	\$89,107
Harney County Restoration Collaborative (HCRC)	Malheur National Forest	√	√	\$49,990	\$0
Hood River Forest Collaborative and Wasco County Forest Collaborative (HRFC and WCFC)	Mt. Hood National Forest		√	\$44,974	\$66,500
Northern Blues Forest Collaborative (NBFC)	Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests	√	√	\$37,643	\$42,428
Ochoco Forest Restoration Collaborative (OFRC)	Ochoco National Forest		√	\$64,609	\$49,604
Siuslaw Forest Collaborative; now known as Oregon Central Coast Forest Collaborative (OCCFC)	Siuslaw National Forest	√	√	\$71,473	\$5,000
Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative (SOFRC)	Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and Medford District of Bureau of Land Management	√	√	\$34,760	\$400
Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative (SWFC)	Willamette National Forest		√	\$65,000	\$97,320
Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative (WRCFC)	Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest	√		\$26,400	\$4,000
12 groups supported	9 national forests and 1 BLM district engaged			\$540,281	\$387,661

from partners. Six groups submitted grants solely to work on ZOA, two solely to work on collaborative capacity, and four to work on both purposes.

Collaboratives used FFR Program funding to help prepare project-level restoration plans for a total of 859,174 acres of federal forestland across 32 NEPA planning areas between 2019 and 2021. Final NEPA decisions were signed on 16 areas covering over 370,000 acres during this time period. Groups engaged on 16 other planning areas in pre-scoping or environmental analysis stages (decisions not yet signed) covering nearly 490,000 acres. Planning

areas ranged in size and scope, as this varies by national forest. Spatially smaller efforts with more rapid timelines included a fire salvage project of 250 acres and other Categorical Exclusion areas of approximately 3,000 acres. A few groups worked on larger landscape areas between 60,000–92,000 acres with more complex scopes and longer analysis durations. For the 16 areas on which a decision was reached in the grant period, the duration of the NEPA process as measured from release of scoping letter to signature of final decision varied, as groups collaborated on projects with NEPA documents of varying scope and complexity. The average dura-

tion was 25 months; the shortest was one month, and the longest was 54 months.

During the 2019–2021 biennium, a variety of forest restoration and timber sale activities were implemented in planning areas that previously had collaborative participation. Nearly 40,000 acres were involved in commercial sales. Precommercial thinning, piling of fuels, and pile burning were each implemented on about 25,000 acres of land. A total of about 3,800 acres of broadcast burning was accomplished on collaboratively planned areas, with a dip during 2020, likely due to changes in fire policy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately 210 million board feet of timber were also sold from planning areas where collaborative groups participated. Those timber sales supported about 486 direct effects jobs harvesting or processing timber and 610 secondary effects jobs in other sectors of the economy (Table 7). The approximately half million dollars of collaborative capacity grant funds provided during the 2019–2021 biennium supported about five jobs each year of the biennium. Three of those jobs were directly associated with collaborative operations and two were in other sectors of the economy.

On-the-ground accomplishments

ZOA activities

ZOA allow collaboratives to articulate their areas of agreement and synthesize current science in a format that can help the Forest Service more efficiently apply their input if the agency chooses to use them; collaboratives may also use them to capture agreements for future use. Collaborative grants

supported the development or updating of multiple types of new ZOA on topics including upland forest restoration, roads management, managing natural ignitions, wildlife, future planning areas, climate change, fuel breaks, lodgepole pine management, and riparian areas. Some work on ZOA remains delayed by capacity limitations and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Collaborative governance activities

Collaborative grants aim investments at strengthening collaborative capacity, recognizing the connection between effective collaborative processes and outcomes on the ground. In particular, governance structures for collaborative groups often need to be updated and adapted in order to increase their ability to foster accelerated restoration. During this grant cycle, six groups increased their capacity by revising or developing collaborative governance documents including strategic plans and operating principles or manuals.

