

# 2023 Sudden Oak Death Report: Response to Follow-up Questions



*Note: The report referenced below (Sudden Oak Death Management in Oregon Forests) is available online.*

The second paragraph on page 3 of the report notes that Oregon regulations require infested sites on state and private lands to undergo eradication treatment. What are these specific regulations (ORS or administrative rules)? What state agency or agencies are charged with the enforcement of these regulations? And how are these regulations enforced?

Spread of *P. ramorum* on state, private, and federal lands is managed by designating a Sudden Oak Death (SOD) quarantine area under the authorities of the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) (ORS 603-052-1230). The quarantine requires infested sites to undergo eradication treatment, prohibits the movement of infected material outside of the quarantine area, specifies the best practices to apply when moving non-bole host plant material from infested sites and sets forth requirements for disease-free certification when moving uninfected host material to areas outside the quarantine. ODA relies on the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to serve as technical assistance for enforcement through the SOD treatments on private landowners and doing surveys of tanoak harvests to ensure they are disease free. When a new SOD infestation is found on private lands, the landowner receives a certified letter from ODA and ODF explaining the quarantine regulations.

On page 7, under the subheading of program expenditures, the narrative refers to the program using new agreement authorities passed by Congress to find creative ways to manage the disease. Will you please expound on this and quantify the creative ways?

The department entered into a Good Neighbor Authority agreement with the Bureau of Land Management - a new authority passed during the 2014 federal Farm Bill. This new agreement has allowed the SOD Program to use funding across land ownerships. Additionally in 2018, United States Forest Service (USFS) and ODF staff modified existing cooperative agreement language to allow for USFS funds to be paid to ODF contractors for treatment work on USFS lands. This was vital to complete USFS treatments during a time when USFS staff were lacking.

On page 7, under the subheading of federal funding sources, the report states that funding through the USFS requires 1:1 matching funds. Can you give more specific detail on the source and use of these matching funds? What amount is provided through state sources vs. private sources?

Over the last 22 years, most matching funds for the USFS/ODF agreements have been general funds (GF). Occasionally there have been private landowner funds for treatments. The state matching funds are used for ODF SOD staff, treatments on private and state lands, and aerial survey flights. Over the last 10 years, USFS/ODF agreements have ranged from \$336,00 to \$625,000.

Also on page 7, the report discusses the BLM direct eradication work on their lands and interagency grant programs with the USFS and then goes on to talk about ODF entering into Good Neighbor Authority agreements. What are the specific funding amounts and activities under these agreements? Are these activities limited to BLM lands?

USFS has funding available for other federal agencies, such as BLM, to conduct forest health suppression, prevention, and restoration projects on their lands. Coos Bay BLM requests SOD treatment funds through this program on a yearly basis, typically funded at \$250,000. BLM has used these funds along with base BLM funding to fund GNA work through ODF. This has included survey, detection, and treatments on BLM lands and adjacent lands that pose a risk of SOD spreading onto BLM. Since 2020, BLM has provided in total \$741,792 to ODF under the Good Neighbor Authority.

On page 8, the report provides a table of estimated annual program expenditures. Pulling out the GF portions noted in the table, it appears that approximately \$215,000 per year, or \$430,000 per biennium is for programmatic expenditures and \$850,000 per year, or \$1.7 million per biennium is for eradication treatment. What portion of this is ongoing in the ODF base budget and what portion has been funded from one-time appropriations?

The \$215,000 per year (\$430,000 per biennium) includes \$123,000 for ODF-Brookings staff that were funded from one-time appropriations (e.g., \$1.7 million appropriation for SOD) and \$92,000 for ODF-Salem staff that were funded from ODF base budget.



On page 12, in the section describing program challenges, the report lists a number of concerning items for which I would like to have additional detail as follows:

- a. Landowner permission. How do the current regulations address this issue? Has obtaining administrative warrants been an issue? How does ODF believe that this can be addressed to remove this challenge?
  - The administrative warrants are obtained by ODA working through the state DOJ. ODF SOD Program staff assist with background information and affidavits required for the process. Obtaining the warrants has not been an issue, but it does take up work time of ODF and ODA staff. However, over the last 22 years of the program, only 5 warrants have had to be issued for over 440 treatment areas on private lands, or about 1%. In recent years, ODF has worked closely with OSU Extension staff to produce more landowner outreach and information opportunities.
- b. Finding contractors. Does ODF have a plan for addressing this issue? How would it be possible to expand treatments if this remains an impediment?
  - Workforce availability is a known issue across all aspects of forestry operations in the Pacific Northwest and the SOD Program is no exception. Recently, we have reached out to smaller contractors along the southern Oregon Coast in preparation for the contract solicitation period this year for ODF.
- c. Fire season. Is it possible to use additional seasonal personnel that were authorized recently (SB 762 etc.) to do eradication work on the shoulder seasons before and after fire season specifically?
  - It is possible; however we would need more seasonal position authority and the positions would likely be a different classification. We have offered this opportunity in the past without any interest.

In the alternatives section beginning on page 14, alternatives 1 and 2 do not have any costs detailed. Will you please provide the estimated annual or biennial costs for these? Alternative 4 has some costs noted, but these appear to be marginal, or increased costs above some kind of baseline funding. Could you please provide a clear estimate of the total annual cost to pursue this option?

Alternative 1: Based on the SOD Economic Impact Assessment prepared by Mason, Bruce & Girard in 2019, if the ODF SOD treatment regimes were terminated as of January 1, 2019, serious economic impacts might occur as SOD expands to Coos County, which could happen as early as 2028. Details of these impacts can be found in the [economic report](#).

Approximate cost of general aerial detection forest health survey for this area would be \$45,000/year.



Alternative 2: Based on our current knowledge, at the end of December 2022, the SOD program estimated 600 acres of treatment at \$5,500 per acre are needed, amounting to \$3,300,000/year to prioritize treatment sites.

This estimate will likely change over time as the disease slowly spreads.

Alternative 4: An ideal eradication treatment of 600-ft buffer increases the treatment area to 26 acres around an infested SOD site from a 300-ft buffer (6.7 acres), increasing the overall treatment cost, a significant increase from \$36, 850 to \$143,000.

717 acres (from Alt 3) x 3.88 = 2,782 acres x \$5,500/acre=\$15,301,000

***Have questions or need more information?***

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