



*2006
Year in Review*

Deschutes
National Forest

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www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon

Welcome

Welcome to the Deschutes National Forest. This report displays progress and accomplishments in our forest programs of vegetation management, recreation, fire, wildlife management and conservation education. In all our operations, managing for resilient healthy ecosystems is a responsibility employees and our partners take seriously. We are pleased to enjoy active participation with a range of partners and volunteers, making it possible to achieve all that we do. It is through these critical connections with local forest communities that both the land and the people can thrive. We encourage you to stay involved in Forest management activities and enjoy the successes. This is your National Forest. For more information, please contact us at (541) 383-5300.

Leslie Weldon
Forest Supervisor
Deschutes National Forest

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Glaze - Forest Restoration Project

This collaborative project was jointly initiated by a conservation group and a forest products industry group because they agreed that active management was needed to restore the health, resiliency, and beauty of eastside forests. Tim Lillebo of Oregon Wild and Cal Mukumoto of Warm Springs Forest Industries have forged a partnership with the Forest Service focusing on building trust and bringing people with diverse views together to benefit the ecosystem, community and economy. Other conservation group partners have donated hundreds of hours assisting with bird and plant surveys.



As part of the partnership between the DES NF and the Nature Conservancy, Fire Ecologist Amy Waltz studies a fire scar on an old growth pine to learn more about the fire history.

The scenic Glaze Old Growth Area contains old growth ponderosa pine, aspen groves, meadows, and second growth pine forests that have been altered by years of fire suppression and past management. We are currently analyzing options for manage-

ment in the Glaze Old Growth Area, including reducing fuels by thinning trees, mowing brush, and using prescribed fire in ponderosa pine forests, aspen groves and meadows. These treatments reduce fire hazard and restore natural ecological functions thus reducing fire risk to the Black Butte Ranch development to the west and other subdivisions to the east. The by-products of the work would be small saw logs and biomass fuel that can be used to create alternative energy.



The Pygmy owl benefits from ecosystem restoration and helps keep the population of gophers in balance. An avid birder enjoys the abundance of birding opportunities in a healthy habitat.

Partnerships

Tumalo Creek Restoration Project of 2004-2006

People working together on this project restored a 2.8 mile section of Tumalo Creek, a major tributary to the Deschutes River. The creek flows through a recreation area adjacent to Bend where hikers, cyclists and skiers enjoy regular trail use. The project increased habitat for the sensitive species redband trout, improved channel and streambank stability, decreased erosion, restored riparian vegetation and wetlands, and improved community and high school student awareness of watershed management and restoration.

This project was a recovery effort after the Bridge Creek Fire. The fire started in July 1979 in the City of Bend Municipal Watershed. Nearly 4300 acres of forest were burned as the fire moved down the drainage.

Over time, the streambanks eroded and the channel became unstable. Fish and wildlife habitat was lost as the stream became wider and shallower. Wetlands and riparian zones were lost or at risk of degradation. Early attempts at improving fish habitat and streambank stability were carried out by the Forest Service and partners in the early 1990's and again in 2001. Over time, it became apparent that a larger scale, better designed restoration project was needed.

The entire reach of Tumalo Creek from the mouth of Bridge Creek to Skyliner Bridge was targeted for restoration. Using advanced techniques in stream restoration, the channel was re-designed to a stable sinuosity, width, depth, and slope. Numerous log jams and several boulder structures were constructed to create habitat and streambank stability. Nearly 70,000 riparian shrubs and trees were planted. Off-channel ponds and side channels were created. The restoration work was accomplished over three phases during the summers and falls of 2004-2006.

This outstanding project was accomplished in cooperation with the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council, National Forest Foundation, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, the City of Bend, the Deschutes River Mitigation and Enhancement Program, and students at Summit High School. Thank you, Partners!



Students help plant seventy thousand seedlings to restore natural vegetation and improve riparian stability.



