

South Cascade District



2025 Annual Report

Welcome to the South Cascade District!

It is a privilege to offer opening remarks on behalf of the amazing workforce of men and women who call the South Cascade District home. As you work your way through the pages of this report, you will have the opportunity to review statistical highlights that reflect the outstanding efforts and high level of service demonstrated across the district each day.

This year's report is especially meaningful to me, as I was away from the district for all of 2024 while serving as Protection Division Chief. While it was an incredible experience that provided valuable insight into the inner workings of Salem, I missed the local relationships fostered at the district level. It was a true pleasure to return in 2025 to the dedicated individuals who serve this district, its communities, and its landowners. I would like to take a moment to thank Craig Pettinger, who served as Acting District Forester in my absence, and Jerrin Robbins, who stepped in as Acting Unit Forester in Sweet Home behind Craig. 2024 was not an easy year to take on those responsibilities, and I am grateful for their dedication to the district.

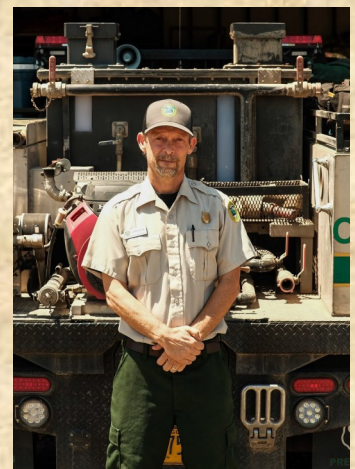
Looking back on 2025, it was a much-improved fire year compared to 2024. We entered the season nearly three weeks earlier than normal, and expectations pointed toward another record-breaking year, largely due to below-average winter rainfall. While the summer outlook initially appeared bleak, above-average rainfall in June helped moderate conditions and reduce overall severity. Another key factor was the absence of any heat dome events. In recent years, our district has experienced prolonged periods of extreme temperatures in June and July, which have significantly reduced fuel moisture and contributed to critical fire conditions. Avoiding those events in 2025 was a welcome relief.

In addition to more favorable weather, we were also well-prepared. Alongside our normal complement of personnel and equipment, we had an additional resource this year. For the first time, our district hosted a Type 1 severity helicopter based out of the Creswell Airport. While there was a learning curve in tracking and managing this resource daily, it proved to be a tremendous asset. It supported not only ODF fires but was also heavily utilized within nearby USFS jurisdictions. I am grateful to Area and Salem leadership, who oversee the statewide Severity Program, for trusting our district to host this resource and demonstrate its value in the Southern Willamette Valley.

Beyond fire response, our staff also remained actively engaged across a wide range of additional programs. Whether it's Good Neighbor Authority and federal forest restoration work, grant programs/fuels reduction, Stewardship Foresters assisting local landowners, or administrative staff supporting dispatch, financial tracking, and payment teams at both the local and statewide levels, success depends on a collective effort. I believe the men and women of this district take great pride in delivering service with attention to detail and accountability. In an environment where that standard can sometimes be difficult to maintain, I am proud of their professionalism and commitment to excellence.

In closing, I would like to extend a special thank you to the landowner members of the Eastern Lane and Linn Forest Protective Associations for their continued support and commitment to the district. I also want to recognize the families of our staff, whose patience and support make this work possible. We could not succeed without you—thank you.

Chris Cline
District Forester



PREVENTION



The South Cascade District Fire Prevention program saw great impact and continuous growth throughout 2025. Starting off the year South Cascade partnered with the Willamette National forest and had Smokey Bear visit over 30 Schools in our district to help teach roughly 2,500 students in the 1st and 4th grade about fire safety. Students in the 1st grade are taught what prevention means, the difference between good and bad fires, and the 5 rules of campfire safety. 4th grade has more of an emphasis on the fire triangle, how humans cause fires, and how we can prevent fires. The Smokey Bear prevention program always seeks constructive feedback from participating schools and receives lots of positive responses and requests to continue and expand the program.

As we move into summertime prevention takes a focus on community events to reach out to the public and continue to teach fire safety. In 2025 we attended events including but not limited to: Creswell 4th of July parade, Day Island Park children's celebration, Spirit of Bohemia Days, Movie Nights in Cottage Grove, annual Sportsman's Holiday parade, and more. While we weren't able to attend all our planned events due to local fires, we are proud of the effort and representation we had in our communities. We also work with the Future Natural Resource Leaders program at the local and state level.