Further large landscape impacts

In addition to engaging in project planning, several collaboratives continued to lay a foundation for future restoration at large landscape scales during their grant periods. Two groups worked with national forest partners to submit new Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) proposals in 2020 and one submitted an extension. These proposals outline significant ten-year restoration strategies and a sequence of future planning areas. Other examples of leveraging opportunities to increase the pace, scale, and complexity of restoration included one collaborative's successful Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Program proposal,

Table 7 Statewide economic activity from collaborative grant investments during the 2019–2021 biennium.

Biennium inputs	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$540,281 in collaborative capacity grants	2.8	4.8	\$180,721	\$361,075
210 million board feet of timber sold	486	1,096	\$41.4 million	\$91.5 million

and ongoing collaboration around the use of Good Neighbor Authority.

Other findings about collaborative activities

- In addition to a focus on NEPA projects, some collaboratives have engaged in implementation. In some instances, this was because collaborative agreements were not resulting in intended outcomes, including examples wherein the Forest Service did not consistently apply agreements as collaboratives expected. There is not a clear pathway for collaborative involvement in implementation, although a few groups have developed implementation committees that focus on helping design economical and timely implementation projects using stewardship contracting and GNA agreements.
- Several collaboratives conducted community outreach to build broader social support for forest restoration through traditional news media stories, social media campaigns, interpretive signage, story maps, presentations, newsletters, and websites.
- Several collaboratives are facing uncertainty in the aftermath of large wildfires within or near their landscapes of focus. Post-fire activities redirected Forest Service staff capacity and led to the pause of some collaborative projects.
- With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, all collaboratives shifted their work to virtual platforms, with the exception of a few field trips. Meeting attendance remained largely regular and some groups were able to make needed collaborative governance adaptations. However, online settings may be challenging for some participants, and some groups delayed work on substantial topics until they could be addressed in person.
- FFR Program grants continue to be a primary or sole source of funding for Oregon's collaboratives.



Federal Forest Restoration Program Staff

FFR Program staff expenditures support the permanent full-time ODF personnel who facilitate program-related work and liaise between collaborative groups, agencies, and communities. In the 2019–2021 biennium, FFR Program staff expenditures also partially supported personnel focused primarily on implementing work under GNA.

Investments and economic activity

State allocations to FFR Program staff for the 2019–2021 biennium amounted to just over \$1.0 million. This funding supported seven positions: a state-wide program lead, four ODF FFR Program district coordinators, a portion of a GNA forester position, and a portion of a timber sale mentor/unit forester

position (Figure 10). In addition, three GNA foresters, one GNA crew lead, and four fuels management technicians were funded with a combination of federal GNA funds and crew funds (Figure 11). GNA agreements also provided funding to support some ODF staff from the state forests and private forests division to facilitate GNA work.

The investment in staff contributed an annual average of nearly eight jobs and \$0.96 million gross regional product per year to Oregon’s economy (Table 8). Slightly more than half of those jobs resulted directly from the funding investment and the remaining job effects were secondary.

On-the-ground accomplishments

The FFR Program lead and district coordinators oversaw crew work and helped administer PACE

Figure 10 FFR Program staff investments by federal land management unit during the 2019–2021 biennium

