OREGON FORESTRY
Managing healthy forests for all

SUSTAINABLE SALES
Timber harvests the right way

FOREST SHUFFLE
The history of O&C lands

The Bureau of Land Management Oregon & Washington
Managing Forests in Western Oregon

New plans will guide timber harvests, conservation and recreation

The 2016 Resource Management Plan for western Oregon is designed to provide balanced oversight for 2.5 million acres of forest. The plans outline how BLM lands will further the recovery of threatened and endangered species, provide for clean water and recreation, restore fire-adapted ecosystems and produce a sustained yield of timber products.

The majority of the 2.5 million acres are predominantly known as O&C lands, managed under the Oregon and California Railroad and Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant Lands Act of 1937. These lands lie in a checkerboard pattern through 18 western Oregon counties.

The O&C Act provides that 50 percent of receipts from the sale of timber on those lands be distributed among the counties. The receipts are distributed by a formula based on the acreage of O&C land in each county.

The RMP is designed to produce a sustained yield of timber while meeting the conservation needs of species listed under the Endangered Species Act, protecting clean water as required by the Clean Water Act and increasing fire resiliency in the dry forest landscape.

The full cycle of a sustainable timber program, from proper harvesting to replanting, supports local communities and working landscapes, and fulfills obligations under the O&C Act.

Timber Sales 101

How to produce sustainable Oregon timber

Timber sales allow for the sustainable harvest of timber for commercial purposes on public land. The availability of timber for harvest depends on the age and condition of the trees, land status, and public demand, among other land use considerations.

The Allowable Sale Quantity is defined as the amount of timber that a sustained-yield forest unit can produce continuously under the specific management protocols established for that area.

Only the trees harvested from those lands allocated for permanent timber production, which is known as the Harvest Land Base, count towards the ASQ.

The 2016 Resource Management Plan for western Oregon calculated an ASQ based on the acreage of the Harvest Land Base and the intensity of forest management practices applied, for example, selection harvest or regeneration harvest.

For the past decade, the BLM on average offered approximately 214 million board feet of timber per year. It takes approximately 16,000 board feet of lumber to frame a 2,000-square-foot home.

The BLM timber harvest program provides substantial economic contributions to rural Oregon economies. For every million board feet of timber harvested on BLM lands, about 13 local jobs are created or maintained and about $647,000 of employment income is introduced into local economies. In fiscal year 2016 BLM timber management produced over $600 million in total economic output in Oregon.
The history of the O&C lands goes back to 1866 when Congress established a land grant to promote rapid completion of a stretch of Oregon railroad that was to connect Portland to San Francisco. The Oregon and California Railroad company was deeded about 12,800 acres per mile of track, providing incentive to complete the railroad. The land grant required the company to sell 160 acre parcels at no more than $2.50 an acre to qualified settlers. In 1916, Congress took back the title on more than 2 million acres of these lands after the company failed to sell the land to settlers. Three years later, Congress revested 93,000 acres of Coos Bay Wagon Road grant lands due to similar circumstances.

The Oregon and California Railroad lands contain more than 2.4 million acres of forests with a diversity of plant and animal species, recreation areas, mining claims, grazing lands, cultural and historical resources, scenic areas, wild and scenic rivers, and wilderness. Most of the O&C lands are administered by the BLM.

After 1937, the O&C lands were classified by the U.S. Department of Interior as timberlands to be managed for permanent forest production. The timber was to be sold, cut and removed with the principle of sustained yield.

Fact: Oregon became a state in 1859.
Fact: The Civil War ended in 1865.

201.2 million board feet harvested in 2017
That much timber can build 12,675 homes
The BLM manages 2,439,000 acres of forest in the NW