

## OSAF Position Statement: Using Pesticides on Forest Lands

### Position

EMC0625

5 The Oregon Society of American Foresters supports the careful use of pesticides that are registered for forest use. Pesticides are an important tool in Integrated Pest Management to help meet forest management objectives by controlling harmful forest pests including unwanted, competing vegetation.

### Issue

6 Pesticides are herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides. They can be synthetic chemicals or natural compounds. Pesticides are used in forests to control plants, insects, diseases and rodents to enhance and protect the health and productivity of forests. The need to treat non-native, invasive plant species is of particular concern in Oregon. Pesticide use as a forest management tool is controversial. Some believe that pesticides should be further regulated or even prohibited. However, science and professional forestry experience has demonstrated that careful use of pesticides registered for forest use by the Environmental Protection Agency is a safe and effective method of controlling pests in forests.

### Background

7 Competing vegetation and epidemic levels of insects, diseases, and rodents are significant impediments to tree vigor and forest productivity. Competing vegetation and other pests can impair the establishment and growth of newly planted seedlings. This can result in unsuccessful reforestation that is in non-compliance with the Oregon Forest Practices Act and Rules (FPAR). Insects threaten forest health by weakening or killing trees, or by being carriers of diseases that attack trees. The control of invasive, noxious plants and insects is especially important in Oregon forests. Diseases slow tree growth or kill trees. Controlling forest pests help achieve a broad range of additional benefits such as enhancement of wildlife habitat and livestock forage. Pesticides can be a safe and effective tool to address all of these situations.

8 To ensure safe use, the federal government regulates pesticide use under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). FIFRA regulations require that all pesticides be registered by the EPA before sale and use. The Oregon Forest Practices Act further regulates the use of pesticides in forests in OAR Chapter 629, Division 620. For example, among numerous requirements stated in OAR 629-620-000 through OAR 629-620-800 are rules requiring untreated buffers next to water sources to prevent contamination of waters of the state.

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In 1988, regulations were approved that require the EPA to register the active ingredients in all pesticides originally registered before November 1, 1984. In Oregon, licensing and continuing education of applicators are required and administered by the Department of Agriculture. Monitoring and enforcement by the Department of Forestry requires compliance with all regulations for the proper use of forest pesticides. The amount of pesticides used on forest lands is very small compared to urban and residential, agricultural, and right-of-way use. Newer, safer and more effective pesticides and application methods are continually being developed. Pesticides in use today are more selective, targeting the undesirable species better than pesticides used in the past.

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With an Integrated Pest Management strategy, the most effective group of treatments is used to achieve the desired long-term results of successful pest control. Pesticides comprise one of many tools available for pest control in forests. Prescribed fire and mechanical, silvicultural, and biological methods, alone or in combination, are also effective pest management tools. Forest pesticides are an important, effective, and safe management tool for ensuring healthy and productive forests when used consistent with federal and Oregon FPAR requirements. Professional foresters make a significant contribution to controlling pests by developing appropriate pesticide prescriptions.

### **Selected References**

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Oregon Department of Forestry. January 2003 (or most current version). Division 620, Chemical and Other Petroleum Product Rules. In: Forest Practice Administrative Rules and Oregon Forest Practices Act. Available at local Oregon Dept. of Forestry offices and [online](#). This web site lists and describes many references related to the Act and Rules, including publications and databases about pesticide use and application.

12

Originally adopted by member referendum of the Oregon Society of American Foresters (OSAF) on December 6, 1995. Revised and adopted by the OSAF Executive Committee on May 7, 2003. This statement will expire May 7, 2008 unless after thorough review it is renewed by the OSAF.