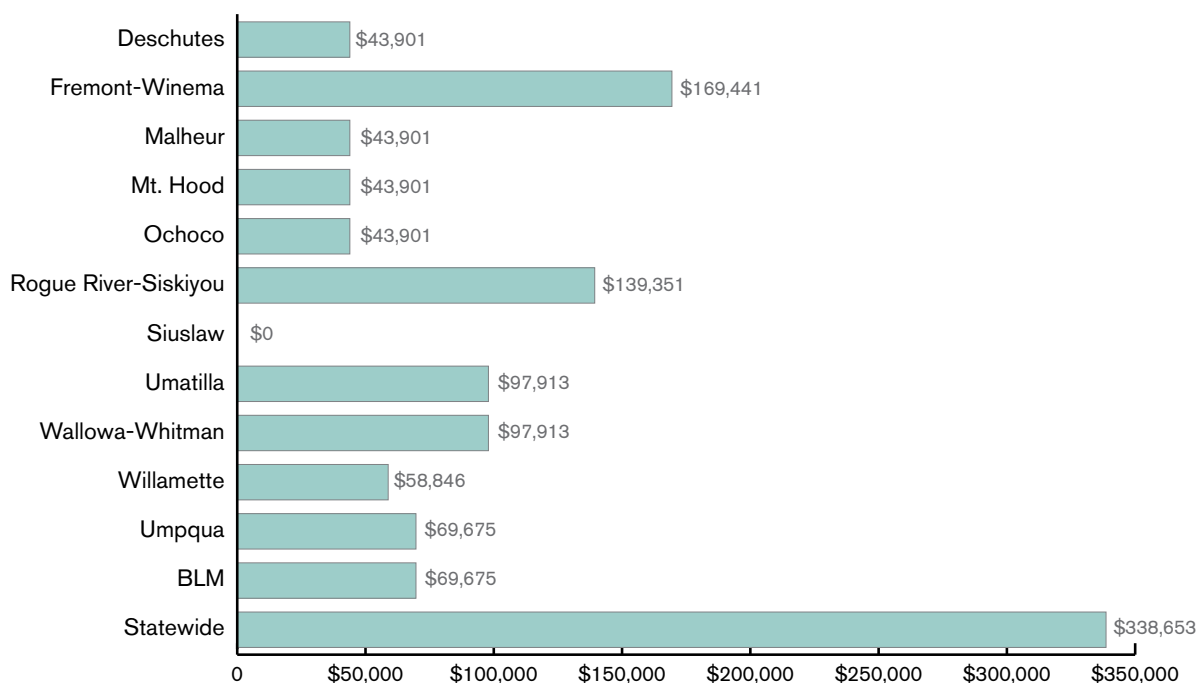
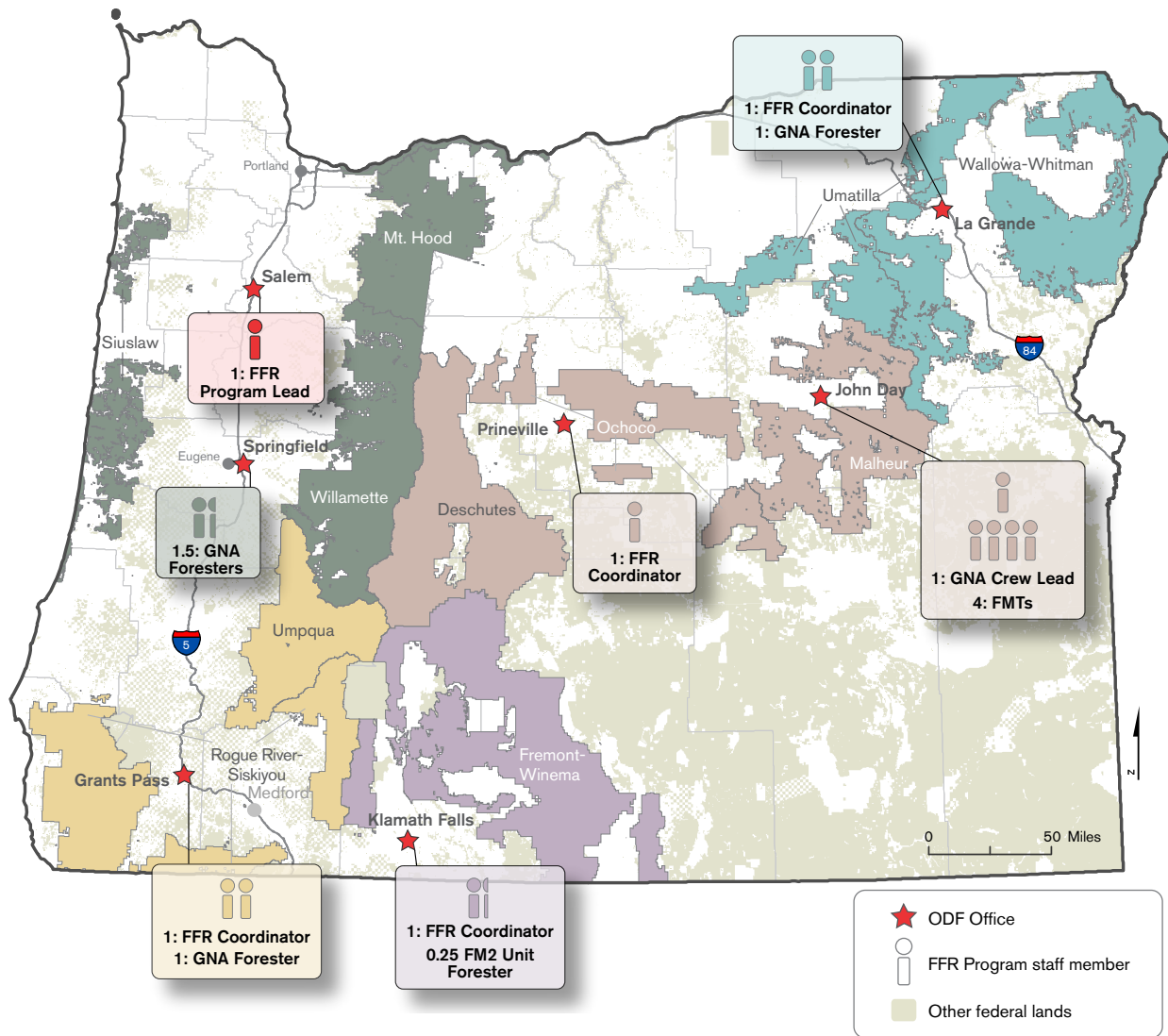


