

# The Blue Mountain Forester

## **Northeast Oregon Small Woodlands Association**

*Quarterly Newsletter*



*Volume 5, Issue 1*

*Fall 2025*

### **Note from NEOSWA President**

We are blessed to enjoy the vibrant colors that fall brings to us here in Northeast Oregon. As we transition toward the winter months, things will slow for most of us. For NEOSWA, it is a time to reflect on this past year and look forward to activities and learning opportunities. Our far-flung membership covers five very large counties here in Northeast Oregon, making it difficult to join together on a regular basis. To overcome this, we are looking forward to a mix of learning seminars that can be accessed via phone and the internet from home and continued in-person events such as our Monument Field Tour of their local fires and the effect that preplanning and implementation played in successfully saving many structures and assets.

On December 10<sup>th</sup> we will be holding an informational and input gathering seminar to hear from you – NEOSWA Members – about what you would like to see as a focus for legislative and regulatory advocacy for OSWA this coming legislative session. A very important part of OSWA is this advocacy for things that are important to our members, and just as pivotal is our coordinated efforts to stop or impact legislative and regulatory impacts to our ownerships. Mike Cafferata, our Executive Director, will be online with us to recap our recent efforts, highlight upcoming issues, and most importantly for us as OSWA Members to share our priorities for our collective statewide legislative advocacy. We can then focus our efforts on future seminars and tours as a Chapter. You can attend in-person at the Baker County Extension Office or virtually via Zoom.

Paul Harlan, NEOSWA Chapter President

### **2025 NEOSWA Fall Tour Recap**

We had a fantastic Fall Tour this September, hosted by the Top Road Firewise Community. We started the day at the Monument Senior Center, where we heard from several folks from the Oregon State Fire Marshal, Oregon Department of Forestry, local community members, and our new OSWA Executive Director, Mike Cafferata. We then departed up Top Road for several stops, where we had the opportunity to learn first-hand the critical role the Firewise Community played during the 2024 wildfire season. Community members shared their experiences and discussed the home hardening, defensible space, and forest management treatments they have accomplished. We also had the chance to observe how different treatments affected fire behavior when the Battle Mountain Complex moved through the area. After lunch, we concluded the tour with a demonstration of a mobile dimension sawmill. We couldn't have asked for a better day out in Monument. Huge thanks to Irene Jerome and the Top Road Firewise Community for organizing and hosting this event. We also want to thank the Monument Senior Center for the meeting space, the local 4-H club for the refreshments, and everyone who participated on the tour.



## Family Forests of Oregon Restarted

Family Forests of Oregon (FFO) has been reactivated to serve once again as an important partner to the Oregon Small Woodlands Association (OSWA). FFO exists to promote family forest ownership and management, with a particular focus on supporting the scientific and educational mission of OSWA.

FFO is organized as a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit, which means it is eligible to receive grants, donations, and planned giving contributions to support its work. The key distinction between OSWA and Family Forests of Oregon lies in their respective nonprofit classifications and purposes.

- OSWA, as a 501(c)(5) member organization, represents woodland owners and can advocate on behalf of its members on policy and legislative issues. Contributions to OSWA are not tax deductible.
- Family Forests of Oregon, as a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit, focuses on education, outreach, and the promotion of sustainable family forest management and cannot engage in advocacy or political activity.

While FFO cannot participate in advocacy, its charitable status allows access to a broader range of grants and donation opportunities that are not available to OSWA to promote family forest landowners. Donations to Family Forests of Oregon are generally tax deductible.

In October, the Family Forests of Oregon Board of Directors was reappointed. The current board includes:

- Ken Nygren, President
- Suzi Armstrong, Treasurer
- Connie Battles, Greg Fox, Gordon Culbertson, and Vic Herinckx
- Mike Cafferata was selected to serve as the acting agent for the board and serves as its secretary

The board will be working to identify opportunities where Family Forests of Oregon can promote family forest ownership and augment OSWA's efforts in education of family forest ownership across Oregon. If you have an interest in promoting family forest ownership and management, either through a contribution or joining the board, contact a current member for opportunities.

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## Advocacy Updates

### SB 485 – Estate Tax Bill

- SB 485 is going through a rulemaking process – so no update this month on that process.

### SB 1061 – Forest to Homes Act

- Forest to Homes Act directs OSU Extension Service to establish a lumber grading training program for grading your own lumber. OSU Extension is currently in the process of developing this program but are still in the early stages. The first training won't be offered until next spring at the earliest.