Keep Oregon Green continues to be a fantastic partner for local prevention efforts. For the 4th year in a row, we were able to distribute tens of thousands of coffee sleeves to over 25 locally owned coffee shops that share Smokey Bears message stating "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires". Being able to partner with local businesses to help spread the message of prevention has been a fantastic way to improve our outreach.

It is difficult to measure prevention efforts into any specific statistic to reflect fire prevention, but it is easy to see how much effort goes into building relationships with our local community and educating them about fire safety / prevention. If we look at last year's numbers, our overall response was down nearly 30% from 2024 and total acreage burned was also down substantially from the previous years. Statistics also show a decrease in human caused starts from years past. This is due to the accumulated work of prevention efforts and our crews' ability to successfully perform their firefighting duties. Thanks to all who participated in another successful year of prevention.



Jackson Wojdylak, Smokey Bear and Ben Cline at the Creswell 4th of July parade.

PROTECTION

South Cascade Statistical Fires

Cause	2024 Fires	2025 Fires	2025 ODF Acres Burned
Lightning	21	17	1.59
Railroad	0	1	.01
Equipment Use	15	13	55.32
Recreation	4	5	.30
Smoking	0	1	.03
Debris Burning	22	21	7.08
Arson	0	5	.07
Miscellaneous	5	5	.55
Under Investigation	1	1	0
Totals	68	69	64.95

The South Cascade District's fire season began on June 9th, 2025, following a wet winter. A dry spring prompted an uptick in early June activity. Despite this, the weather moderated and initial attack remained light in the district into mid-August.

On July 23rd, the Sweet Home Unit responded to the Gap Road fire. This incident was started by a skid steer mowing just outside the district boundary; quickly growing to 28 acres and threatening ODF protected lands.

The wind driven Rice Road incident on August 25th challenged our firefighters, burning around multiple homes and structures in the Holley area. Level 3 evacuations were placed around Crescent Hill Road by the Linn County Sheriff's Office and were quickly lowered to Level 1. ODF, with assistance from Sweet Home Fire, Brownsville Fire and local landowners saved several homes and outbuildings.

Forward progress was stopped before fire could spread into the timber. The Rice Road incident was caught at 25 acres.

August brought multiple lightning events that lasted more than two weeks. These storms delivered strikes to all corners of the district and started multiple large fires on the Willamette and Umpqua National Forests including Emigrant, Foley Ridge, Sugarloaf, Incident 369 and 383. During this time, our district resources were very busy with initial attack spanning the duration of the lightning. The Eastern Lane Unit responded to 13 lightning fires over the course of 2 days and was successful at keeping each fire under 1 acre.

Fire growth on new starts was kept to a minimum due to early detection and aggressive initial attack from South Cascade District resources as well as the Forest Service and industry cooperators. This complete and coordinated system proved invaluable at catching new fire starts. A seasonal fall pattern led to fire season ending on October 11th, 2025, for a total of 124 days.



Rice Road Fire Sweet Home Unit



Adrian Kast, Sweet Home Unit, packing hose out of the Fools Canyon fire.

FOREST RESOURCES

2025 was a busy year for the Forest Resources Program, with the district receiving 1,607 new notifications. These notifications were reviewed and inspected for compliance with the forest practices' rules. In 2025 the forest resources program continued to implement the revised forest practices rules brought by the Private Forest Accord. Staff assisted landowners with technical assistance and education and helped the industrial fire program with inspections and waivers. The 2025 fire season was busy, with staff assisting the protection program both within the district and helping to support other districts.

In 2025 the Sweet Home Unit welcomed Kate Vanberg to the Forest Resources program as a Stewardship Forester. Jerrin Robbins also returned in February to his Stewardship Forester role after serving as the Interim Sweet Home Unit Forester. The Eastern Lane Unit welcomed Jesse Kennedy as a Stewardship Forester, filling the role previously held by Brian Dally.