Table 8 Statewide economic activity from staff investments during the 2019–2021 biennium

Two-year biennium allocation	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$1,217,072	4.4	7.9	\$619,357	\$960,454

Figure 11 Map of national forests in ODF Districts and FFR Program staff allocations at ODF offices during the 2019–2021 biennium



and TASS grants. District coordinators are assigned to specific ODF administrative unit(s) and work with their local forests (Figure 11). These positions also supported GNA projects and managed restoration-related contracts that used Oregon Legislative Emergency Board funding (see SFIP summary for list of projects).

Stakeholder perspectives

Stakeholders overall voiced the importance of having FFR District Coordinators that were invested in the program and that helped build strong relationships between agencies. A number of stakeholders were concerned about staff turnover. Both state

and federal employees emphasized that turnover among ODF FFR Program staff as well as in federal agencies slowed progress in forest restoration. In some cases, stakeholders felt that the FFR Program staff was lacking capacity and overextended, specifically with regard to the amount of GNA work available to be done. One suggestion from an interviewee was that ODF should “capitalize on the program growth” that it is currently experiencing with GNA by creating and filling more permanent staff positions. However, another stakeholder suggested that if the program did expand, they would need to continue to hire “relationship builders” into FFR coordinator positions.

Project management

FFR Program project management funding provides administrative support, training opportunities, stakeholder input process, and overall program monitoring and evaluation.

Investments and economic activity

FFR Program expenditures for project management during the 2019–2021 biennium totaled \$368,458 (Figure 12). This investment supported an average of 2.6 jobs and \$0.4 million in gross regional product to the State’s economy (Table 9). The job effects of project management are nearly equally split between direct and secondary effects.

On-the-ground accomplishments

Outcomes resulting from project management included:

- The FFR Program’s contribution to the ODF’s administrative pro-rate. This funds procurement, human resources, public affairs, and other necessary agency administrative services.
- Monitoring conducted by the Ecosystem Workforce Program at the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, and USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station.¹⁴
- Legal services from the Oregon Department of Justice.
- Communications and media support from ODF staff.