Tucker Billman from the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperatives (ORECA) joined the Policy Committee in September. He did a nice job of describing the issues facing rural power cooperatives, and how the costs/risks of wildfire liability are straining these rural cooperatives. Many OSWA members receive their power from electric cooperatives. ORECA is preparing for the next legislative session and is seeking liability limitations related to wildfire. It was a very informative discussion. OSWA members learned a lot, as did Tucker. No OSWA policy decisions were made, but Tucker will keep up involved as the session approaches, and work with us on whatever they do propose, seeking to find legislation that best meets the community needs – for power and for landowner rights.

## Update from the Oregon Woodland Cooperative

Why do we have the Oregon Woodland Cooperative when we can access OSWA, Oregon Tree Farm System, Foresters, and a great university with programs and classes for tree farmers?

Well, going back a few generations, when the log buyers were working for mills that seemed to never run out of resources, it was difficult for a single small woodland owner to find good prices for his few logs or even get a mill to accept his or her logs. So, a group of private timberland owners decided to pool resources and then approach the mills with the possibility of several truckloads at a time. It succeeded and as a result the concept of working together to reach several markets contributes to sustainable, successful organization.

The OWC now looks for any marketable product in our woodlands that might be grown, packaged, and marketed with profitable income. We have successfully produced and sold the essential oils distilled from 6 different conifers. Holidays boughs provide income for several local members. We have explored the concept of harvesting and selling mushrooms and truffles. Our bundled firewood program brings in over \$200,000 each year. Our contributing members share 90% of that income. The cooperative pays for accounting and promotion with the remaining 10%. With just a little creative thinking, there are numerous possibilities.

The point that explains the difference between OWC and the other organizations is the idea of providing the individual landowners with income. We all need ways to pay the bills while the trees are growing, and this is what this organization tries successfully to accomplish.

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## Don't Forget to Renew Your Membership!

Membership Renewal Time! 2025 was a big year for OSWA. At the local level, chapters held numerous education and fellowship events. At the statewide level, OSWA was active on multiple fronts, with the biggest successes coming in the Oregon legislature. OSWA was responsible for several legislative successes this past year, including:

- An important improvement to Oregon's estate tax exemption – supporting forestland owners estate tax exemption up to \$15 million rather than \$1 million.
- Lumber grading change – allowing home grading of lumber with proper training. (training coming this spring or summer from OSU Extension).
- Successful fire funding reform
- Defeat of harmful bills affecting woodland owners

We now turn to 2026. In the coming year, you can expect your membership to support your local chapter, and the statewide advocacy in the many places OSWA is represented – Oregon Legislature, Board of Forestry, ODFW, and many others. Current topics include liability from wildfire for power cooperatives, tethered logging rules, implementation of stream rules, and more.

It's going to be an exciting year ahead. You can take part in your local chapter activities and get involved in the statewide work. The Government Affairs Committee and the Policy Advisory Committee both have regular meetings with input from all members welcomed. Dates and zoom links are available on the OSWA.ORG calendar.

We hope you'll renew your membership and continue to be part of the OSWA family. This "first call" for renewals is being sent by email, and renewing now helps OSWA save on mailing costs. You can renew by mailing a check or paying online at [www.oswa.org](http://www.oswa.org).

As you renew, please remember the Sharpening Our Edge campaign. Membership dues alone don't fully cover the costs of sustaining our programs, and your additional contributions through the Sharpening Our Edge campaign play a vital role in keeping OSWA strong and effective. When you see the Friends of OSWA, be sure to thank them — we couldn't do what we do without their generous support as well!

