



February 17, 2021

Representative Brad Witt
House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Witt and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon Chair Witt, members of the committee, for the record, I am Erin Isselmann, and I am Executive Director of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute "OFRI". My presentation today at your request provides factual information on how the Forest Products Harvest Tax is used by OFRI, and for the record, my presentation, and my answers to any questions you may have, are not intended in any way to affect or otherwise influence any pending legislation.

OFRI was created by the Legislature in 1991 with a mission to advance public understanding of Oregon's forests, forest practices and encourage sustainable forestry through landowner education.

OFRI receives a dedicated portion of the Forest Products Harvest Tax. The Forest Products Harvest Tax is the sole source of funding for OFRI and its programs. OFRI receives no money from the General Fund.

OFRI operates on an annual budget based on the Fiscal Year (July - June). This chart demonstrates the payments that OFRI has received from the Forest Products Harvest Tax for the past five Fiscal Years. As you can see from this chart, OFRI's annual budget is between \$3.6 and \$4 million, depending on timber harvest levels. I will now explain how OFRI uses the Forest Products Harvest Tax Revenue.

OFRI uses the revenue provided by the Harvest Tax to fulfill its mission in three core educational programs: K-12, Landowner and Public Education. I will now explain how OFRI uses the revenue from the Harvest Tax in each of these programs.

9755 SW Barnes Rd., Suite 210
Portland, OR 97225
971-673-2944
971-673-2946 facsimile

OregonForests.org

K-12 Education Programs for Students and Teachers

In our K-12 Education program OFRI allocates roughly 25 percent of its annual budget.

As part of our efforts to connect with students with forests, we manage a 15-acre teaching forest at the Oregon Garden in Silverton, where we host an educational program for schoolchildren in grades 4-6. In a typical year, we serve 4,500 students. In partnership with the Oregon Garden, we offer an annual Home School Day event that reaches approximately 575 students from the home school community.

Another way we connect students with forests is through our bus transportation reimbursement program. Through this program we fund school bus transportation costs for field trips to destinations including the Tillamook Forest Center, Crater Lake National Park, The Oregon Garden and Tryon Creek State Park, among others.

We fund in-class forestry educational programming for students in grades preK-8 through our partner, Talk about Trees. This program is statewide and reaches around 140,000 students each year.

OFRI also provides free educational publications for students at every grade level and curriculum for teachers. We make all of these materials available for teachers to order or download for free on our K-12 teacher website, LearnForests.org. All of our K-12 materials are based on education standards established by the Oregon Department of Education.

OFRI supports forestry and natural resources career technical education programs in high schools by working with the Oregon Department of Education to provide professional development and curriculum to teachers. This includes an annual conference and a summer tour that attracts teachers from more than 30 schools.

Many of these schools also participate in the Oregon Envirothon, which is a hands-on, problem-solving education program and annual competition. OFRI is the sole financial sponsor of the Oregon Envirothon.

Another important aspect of our K-12 education program is the Oregon Natural Resources Education Program known as “ONREP”, which is a part of OSU College of Forestry. ONREP provides professional development to teachers. Through ONREP workshops, teachers gain knowledge and tools to educate students about Oregon’s forests and other natural resources. Most of these workshops are based on the award winning environmental curricula, Project Learning Tree and Project WILD. ONREP serves about 1,000 teachers annually. As a result of OFRI’s funding, ONREP is able to offer this professional development at no cost and provide substitute reimbursement to make it easier for teachers to attend.

All of OFRI’s K-12 education programs are managed by a staff of two natural resources educators.

Forest Landowner Education

In our forest landowner education program, OFRI allocates about 12 percent of our annual budget. There are over 70,000 forestland owners in Oregon with properties that range in size from 10 acres to over a million. OFRI encourages sustainable forestry by helping educate landowners and forestry professionals.

We offer an extensive library of free publications that provide forest landowners with practical information on managing their forestland. This includes an illustrated manual that serves as a detailed guide to Oregon's forest protection laws. We also offer a series of publications and workshops to assist Oregon forest landowners with wildlife habitat conservation and enhancement.

OFRI is a founding member of the Partnership for Forestry Education, a collaboration of state, federal and private organizations that provide educational resources to Oregon's forest landowners. OFRI centralizes landowner information from members of the Partnership on one website, KnowYourForest.org.

Many of OFRI's landowner education efforts occur in close partnership with Oregon State University through its extension service. OFRI provides crucial funding for a number of OSU Extension forest landowner education programs including Tree School, the Women Owning Woodlands Network (WOWNet) and the Master Woodland Manager program.

Tree School events are mini-colleges for family forestland owners, foresters, loggers, arborists, teachers and the public. OFRI provides funding to market Tree Schools around the state and OFRI staff teach classes on Oregon Forest Protection Laws and Forest Certification Systems.

The WOWNet is a peer learning program that allows women to learn about forest management, share their forestry and natural resources experiences and exchange personal knowledge. OFRI provides funding for the professional staff at OSU Extension that manage the WOWNet program.

The Master Woodland Manager program offers a master's level course for landowners who are interested in extensive forest management training. In exchange for this training, program participants share this knowledge by volunteering in their local communities. OFRI provides funding for the professional staff at OSU Extension that deliver this program.

OFRI also partners with the Oregon Small Woodlands Association (OSWA) to provide funding for their annual Neighbor to Neighbor tours. These tours are an outreach field-based awareness and education program designed to provide Oregon family forestland owners with information and contacts from their peers about sustainable forest management.

All of OFRI's forest landowner education programs are managed by a staff of two professional foresters.

Public Education

OFRI spends approximately 47 percent of its annual budget in our public education program. We reach the public in a variety of ways.

OFRI produces a wide variety of publications to help educate the public about Oregon's forests. Updated every two years, OFRI's most popular publication is *Oregon Forest Facts*, which is a detailed reference guide to Oregon's forest sector that includes information, maps, graphs and statistics about forestland ownership, timber harvest, forest-based employment and wood products production. As a companion to the printed publication, we provide a mobile friendly website, OregonForestFacts.org.

OFRI also produces in-depth special reports that cover a range of forest issues that are of public interest, and are produced in partnership with leading research institutions like Oregon State University, the University of Oregon and the University of Idaho. Topics include forest sector economic impact, mass timber, water quality, wildfire and the Oregon Forest Practices Act.

All OFRI publications are available for free download and ordering from our main public website, OregonForests.org.

We also communicate to Oregonians through an annual spring educational advertising program. Core messages on sustainable forest management and forest protection laws reach audiences across the state through broadcast and digital media.

In addition to the four OFRI staff that I have previously mentioned, OFRI staff include two professional communicators and a business manager. These three staff provide support to all of OFRI's programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to present to the committee.

Erin Isselmann
Executive Director