

# Committee for Family Forestlands

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May 10, 2011

Senator Chris Edwards, Co-Chair  
Representative Jean Cowan, Co-Chair  
Representative Bob Jenson, Co-Chair  
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
State Capitol, Room 405  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SB 5532 - OSU Forestry Extension and Forest Research Lab Budget Funding

Co-Chairs Edwards, Cowan, and Jenson and Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

**PLEASE SUPPORT:** Funding for OSU Forestry Extension and Forest Research Lab at the \$20 million add-back level. The Governor's Balanced Budget cut \$20 million, and the Co-Chairs Budget restored \$8 million of the cut. \$12 million is the minimum needed to maintain the skeleton of Forestry Extension across the state, but the full \$20 million is required to avoid losing the connection Extension has forged over the years with the family and small forest owners who manage 15% of Oregon's forestland.

## WHY DO WE CARE?

Forestry Extension is THE entry port for landowners seeking management information. Because our activities cover decades, not days, we live with our management decisions over lifetimes and beyond. Information is golden. Whether management goals are to improve an oak woodland for habitat, plant disease resistant species, or grow big trees faster, making informed decisions is key. Without a strong Extension, we have reduced access to OSU's world-class science and are unlikely to know where else to turn for other technical expertise.

Extension is the place where science and research meet the landowning public: Even experienced forest managers utilize the information available "on tap" from Extension Forestry when important decisions must be made.

Studies show our lands are going out of family ownership, either out of forest use and under pavement or into ownership of larger owners who have less diverse management objectives. Until now, we have relied on our land-use planning and zoning to keep our prime forest lands in forests, but today these close-in forest lands are much more valuable for development. Without knowledgeable and confident family forest landowners, much of the woods close to towns will be converted to non-forest use. Concurrently, the generation of small forest owners who purchased their lands in the 50's, 60's, and 70's are passing on, while the next generation of owners is coming into forest ownership with little knowledge of good management practices and commitment to the value of forests to their families. These are exactly the people Extension is set up to reach.

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## WHY SHOULD OREGON CARE?

Oregon's 70,000+ family forest landowners manage forests critical to the economic, environmental, and social well-being of all our citizens. Our lands are located in vital, ecologic locations: low-down in watersheds, buffering both urban and suburban from rural lands, and also betwixt and between larger private landowners and public owners, both which have more homogenous forestry goals.

As we reduce state funding, we fail to utilize the matching funds provided in the three-legged Extension funding stool: without state funding, we leave federal and local dollars on the table. For the Forest Research Lab, we lose the matching funds from harvest taxes.

Value will be returned to Oregon with a strong Forestry Extension. Lands will be kept in forest use, environmental values will be maintained and enhanced, economic value will be produced and flow into the system, and we will be able to take advantage of shared funding sources.

Forestry Extension is in the midst of a comprehensive reorganization, as funding has already been "leaned and meaned." Extension is responding to the call to do business in more efficient and different ways. Without restoration of the funds targeted for reduction, these achievements will be lost.

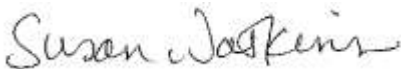
We urge you to protect Oregon's forests and family woodland owners by fully funding OSU Forestry Extension and its partner in sound science, the Forest Research Laboratory.

Sincerely,

Committee for Family Forestlands



Craig Shinn, Chair



Susan Watkins, Vice-Chair

cc: Board of Forestry  
Doug Decker, State Forester

*The Committee for Family Forestlands is a statutory committee appointed by the Board of Forestry to provide advice and recommendations regarding family forests and includes family forestland owners from different areas of the state, environmental organization and forest industry representatives, a citizen-at-large and ex-officio members representing the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Extension Service, Oregon Forest Resources Institute, the Oregon Small Woodlot Association and logging or forestry consulting interests.*