More than 2,100 trees were used to create log jams and pool habitat which in turn improved wildlife and fish habitat

Biomass

In January of 2006, the Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region 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 located 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 and are in mass production and used in thousands of buildings in Europe.



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

Title II Restoration Projects

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination act of 2000 (SRS) (PL 106-393) was enacted to provide transitional assistance to rural counties affected by the decline in revenue from timber harvests in federal lands.

In 2006, over \$1.2 million was allocated to projects recommended by the Deschutes – Ochoco Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) for funding through Title II dollars of the Act.

Projects included trail bridge replacement, forest thinning, fuel reduction, noxious weed treatments, water monitoring, and stream restoration. Accomplishments for 2006 that were directly funded by Title II funds include those of the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC). The OYCC employed 105 local young adults (19 crews) who accomplished substantial forest work for the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and the Crooked River National Grassland.

Highlights of their accomplishments include:

- ✿ Controlled/eliminated 400 acres of noxious weeds (380+ garbage bags)
- ✿ Thinned 550 acres of juniper and maintained 75 water guzzlers
- ✿ Constructed big game exclosures around 25 acres of riparian areas
- ✿ Hand piled 200 acres of hazard fuel
- ✿ Maintained 50 miles of fence primarily around riparian areas
- ✿ Cleared and maintained more than 100 miles of recreational trails
- ✿ Replaced 20 trail head signs
- ✿ Obliterated roads & user made trails to manage unauthorized ATV use
- ✿ Planted native grass plugs in upland and riparian areas
- ✿ Pruned more than 1,000 pine trees

Partnerships

Deschutes Conservation Camp

In 2006, Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) minimum security inmate work crews began their eighth year of working on the Deschutes National Forest to restore forest health and reduce fire hazards in Central Oregon.

Over 170 inmates were assigned to the award-winning Deschutes Conservation Camp and worked six days a week for 15 weeks. With a fall and summer camp, the inmate crews accomplished approximately 6200 acres of hazardous fuels treatments on the Forest.

The inmates gained skills that can lead to future employment in the landscaping, nursery, and forestry fields. They also received firefighting training, which allows them to participate in fire crews during their time in prison and helps them to find employment following their release.

“This partnership is a great example of the Department of Corrections Oregon Accountability Model at work,” said Greg Atkins, DOC Inmate Work Programs Supervisor. “It is gratifying to watch the growth of the inmates while they participate in such a worthwhile program.”

The Oregon Accountability Model is both a philosophy and an action plan embraced by the DOC to hold inmates accountable for their actions and learn new skills, thus reducing the risk that they will continue with criminal behavior, both while incarcerated and following release.

Thank you, Volunteers!

880 Volunteers contributed nearly 30,000 thousand hours of their valuable time “giving back” to natural resource projects, in many cases enhancing the visitor experiences. Volunteers shared their passion and skills maintaining trails, assisting with environmental educational projects, hazardous fuel reduction, serving as stewards for archaeological sites, and staffing historic Elk Lake Guard Station. Some of our volunteers even dedicated their strong muscles and positive attitude to garbage pickup and noxious weed eradication.

Heart of Oregon Corps - Central Oregon Conservation Youth Corps

The summer youth program on the Deschutes National Forest continued its tradition of success in 2006. Nine crews worked on the forest (4 Bend Fort Rock, 2 Sisters and 3 Crescent) and accomplished much needed natural resources work across the Forest. They also participated in three days of field science education provided by Wolfree, a non-profit conservation education organization.

Projects specific to the Deschutes National Forest included:

☼ **Recreation** - maintained 40 miles of trail, repaired and replaced 20 signs, cleaned up dispersed campsites, cleaned out campfire rings, repaired docks, obliterated user built trails, repaired picnic tables and participated in restoration projects at disperse camping sites along rivers.

☼ **Noxious weeds** - pulled 150 acres and bagged 3,200 gallons of noxious weeds – primarily spotted knapweed and hounds tongue.