Jerrin Robbins ODF Paul Olmstead ODFW

2025 NOAPS	Springfield	Sweet Home	Totals
New Notifications	851	756	1607
Continuations	155	200	355
Written Statements	0	2	2
Citations	0	2	2
IFPL Enforcements	3	2	5

OUT OF STATE ASSIGNMENTS



Oregon Department of Forestry engages in many state-to-state agreements, primarily for mutual aid in wildfire response. This gives our firefighters opportunities to strengthen their skillset while assisting in protecting communities.

California

David Batten
Nick Case
Cole Sampson
Adrian Kast
Connor Devore
Matt Luciani
Larry Jackson
Colton Anderson
Jason Wickizer
Brian Dally Jr.

North Carolina

Nick Case
Ben Cline
Larry Jackson



Canada

Chris Cline
Isaak Post
Nick Case
Jon Bridges



MID WILLAMETTE VALLEY INTERAGENCY FIRE SCHOOL

In June of 2025, the South Cascade Sweet Home Unit hosted the Mid-Willamette Valley Interagency Fire School. Throughout the week, courses of all levels, from beginner to more advanced, were offered to approximately 230 participants. The last day of training consisted of live fire and certifications for new and returning firefighters. Weyerhaeuser's helicopter 82W was utilized to certify firefighters for long line operations. Oregon's Governor Tina Kotek attended fire school during the live fire exercise to show support to our firefighters and bring awareness to the importance of public service. Thank you to Cascade Timber Consulting for providing the field site.



Our district's own Craig Pettinger and Chris Cline standing with Governor Tina Kotek.



Weyerhaeuser's helicopter 82W

FNRL CTE PROGRAM

2025 was the 9th year that ODF South Cascade Sweet Home Unit has partnered with the Future Natural Resource Leaders (FNRL). FNRL is a career technical student organization that provides leadership training dedicated to personal growth and career success in forestry and natural resources. Camp Tadmor, located outside of Sweet Home, hosted 136 students from 15 Oregon schools during a 3-day skills event. During this event the students gain valuable experience while learning skills and working with the timber industry. South Cascade ODF and Sweet Home Fire assisted students in learning hose lay, fire line construction, fire suppression, and first aid as well as many safety techniques. The students then compete to strengthen the skills they have learned and build crew cohesion. Programs such as this help the younger generation understand the opportunities and benefits of working in the timber industry as well as providing a recruitment opportunity.



Chad Calderwood



Justin Wolfe Sweet Home Fire, Zech Brown Sweet Home ODF

INDUSTRIAL FIRE

The Industrial Fire program in the South Cascade District consists of Stewardship Foresters and Forest Officers working under the direction of their respective Unit Foresters.

An important part of the Industrial Fire program is the summer industrial fire inspections. Both landowners and operators are encouraged to reach out to their local ODF office to receive a pre-season inspection of their equipment to ensure fire readiness once fire season arrives. During 2025, South Cascade performed 75 fire inspections.

In June of 2025, Cascade Timber Consulting held their annual fire truck inspection in Sweet Home. For over 26 years contractors have participated in this inspection event. With the help from The Oregon Department of Forestry, the trucks were inspected to make sure the equipment is ready and meets the required standards.



Local operators having their equipment inspected at the annual Cascade Timber Consulting inspection event.

IFPL	# Days
IFPL 1	39
IFPL 2	85
IFPL 3	0
IFPL 4	0
TOTAL	124

ADMINISTRATION & DISPATCH



Kara Wolfe

South Cascade's administrative staff consists of our District Business Manager Renae Meyer, Administrative Specialist Callie Middelstadt in the Eastern Lane unit, and Administrative Specialist Nakia Stafford in the Sweet Home unit. Dispatching positions were held by third year seasonal Elijah Woodward working in both Sweet Home and Eastern Lane. First year seasonals Justin Swan in Eastern Lane and Kara Wolfe in Sweet Home. South Cascade's administrative staff played a significant role in supporting dispatch as both units hired and trained new staff.

The 2025 fire season started off slowly for South Cascade which allowed our administrative staff to support our neighboring districts.

Callie Middelstadt

24 days as a payment team member on the Grizzly Complex - SWO

Nakia Stafford

14 days as an equipment/personnel time recorder on the Grizzly Complex - SWO

21 days as a payment team member on the Grizzly Complex - SWO

12 days as equipment time recorder on the Flat Fire – COD



Callie Middelstadt, Renae Meyer, Nakia Stafford

Multiple rounds of lighting proved to be a challenge for our administrative staff as well as providing many training opportunities for our first-year seasonal dispatchers. Overall, 2025 was a successful year, reflecting the strong performance and dedication of our dispatch and administrative team.