## Eastern Oregon Log Market Report (As of: November 15, 2025)

Pendleton – No Sawlog Prices							
Species/Sort:	Douglas-fir/Larch	Ponderosa Pine		Grand/White Fir	Lodgepole Pine	E. Spruce	Pulp/Chip (Ton)
		6-18"	19"+				25
Price (\$/MBF):							
La Grande							
Species/Sort:	Douglas-fir/Larch	Ponderosa Pine		Grand/White Fir	Lodgepole Pine	E. Spruce	Pulp/Chip (Ton)
		6-7"	8"+				
Price (\$/MBF):	400	280	280				
Elgin – Currently Not Purchasing							
Species/Sort:	Douglas-fir/Larch	Ponderosa Pine		Grand/White Fir	Lodgepole Pine	E. Spruce	Pulp/Chip (Ton)
Price (\$/MBF):							
Pilot Rock – MILL CLOSED							
Species/Sort:	Douglas-fir/Larch	Ponderosa Pine		Grand/White Fir	Lodgepole Pine	E. Spruce	Pulp/Chip (Ton)
Price (\$/MBF):							
John Day/Prairie City – MILLS CLOSED							
Species/Sort:	Douglas-fir/Larch	Ponderosa Pine		Grand/White Fir	Lodgepole Pine	E. Spruce	Pulp/Chip (Ton)
Price (\$/MBF):							
Redmond/Bend/Gilchrist							
Species/Sort:	Douglas-fir/Larch	Ponderosa Pine		Grand/White Fir	Lodgepole Pine	E. Spruce	Pulp/Chip (Ton)
		8-11"	17"+				
Price (\$/MBF):		270	350				
Lakeview/Klamath Falls							
Species/Sort:	Douglas-fir/Larch	Ponderosa Pine		Grand/White Fir	Lodgepole Pine	E. Spruce	Pulp/Chip (Ton)
		6-11"	12-16"	17"+	12-16"	8"+	
Price (\$/MBF):				410	370		

Data Courtesy of John Lindberg (Oregon Log Market Report)

## Event Calendar

Date & Time	Event	Details & Location
December 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2025 5:30 – 7:00pm	Succession Planning Panel OSU Extension	Following the conclusion of the <i>Ties to the Land</i> Workshop Series, OSU Extension will be hosting a panel discussion focused on succession planning. This panel will feature local landowners who will share their succession planning experiences. This event will be open to all, regardless if you attended the workshop series. The event location and speaker lineup will be announced soon.
December 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2025 5:30pm	Board & Member Meeting NEOSWA	Small Meeting Room, Baker Co. Fairgrounds (In-Person or Virtual) Agenda: To be announced soon. We will be joined by OSWA Executive Director, Mike Cafferata, who will provide us with an update and outlook for the 2026 Legislative Session.
Jan. – Apr. 2026 6:00pm	Managing Eastern Oregon Forests Webinar Series OSU Extension	OSU Extension is excited to announce our latest webinar series, <i>Management Considerations for Oregon's Dry-Side Forests</i> . This series will take a close look at management of specific eastern Oregon tree species including aspects of ecology, density management, health issues, and commercial value. We will also cover some basics of forest management along the way. To register, or for more information, visit the series website at: <a href="https://beav.es/drysidemgt">https://beav.es/drysidemgt</a>
January 2026 5:30pm	Board & Member Meeting NEOSWA	Location, Program, and Agenda: TBA
February 25-26 <sup>th</sup> , 2026 All-Day	2026 Annual Meeting Northern Blues Restoration Partnership	Save the Date! Join us for the Northern Blues Restoration Partnership's 2026 Annual Meeting! This conference will explore how fire - both prescribed and beneficial or risk informed wildfire - shapes our landscapes and communities. We'll highlight the full fire cycle: from proactive work like thinning and preparedness, to cultural burning, post-fire recovery, workforce development, and policy innovations that support fire-ready communities across all lands. Website & RSVP: <a href="https://www.northernblues.org/events/2026-annual-meeting">https://www.northernblues.org/events/2026-annual-meeting</a>
March 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2026 All-Day	Tree School Clackamas OSU Extension	The next Tree School East won't be held again until 2027, however, there are still opportunities to attend a Tree School in 2026! Tree School Clackamas, the first and largest of the Tree Schools, will be held on Saturday, March 21 <sup>st</sup> , at Clackamas Community College in Oregon City, OR. Visit the Tree School Website for more details as they become available: <a href="https://extension.oregonstate.edu/tree-school/tree-school-clackamas">https://extension.oregonstate.edu/tree-school/tree-school-clackamas</a>
June 25-27 <sup>th</sup> , 2026	Oregon Family Forest Convention OSWA & OTFS	Save the Date! Planning is well underway for the 2026 Family Forest Convention and Tree Farm of the Year Tour at the Big K Ranch! Save June 25, 26, and 27 and reserve your cabin or RV site at the Big K, or a motel room in Sutherland, ASAP. Expect an outdoor, hands-on oriented program rather than an indoor series of lectures.