Figure 12 Project management funds received by each service provider during the 2019–2021 biennium

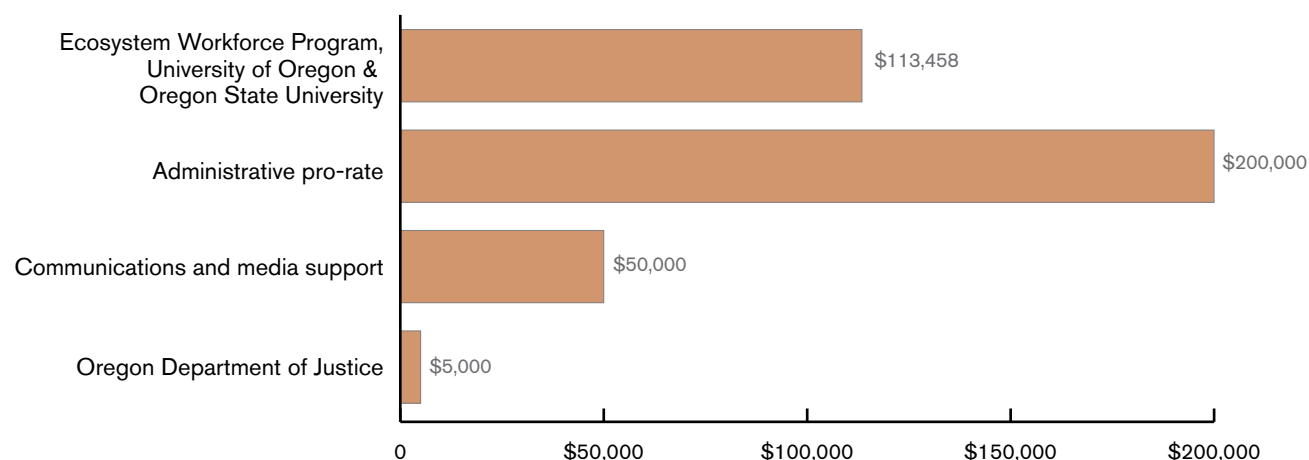


Table 9 Statewide economic activity from project management investments during the 2019–2021 biennium

Two-year biennium allocation	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$368,458	1.3	2.6	\$320,440	\$399,846

¹⁴ Ecosystem Workforce Program. Webpage: Federal Forest Restoration Program Monitoring for the Oregon Department of Forestry. http://ewp.uoregon.edu/ODF_FFRP_Monitoring.



Stakeholder perspectives

Interviews mostly expressed concerns and potential solutions with regard to project management efforts. Some interviewees thought that there was a need to create permanent leadership positions to have more stability in staffing and direction for the program. A few interviewees suggested that the FFR Program could clarify its objectives and have more concrete guidelines on what it accomplishes.

For example, one interviewee suggested that the program could have a “business plan.” Stakeholders also felt that there could be better alignment between ODF and federal guidelines and requirements for project development and implementation. Related to this issue, some stakeholders highlighted a long-standing challenge of the ODF biennia start-end dates not aligning well with the federal fiscal year.



Additive value of the Federal Forest Restoration Program

Perceived “tangible” impacts

Interviewees expressed a range of tangible impacts from the FFR Program:

Outcome 1: Increase in the marketability of restoration timber sales on federal forests as well as capacity to administer sales. Nearly half of all interviewees emphasized that with the increasing intersection of the FFR Program and GNA projects, FFR staff and crew had noticeably amplified the capacity of the Forest Service to offer timber sales as well as make them more economically desirable for contractors.

Outcome 2. Perceived increases in NEPA-ready acres. Consistent with the previous monitoring

report, some interviewees expressed that FFR Program facilitation of NEPA surveys and contract CEs had increased the pace and scale of restoration projects by alleviating NEPA backlogs and bottlenecks that several national forests in Oregon faced. Several interviewees specifically noted that the FFR Program’s administration of contract heritage surveys had aided in the completion of NEPA compliance backlogs which were delaying restoration projects that were otherwise ready to begin.