☼ **Fire** - Removed hazardous fuel and picked up 80 bags of pine needles around campgrounds and along heavily traveled roads where fire danger was very high.

☼ **Wildlife, Fisheries, Botany & Reforestation** - constructed miles of big game exclosures in the B&B fire area to protect riparian areas that had been replanted. Participated in rehabilitation projects along Whychus creek. Planted more than 600 plugs of native grasses in riparian areas. Pruned and thinned more than 1,000 trees in plantations and wildlife exclosures.

☼ **Range** - worked on range management projects, constructing more than 14,000 feet of fence and replaced hundreds upon hundreds of fencing stays.



Conservation Education & Recreation

Conservation Education

Connecting people to the land has always been an important part of the Forest Service. Conservation education helps people to learn about natural and cultural resources and the connections of these resources to their lives. We are very excited about what is offered with partners to help connect people to the land. Some of those accomplishments include:

- ❁ Wildlife Viewing Website – please visit at www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/
- ❁ Numerous community events such as the International Migratory Bird Day Celebration, Winterfest, Fish Day, Kokanee Karnival, National Fishing Day
- ❁ Sharing with local school teachers to help them discover the natural world through events such as Fish Day in Crescent, aquatic education, and working with Wolftree.
- ❁ An Eagle Cam website with the Oregon Zoo provided folks an opportunity to see eagles up close on the Deschutes National Forest.



Fun in the Sun! – Recreating on the Deschutes

Nearly three million people visit the Deschutes National Forest each year, seeking an opportunity to spend the day in the Forest recreating and making memories. Spring, summer, and fall, visitors are hiking, mountain biking, trail riding, lake-side camping, fishing, hunting and rock hounding. In the winter they are skiing, snow shoeing, and snowmobiling.

In an effort to meet the growing and changing demands of our visitors and provide healthy, safe, and well-maintained recreation opportunities, management personnel of the Deschutes National Forest have formulated the Recreation Site Facility Master Plan (RSFMP). RS-FMP is an analysis tool that guides maintenance of 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 by 2007.

RSFMP guides us through a thorough evaluation of every developed recreation site, such as campgrounds, picnic areas, trailheads and boat launches. This analysis considers alignment with the recreation 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 available resources.

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Fun in the Sun! - Recreating on the Deschutes (Continued)

“*Fun in the Sun*” describes the Deschutes National Forest recreation niche. It is the hub of incredible opportunities in diverse settings within close proximity to one another, facilitating four season day-use recreation opportunities.

The Deschutes National Forest has completed the staff work and has proposed the 5-year Recreation Site Facility Master Plan (RSFMP) for the 212 developed recreation sites on the Forest. The proposed information is available on our website. We have completed a public meeting, shared goals, objectives, and proposed management options to meet the changing needs and demands of the public. We have received valuable feedback from the public which we are currently evaluating. To gather additional public input on recreation values we will also be participating in a pilot “Landscape Values Mapping” study.

For more information, the plan summary and data table of the 212 sites is available on the Forest website at www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon. We will also post information on the pilot study “Landscape Values Mapping” as it becomes available.

Recreation fees update

Recreation fees funded approximately 85% of the Lava Lands Visitor Center and Lava River Cave operations as well as many educational programs across the Forest. More than fifty miles of trails were maintained and fences and picnic tables were repaired. Funds were also used to support youth programs such as Youth Conservation Corps and Americorps.



Paulina Lake is a popular recreation spot in the summer.

Restoring Forest Health

Protecting Communities, Reducing the Risk of Severe Wildfire, the Spread of Disease and Insect infestations

The long-term focus of forest restoration is to ensure the healthy recovery of ecological function, wildlife habitat and biological diversity. Building resiliency into the landscape helps to prevent catastrophic wildfires, restore ecosystems when the fires do occur, and provide economic benefits in communities. Together we can limit the spread of noxious weeds and invasive species, explore new frontiers like biomass utilization, and tend the health of this national forest for its other diverse biological and recreational uses today and into the future.