### Executive Committee Prepares for the New Year

OSWA's Executive Committee gathered in September to focus on the coming year. Your Executive Committee is:

- Dan Newton, President
- Karl Jensen, President Elect
- Gordon Culbertson, Past President
- Second Vice Presidents:
  - Paul Harlan
  - Connie Battles
  - Rick Spring
  - Jock Dalton
- Treasurer: Suzi Armstrong
- Secretary: Nancy Hathaway

Overarching goal for the year:

- Pursue membership growth through service to members.

Key outcomes for our desired future condition:

- **Newsletters:** All members would benefit from a local newsletter. To support this, Mike will send Salem's information directly to the chapters that lack a newsletter for distribution as part of the local newsletter. Local chapters can add local information and distribute. For those chapters that already have newsletters – don't want to disrupt those great newsletters, so Salem will continue sending those chapter members the monthly Salem newsletter.
- **Events:** Provide all members with at least one event each quarter, plus an annual meeting, so each chapter would have a minimum of 5 events/per year. Events can include tours, workshops, evening meetings, twilight walks, zoom educational meetings, etc. The executive team is ready to support this.
- **Membership:** It is important for the health of the organization to welcome and recruit new members. Efforts are underway at the membership committee and with the Board of Directors. Renewals start in October, with follow-ups through February. We will strive to provide new members with welcome packets and personal invitations. Targeted outreach will continue in select counties.
- **Chapter Support:** The EC recognizes that chapters vary in their journey to provide service to members, and we appreciate all the volunteer work each of you do every day. Each chapter has an Executive Committee member as a resource. Chapters are encouraged to reach out for help with planning, membership, and any other needs.
- **Next Steps:** Executive committee members will connect with chapter chairs to discuss newsletters, events, and membership plans.

Some other good ideas came out of the retreat, including the idea to bring students into OSWA through a new membership class, and some revisions to the by-laws to address conflicts of interest. Look to see more on this at the Family Forest Convention in the Spring.

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**Next NEOSWA Meeting: Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 5:30 PM (In-Person or Virtual)**

Small Conference Room, Baker County Fairgrounds/OSU Extension Office

*Guest: Mike Cafferata, OSWA Executive Director*



## NEOSWA Leadership

**Paul Harlan**, *President*

County: Wallowa

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**Jack Kleinhoff**, *Vice-President*

County: Baker

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**Brian Rabe**, *Treasurer*

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**Jacob Putney**, *Secretary*

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**Debi Lorence**, *Board Member*

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**Irene Jerome**, *Board Member*

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## Classifieds

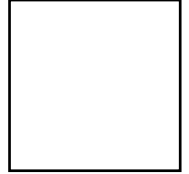
Do you have something to sell or rent? We invite members to submit appropriate items to be listed in this section of the newsletter. If you are interested in listing an item, please submit a photo and description to Jacob Putney ([jacob.putney@oregonstate.edu](mailto:jacob.putney@oregonstate.edu)) and it will be listed in the next issue of the newsletter.

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## Newsletter Distribution

*The Blue Mountain Forester* will be distributed either by email or mail, depending on what information we have on file. Additionally, the newsletter will be posted on our website ([neoswa.com](http://neoswa.com)). If you would like to change how you receive this newsletter, please send your preference to Jacob Putney ([jacob.putney@oregonstate.edu](mailto:jacob.putney@oregonstate.edu)). Note, email is the quickest way to receive information from the Chapter.

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## **The Blue Mountain Forester**

Northeast Oregon Small Woodlands Association  
Baker, Grant, Harney, Union, and Wallowa Counties

*A Newsletter for Small Woodland Owners in Northeast Oregon*

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### ***At a Glance***

- A Note from NEOSWA President
- 2025 NEOSWA Fall Tour Recap
- State-level Updates
- Time to Renew Your Membership
- Eastern Oregon Log Market Prices
- Upcoming Meetings and Events
- OSWA Executive Committee Updates

### ***Resources to Explore***

- 2024 Forest Health Highlights in Oregon  
<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/forestbenefits/documents/forest-health-highlights.pdf>
- Not All Flame's the Same, OSU Extension Fire Program  
<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program/not-all-flames-same>
- Life on the Dry Side Newsletter  
[extension.oregonstate.edu/newsletter/life-dry-side-forestry-newsletter](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/newsletter/life-dry-side-forestry-newsletter)