Outcome 3. Providing year-round, forestry-related employment opportunities in the public and private sectors. Three interviewees also observed that in addition to providing year-round work for FFR Program crew, the program’s acceleration of GNA timber sales was helping to keep timber contractors in business in some ODF Districts by increasing timber supply and volume in the “project pipeline.” These interviewees noted that this has provided important economic stability for the timber-related sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Perceived “intangible” impacts

“The social part [of the FFR Program] is bigger than financial”

As described in the previous monitoring report, strengthened interagency cooperation continues to be the most commonly reported impact of the FFR Program by interviewees. Nearly all interviewees who were directly involved with on-the-ground restoration projects reported that the main accomplishment of the FFR Program was its success in building strong relationships and trust between agencies and working across boundaries, described in more detail below.

Outcome 1. Overcoming bureaucratic silos. Several interviewees discussed how conventional management strategies can create “bureaucratic silos” where individuals fail to perceive opportunities to collaborate or where they operate on assumptions that collaboration is not possible due to bureaucratic barriers. They suggested that the FFR Program has illuminated where real opportunities for collaboration exist.

Outcome 2. New cross-boundary work. Some interviewees discussed how the relationships built by the FFR Program had opened up new avenues for cross-boundary work. For example, one interviewee stated that those relationships were responsible for a national forest obtaining a new CFLRP award.

Perceived challenges facing the FFR Program

Similar to the last round of monitoring, several interviewees noted an overall concern that an urgent and massive need for restoration on federal forests was too great for the FFR Program. Four interviewees also expressed doubt that the FFR Program was sufficiently scalable, that is, able to grow large enough to meet the management needs of federal forests. Eight interviewees were more optimistic, suggesting that the FFR Program could be sufficiently scaled-up to meet long-term restoration needs.

The increasing integration of GNA projects into the FFR Program's operations during 2019–2021 has also brought a new set of challenges. One of the most commonly mentioned challenges related to GNA concerned the idea that the FFR Program could or should become self-sustaining through the use of timber sale receipts. While the state did use receipts from GNA timber sales to accomplish restoration on federal lands, interviewees pointed out that lower-value timber in some locations (mostly on the east side of the Cascade divide) could not provide consistent revenue to fund restoration projects on those forests, where restoration needs are highest. As a consequence, the idea of a self-sustaining program is not realistic for national forests with lower-value timber or limited markets. One potential solution that was suggested was to provide flexibility for transferring funding across federal management units, i.e., from units with higher-value timber to units with lower-value timber.





Conclusion

This report provides an update to previous monitoring of the Oregon Department of Forestry's FFR Program for the 2019–2021 biennium. It presents a summary of economic and on-the-ground accomplishments of Oregon's investments in restoration on federally managed forests. Qualitative and quantitative assessment of this program demonstrate both tangible and intangible impacts that the FFR Program is having on landscape-scale restoration within the state.

The State allocated a total of \$3.3 million in the FFR Program during the 2019–2021 biennium and \$1,084,339 in additional funding from the Oregon Legislative Emergency Board. Through the use of GNA agreements, the FFR Program has also utilized \$3.5 million of federal funds to accomplish its national forest restoration work. Stakeholders suggested that the program continues to provide much needed efficiencies and capacity for completing NEPA planning processes that are required for completing restoration work on federal forestlands. They further suggested that FFR Program crews are

an important resource, providing services such as prescribed fire and other restoration work during critical time periods when federal agencies typically lack seasonal work crews. Lastly, they described how the FFR Program provides key support and funding for stakeholder collaborative groups who help to build necessary consensus and agreement around scientific, social, and practical aspects of implementing restoration on federal forests.