Over the past four years, procedures and processes governing preparation of projects to reduce hazardous fuel and restore healthy ecological conditions on Federal land have undergone many changes. These changes are from the Healthy Forest Initiative (HFI), launched in 2002, and from the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003. The HFRA addresses reduction of hazardous fuels and restoration of healthy forest and rangeland conditions.

The Deschutes National Forest has been working with communities in the urban interface for many years. Once the HFI authorities were in place, the Forest Service partnered with the BLM and expedited a fuels reduction project in the La Pine basin on 1,000 acres. The “Thaw” project was one of the first in the nation to use the authority. Residents saw activity around their homes within the first year of collaboration. Many residents commented they had never seen the Federal agencies move so quickly. The “Crossings” project, also in the La Pine basin near Newberry Estates, was also implemented

As soon as communities in Central Oregon had their Community Wildland Protection Plan (CWPP) in place, the Federal agencies began taking suggestions from homeowners to implement streamlined HFRA projects. The first was the East Tumbull Project west of Bend. Other fuels reduction projects that are in planning stages are Sisters Area Fuels Reduction Project (SAFR) near the community of Sisters, as well as projects in South Bend and Sunriver.



Rows of young trees help with reforestation in fire areas.

Forest Restoration and Forest Products

Focusing on improving forest health, we had the largest reforestation program in 2006 that the Deschutes National Forest has had in ten years. We reforested approximately 13,000 acres with native trees. In addition, we improved forest health on more than 7,000 acres primarily through thinning and pruning. Thinning and pruning reduces the density of trees and lessens the spread of insects and disease or wildfire. It also increases availability of sunlight and nutrients to the forest.

The forest products program focuses on improving forest health and reducing fire risk through commercial timber harvest, Christmas tree harvest, firewood removal, biomass, and other forest products removal projects. We continue to provide commercial wood material from salvage log decks obtained from the B & B Fire Complex and Davis Fire areas. New challenges include designing and implementing several stewardship contracts and enhancing our biomass program.

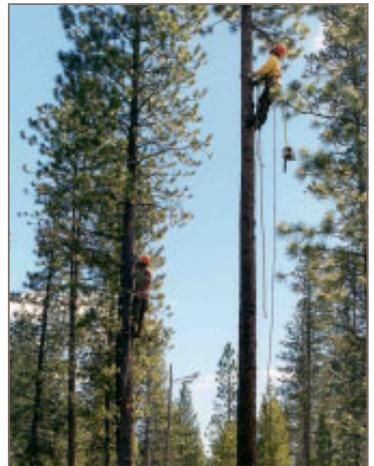
The Deschutes National Forest produced more than 65 million board feet of timber, issued 5,559 Christmas tree permits and sold 7,652 cords of firewood - all of which contributed wood products and jobs locally and in other areas of the Pacific Northwest.



Young trees are planted in the Sugar Pine stock study area.



Active forest management utilizes many tools to restore forest health. Timber production is a by product of forest restoration harvests.



Pruners remove mistletoe from trees so it doesn't spread. Mistletoe stunts tree growth thus slowing their development to become large, old growth trees.



Dropping retardant on fires cools hot spots, and slows fire activity, allowing firefighters on the ground to gain control and put the fire out. In 2006, more than 1.148 million gallons of retardant were delivered—the highest amount in 10 years.



"Buddy checks" help ensure Smokejumper safety. This summer they successfully completed 419 jumps on 90 fires.

Redmond Air Center

The Redmond Air Center (RAC) is a hub for Forest Service fire suppression, fire management and aviation activities for the Pacific Northwest Region in Oregon and Washington. RAC is home to the Pacific Northwest Interagency Wildland Fire Training Center. Also stationed at the RAC are the Redmond Smokejumper Base, an interagency hotshot crew, air tankers, pilots, cache, mobilization center and an information services office for the Deschutes National Forest.

