Forest Lands in Oregon and Washington

Forestland ownership, timber, and mills

Spring 2019

Part of year three of

The Forest Service and Communities:
The Relationships Between Land and People in the Pacific Northwest Region
This is a joint project between the US Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region and the University of Oregon Ecosystem Workforce Program. This project aims to help the Forest Service and its partners better understand and communicate the social and economic contexts in which the Forest Service operates and document Forest Service impacts in advancing sustainable natural resources-based economies. We designed this project as a collaborative learning process in which we would experiment with new ways to use, integrate, and represent data, with a focus on application of Forest Service data.

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All photos courtesy of US Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region (https://www.flickr.com/photos/forestservicenw/). This document is one of three products created for this third year of the project, which are collectively classified as EWP Working Paper #95; all may be downloaded at: http://ewp.uoregon.edu/publications/working, or at the project page at: http://ewp.uoregon.edu/USFScommunities.
The forested landscape of the Pacific Northwest is integral to the economy of the region. In this document, we show the prevalence of federal forestland across Washington and Oregon, and how both state’s forest industry and related economies have changed over the years, with a focus on current conditions.

The following pages illustrate connections between landscapes and people from both the Pacific Northwest region and state-specific perspectives. We first summarize the amount of national forest land at the county level alongside county population, giving important context for understanding usage of forestlands. We then report on the forestland ownership for each state and the volume of timber harvested by different land owners. We connect timber harvested to forest product mills and jobs for Washington and Oregon communities over time, using the same time series to illustrate both the total number and type of mills and where the mills are located. Finally, we report on the employment trends in the forest products industries from 2004-2014 along with a current summary of the forest-related jobs in both states. Returning to the regional perspective, we show haul distance to mills across both states. We then demonstrate the relative availability of milling infrastructure to ranger districts on national forests.

The information in this booklet is a synthesis of existing data that come from federal, state, and non-profit sources. As a consequence, although the information between Washington and Oregon is similar and tells parallel stories, the exact years and metrics reported vary, reflecting data source’s original methods and authors. Due to data availability, we selected three snapshots in time for each state as our frame of reference, beginning in 1998 to 2014 to show changes in recent decades. All data sources and methods are reported in the appendix of this document.
Washington and Oregon land ownership
National forest units and other land ownerships

- National forest
- Other federal land
- Reservation/Native American
- State
- Urban
- Private
- Water

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University of Oregon
Washington and Oregon population density, 2010 census
Counties, interstate highways, and population density

Density = People per square mile

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