Elijah Woodward



Cougar Mountain Fire

SEVERITY

The South Cascade District hosted 4CK, a Type 1 Severity Helicopter, for the 2025 fire season. 4CK was stationed at the Creswell Airport in Creswell, Oregon. This was our first year hosting a severity aircraft and it proved to be a beneficial asset to many ODF districts and our neighboring agency partners.



4CK	2025
TOTAL FLIGHT HOURS	120.6
SOA FLIGHT HOURS	58
FEDERAL FLIGHT HOURS	60.5
SEVERITY FLIGHT HOURS	2.1
GALLONS DELIVERED	390,960

FUELS REDUCTION PROGRAMS

Fuels Reduction — Sweet Home

Fuels reduction in the Sweet Home unit is a joint venture between the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Linn County Juvenile Department. The purpose of the program is to identify, contact, and educate landowners about the benefit of adequate defensible space for homes and structures in the occurrence of wildfire. The Oregon Department of Forestry provides a Fire Planning Forester to contact landowners. We provide technical assistance, identify and plan work projects, and coordinate the completion of the projects. The Linn County Juvenile Department offers a juvenile work crew and leadership to manage the crew on site at eligible Linn County locations. Work projects around homes and structures include pruning, thinning, brush cutting, and chipping of vegetation and debris at the site. Juvenile crews complete up to nine sites and removing over 1,200 cubic yards of wildland fuels annually.

Fuels Reduction — Eastern Lane

The Eastern Lane Unit fuels reduction program leverages multiple funding sources including Western States Fire Manager and Community Assistance to implement fuels reduction activities on private lands throughout our local communities. Fuels reduction treatments consisted of defensible space treatments and larger, strategically located shaded fuel breaks. This was achieved through a combination of landowner cost shares and efforts provided by the Eastern Lane fuels crew. In total 52 projects were complete, treating over 150 acres. Additionally, the program provided educational material to nearly 1000 landowners via mailings and attended 6 public education and outreach events. The program received an overwhelming response from community members requesting guidance to better prepare for wildfire and inquiries related to the fuels reduction program resulting in the completion of over 120 educational site assessments.

BEFORE



AFTER



SMOKE MANAGEMENT

South Cascade		2025
Registered	Units	334
Accomplished	Units	232
Registered	Acres	13,014
Accomplished	Acres	11,247

2025 fall slash burning started in November and continued through the end of the year. November burning was challenging due to warm and dry conditions with low rain amounts. December had significantly more rainfall which allowed burning to be completed. In East Lane, ten-month Forest Officers helped in slash rating, data entry, and burn permitting. We are happy to report there were no smoke intrusions.

STAFFING UPDATES



Jackson Wojdylak

Jackson Wojdylak (Wojo) began his career with The Oregon Department of Forestry at the Sweet Home Unit in 2018 as a Wildland Fire Suppression Specialist. In January of 2025, Wojo took a work out of class position as the Unit Mechanic/Dozer Operator in the Eastern Lane Unit. In November of 2025, he accepted the position permanently.



Jesse Kennedy

Kate Vanberg



Kate Vanberg was hired in the Sweet Home Unit as a Stewardship Forester in January 2025. Kate began her career with ODF in 2021 as a Wildland Fire Suppression Specialist in the Western Lane District. She graduated from Oregon State University in 2022 with a degree in Natural Resources. After college she worked seasonally as a Forest Management Technician in the winter and continued with fire suppression in the summer. Since starting her Stewardship Forester position, she has moved to Sweet Home and has adopted 3 cats!

Jesse Kennedy was hired in the Eastern Lane Unit as a Stewardship Forester in March of 2025. Prior to joining ODF, Jesse graduated from Oregon State University in 2014 with a bachelor's degree in Forest Management. After graduating, Jesse worked in the private timber industry as a timber cruiser, silvicultural, and inventory forester.

SERVICE AWARDS

Rena Meyer

District Business Manager
5 year service award.



Jerrin Robbins

Stewardship Forester
15 year service award.