Partners are crucial to the success of the RAC. A close working relationship exists with the City of Redmond and the Redmond Airport as well as cooperation with other wildland fire protection organizations in Oregon and Washington, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Community Fire Plans

District and Forest staff worked closely with Oregon Department of Forestry, counties, and citizen groups preparing Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP). With the exception of Elk Lake, CWPPs are completed for the entire wildland urban interface with the Deschutes National Forest. Both project planning and/or fuels treatment implementation are underway in the Sisters, Crescent, Greater La Pine, Upper Deschutes River, Sunriver, and Bend CWPP areas.



The Mobilization Center was activated for 82 days, the longest in our history. During this time 111, 20-person crews; 181 pieces of equipment; and 95 members of Incident Management Teams were accommodated. Pictured here is the Interagency Hotshot Crew.

Wildfire Management

Wildfires are a part of life in Central Oregon. Safe, effective initial attack resulted in the suppression of 181 fires by Central Oregon Fire Management Services on the Deschutes National Forest. More than 2,503 people assisted in firefighting efforts on four large wildfires that burned a total of 10,866 acres, primarily in grass and timber. Highly effective interagency coordination contributed to successful suppression of these complex urban interface wildfires. The fires had exceptional safety records with few minor injuries and accidents, and no major injuries. The cost of fighting large wildfires continues to be a national concern. The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are actively identifying ways to reduce costs while maintaining fire fighter safety.

After the Fire... Post-fire recovery is thematic to land stewardship in the Deschutes National Forest. Working with our communities in Central Oregon, we learn and adapt to changed forest conditions in fire-affected landscapes. Short-term recovery efforts focus on stabilizing soil, protecting water quality and other resources, and ensuring public safety in and around wildfire areas. When the fire is out and all the firefighters have gone home, rehabilitation efforts begin to help the area recover from catastrophic wildfire. Over 7000 acres were planted with trees in the 2003 Davis and B&B fire areas. Ninety five percent of the planned timber salvage was completed for the B&B fire area on the Sisters Ranger District. A 250 acre salvage project will occur on the 2006 Black Crater fire area also on Sisters Ranger District



The Redmond Cache provides support for firefighting activities such as this helitanker. The Cache moved \$28 million of the total \$47 million regional cache inventory, exceeding the 10 year average.

2006 Large Fires on the Deschutes National Forest - acres, staff, and cost

NAME	ACRES	PERSONNEL	ESTIMATED COST
Black Crater	5,150*	1,054	9,300,000
Elk Lake	81	303	55,780
Lake George	5,550	1,056	18,208,470
Puzzle	85	90	92,990
DES totals	10,866	2,503	27,657,240
COFMS totals**	35,454	4,247	42,800,995

*Total acreage was 9,400, 4,250 was in private ownership

**Central Oregon Fire Management Service (COFMS) provides fire protection for Deschutes & Ochoco National Forests and Prineville District BLM. More than 400 fires were suppressed (only 16 grew into large fires). About 1/2 were human caused.

2006 Matsutake Mushroom Season

Although the height of mushroom season lasts just a few weeks, activity occurs throughout the year. Representatives from the Alliance of Forest Workers provide translators (Cambodian, Lao, and Spanish) and written translations, educational assistance to harvesters, and advocacy for harvester concerns. With assistance from the Alliance, we organized a camp meeting in Chemult, Oregon last summer to hear harvesters' concerns.

With the help of the interpreters, information about the permit process was shared with harvesters. Education was offered on safety, best mushroom harvest practices, maps, signing, and fire restrictions. Each year the Forest Service provides a camping area near a small community that is managed by a concessionaire who provides water, restrooms and trash cans for a camping fee. Informational signing in camp includes Cambodian and Lao versions. Most mushroom buyers in central Oregon locate near the harvesters' camp.