Although the FFR Program is not filling all federal agency capacity gaps for restoration management on federal lands (a task too large for a single program), it continues to build the administrative infrastructure and inter-agency cooperative relationships that are necessary for accomplishing this work. Most stakeholders were enthusiastic about the Program despite acknowledging the massive challenges that forest restoration holds for public lands management. The FFR Program offers a much-needed infrastructure to efficiently use both state and federal funding to meet the State's restoration priorities for federal lands.

Appendix

ODF FFRP Interview Script

Thanks for talking with me today. The purpose of this conversation is to ask you to reflect on the FFRP as an investment strategy. I'm going to break the conversation up into a few topics. First, I'd like to ask about your involvement with FFRP. Then, I'd like to talk about your opinions about what's working well about the FFRP. Then, I'll ask you about anything that you think isn't working well and ideas for how to improve it. Finally, I want to reflect on a few bigger-picture questions about the program.

So, let's start by talking about your background.

1. How long have you personally been involved with the Federal Forest Restoration Program?
2. Do you find it useful to make a distinction between FFR and GNA or do those terms more or less signify the same thing?

Now I want to talk a little bit about what you think is working well with the FFR Program.

3. How has the FFRP been successful?
 - a) What elements of the FFRP do you think are working well (Please list)? Is it meeting the goal of helping increase the pace, scale, and/or quality of restoration (and how?)
 - b) What do you see as the program's main successes or achievements (Rank list)?
 - c) Have you seen any recent changes (in last 2 years) in implemented that have improved the FFRP over time?
 - i. If so, what were they and how did they improve the program?
4. Have things been accomplished because of the FFRP that otherwise wouldn't have been accomplished? (Yes/No)
 - a) Please list.

Now I'd like to ask about what, if anything, you think isn't working well about the program.

5. Are there any changes you think could be made to improve the FFRP (Yes/NO)?
 - a) What specific problems have you observed?
 - i. top 2-3 key challenges?
 - b) Do you have any suggestions for solutions to those problems?
 - c) Do you have any suggested changes for ODF directly?
6. Are there specific projects you work on that are being supported in multiple ways by the FFRP? (for example, a project supported by ODF crews AND using GNA, or using information generated by a TASS project for a restoration project in the field?)

Now, I'd like to shift to thinking about federal forest management in general.

7. Do you think the approach used in the FFRP is scalable? Meaning, do you think that a similar program would be effective in larger regions, or across other contexts or locations? Why or why not?
 - a) Prompt: could other states adopt something like this? (if prompt is needed)
8. Do you think that FFRP could be a long-term solution for managing federal forests in Oregon? Why or why not?
 - a) Prompt: Is the current scale of funding appropriate?
9. Thinking beyond FFRP, what other existing mechanisms, funding streams, authorities, etc. or changes do you think are needed to achieve large scale forest restoration?
10. Is there anything else that we didn't talk about that you think this is relevant to this topic?
11. Is there anyone else you recommend I talk to about FFRP?
12. Can I contact you again if we have other questions or if I need to clarify any details of our conversation?

ADD in supplemental questions for USFS/BLM staff only

13. Has working with ODF/FFRP changed the way that you operate? (Yes/NO)
 - a) What does it make possible that is different than you would do otherwise?
 - b) Is it helping increase the pace, scale, and/or quality of restoration, and if so, how?
 - c) What challenges or tradeoffs are incurred from working with them?
 - d) How does this affect others on the forest, beyond you? How many and what kinds of people?
14. Were there particular projects that would not have been possible without FFRP?

ADD in supplemental questions for FFR staff only

15. Who are your primary contacts at BLM/USFS that you work with specifically on FFR-related projects?
16. Can you recall the names of the projects received Crew \$ support since 2019?
 - a) What happened with crew funds or projects that were worked on? Do you have any documentation of this work you could share with us? (tracking, project reporting etc)
17. Please list the names of timber sales & restoration projects in your region that were supported by FFRP in the last 2 years. Or confirm the info on this spreadsheet (sent to them ahead of the interview for their area).