FACILITIES



After a windstorm on Feb 24th, 2025, a tree was removed from the main office in the Eastern Lane Unit. There was no damage to the building.

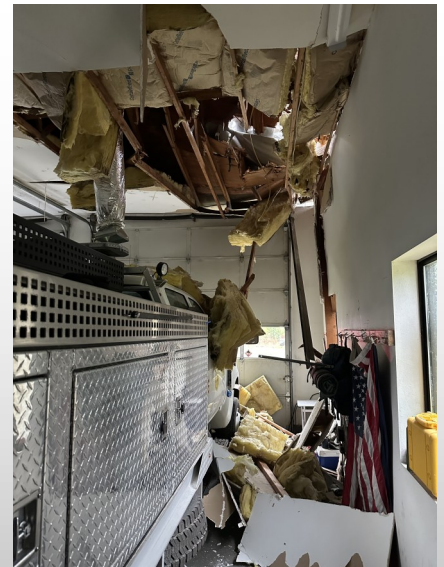


The Sweet Home Unit had a generator installed in October 2025. Base scope includes a 20kW 240/120v generator and ATS installation. The generator will significantly benefit the ability to continue our day to day operations during fire season without delay caused by public safety power shutoff's.



Austin Ainsworth and Ben Cline assisted in replacing the siding and gutters at the Dorena Guard Station.

Jeven Johnson and Eduardo Garcia-Leon constructed a new mail box stand for the Eastern Lane Unit.



During the October 2025 windstorm affecting the McKenzie River corridor, sustained gusts of approximately 70 mph caused a live cedar tree located along the west property boundary to fail at the base. The tree fell onto the station's south apparatus bay, where a Type 5 engine was parked.

Impact forces penetrated the roof assembly, compromising multiple roof trusses, wall headers, and the exterior wall system before the tree came to rest on top of the engine. The building sustained significant structural damage; the engine incurred only minor damage.

Seasonal fire crew personnel with construction experience installed temporary weatherproofing to prevent water intrusion. A licensed contractor subsequently completed temporary structural reinforcement designed to meet required snow load standards.

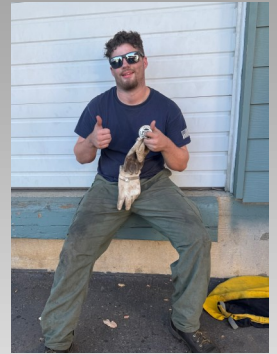
DISTRICT STAFF



Adrian Kast, Kami Hart, Zech Brown



2025 Sweet Home Unit staff



Jackson Barringer



Jerrin Robbins, Kate Vanberg, Justin White



Sweet Home Unit training burn



Tomas Rosa



Cole Johnson, Tyler Promes, Bode Hart, Kami Hart, Zech Brown, Owen Crown



Carl Lemmer, Craig Wilson



Connor Devore



2025 Eastern Lane Unit Fire Crew



Adrian Kast

Eastern Lane Forest Protection Association (ELFPA) Board of Directors

Founded 1904, Incorporated 6/24/1938

President -Ted Reiss, Giustina Land & Timber Co.

Vice President - Kenny Rose, Giustina Resources

Secretary -Mark Willhite, Sierra Pacific Industries

Treasurer -Dylan Johnson, Weyerhaeuser Co.

Susan Fricke, Eugene Water and Electric Board

Will Hansen, RDK Land & Timber, LLC

Shane Uffelman, Franklin Clarkson Timber



Linn Forest Protective Association (LFPA) Board of Directors

Founded 1911, Incorporated 7/31/1936

President - Caleb Brown, Frank Timber Resources Inc.

Vice President - Bruce Gibeau, Giustina Resources, Giustina Woodlands

Secretary/Treasurer - Stacey Whaley, Linn County Parks Department

Milt Moran, CTC South Santiam Tree Farm

Scott Melcher, Shadow Lane Timberlands, LLC

Christy Tye, Udell Family

Randy Hereford, Starker Forests Inc.

McKenzie Bredemeyer, Sierra Pacific Industries

Carey Hart, Giustina Land and Timber

Audrey Brandis, Campbell Global

Richard Wolfenbarger, Weyerhaeuser Co.



SOUTH CASCADE DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART—2025