August 2006 was hot with scattered thunder showers and cool nights – perfect conditions for an early mushroom season. 126 commercial mushroom collecting permits were issued on opening day in early September. First snowfall was on October 24th. Three hundred commercial permits were sold for a total \$25,357.

Wildlife



The Deschutes National Forest wildlife program is about protection and enhancement of habitat for wildlife. A habitat provides food, shelter, water and space. These habitats span from the crest of the Cascade Mountains to the desert floor, and provide homes for 373 species. This includes amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles. This year more than 8,625 habitat acres (includes 2,056 partner acres*) for Non Threatened and Endangered Species were enhanced while 320 acres (includes 254 partner acres*) for Threatened and Endangered Species were enhanced. *Continued next page...*

**Partner acres are acres contributed by partners. Partners include, but are not limited to: National Wild Turkey Foundation, Rocky Mt. Elk Foundation, Oregon Hunters Association, Mule Deer Foundation, Wal-Mart, Interfor, Cascade Timberland, and Youth Conservation Corps. Partners provided both funding and in-kind services that allowed an increase in acres accomplished by 27%.*

The great gray owl: facing page: northern river otter, three-toed woodpecker, male sage grouse, and Cascades frog are only a few of the 373 species found here.

Wildlife (Continued)

Projects Included:

☼ **Meadow Enhancement** - Meadow habitat is uncommon on the landscape and due to fire suppression, conifers are encroaching. To preserve this habitat for those species that depend on them, we remove encroaching lodgepole pine and other conifers by piling and burning to enhance habitat. This provides the necessary habitat for a variety of wildlife - nesting sites for sandhill cranes, nutritious forage for calving elk, and open hunting areas for species like the great gray owl.

☼ **Aspen Restoration** - Approximately 80% of the aspen in the West has been lost and we are trying to restore existing stands by removing encroaching conifers to reduce competition and to allow open growing space for expansion of stands. Aspen habitat provides added diversity for species like the red-naped sapsucker, other cavity excavators, songbirds, upland game birds (ruffed grouse and quail) and big game.

☼ **Guzzler Replacement** - Several old guzzlers originally developed as a livestock water source were in disrepair and no longer holding water. Many are located in dry regions of the forest and native wildlife species came to depend on these. They were repaired or replaced and now hold water. Species dependent on these include big game such as deer, bear and elk, upland game birds (turkey and quail), bats and various songbirds.

☼ **Road Closures** - Road densities are very high and many wildlife species, such as eagles, spotted owl, big game, northern goshawk and cougar benefit greatly when we reduce disturbance or habitat fragmentation caused by excessive roads. Closing roads in strategic areas allows us to provide secure areas away from motorized use and begin to reduce fragmentation in very important habitats such as calving areas for elk.

Research projects include bat surveys in the caves on the Bend Fort Rock Ranger District and Oregon Spotted Frog monitoring on the Crescent Ranger District.



Travel Management

Travel Management

A key emphasis for the past year has been developing an effective travel management system for the Deschutes National Forest. Well managed motorized access is an important part of the public's use of the National Forests & Grasslands. In 2005, the Forest Service published a new rule for providing motor vehicle access to National Forests and Grasslands. The Travel Management 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"

More than 300 people attended public workshops in Central Oregon in 2006. During the workshops we discussed the new rule, what it means, and how it will affect the public use of the National Forests and Grassland. We also asked the public for help mapping special places on the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and the Crooked River National Grassland, and for information that will help us understand what is most important to visitors about motorized access. Our emphasis in 2007 will be to coordinate with a diverse representation of local citizens to develop a proposal for an updated travel map for the Deschutes National Forest.

For More Information please contact:

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Bend Fort Rock Ranger District
541-383-4000

Crescent Ranger District
541-433-3200

Sisters Ranger District
541-549-7700

or visit our website at www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon



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