

TNC Logo and Mission:

For over 60 years The Nature Conservancy has been delivering pragmatic, science driven, business focused conservation finding solutions that meet the needs of people and the environment

Why do we have concern for our Nation's Forests:

Forests play a critical role in our daily lives;

- They support tremendous diversity of fish and wildlife. More than 800 species of plants and animals are at risk from unhealthy forest conditions in Washington and Oregon alone.
- Cover 1/3 of the US and about 50% of our state.
- They store ½ of the nation's water supply

Forest with stream:

- In Fact 44% of Oregon's water supply comes off of lands managed by the Forest Service
- Our Nation's Forests provide jobs for more than a million wood products workers
- Absorb nearly 20% of US carbon emissions
- Generate 14.8 Billion annually in revenues –just off of the 193 million acres of our Nations National Forests.

Unhealthy Forests:

A century of suppressing natural wildfires has resulted in unhealthy forests overstocked and choked with brush and unable to naturally regenerate.

Invasive pests and Pathogens are decimating forests that are now threatening both human and natural communities .

The Nature Conservancy has set Forest health /resiliency as a North American Priority and as the Nation's largest land conservation Organization committed to working with public and private partners to bring our Nation's Forests back to health so that they can continue to support people, businesses and yes, wildlife.

Map of the Nation's Forests:

In a partnership with The US Forest Service, USGS and The Bureau of Land Management we have developed the most comprehensive assessment of our Nation's Forests shared them with congress and the results are very sobering.

Of our nations 193,000 acres of National forests it is estimated that 120 million acres are in crisis.

Map of Oregon's Forests:

The picture in Oregon's forests is similar. Of our 20.8 million acres of forested landscape, 9.5 million acres of our frequent fire forests are moderately (yellow) or highly (red) departed from historic condition meaning they have missed 1 to three natural fire cycles.

Photo series of overstocked Forest:

The result is dramatically increased stocking densities / fuel loads of species such as white fir, grand fir, lodge pole Pine and cedar that are less tolerant to relatively frequent low to mixed severity wildfires.

These enabling conditions have increased the susceptibility of these

forests to disease, insect infestations and uncharacteristically large wildfires.

These changes in forest structure, composition and fire suppression policies have put many of our rural communities at great risk. We are witnessing in Oregon and across the West a shift from low intensity ground fires to more and more frequent high intensity landscape scale stand replacement fires.

The cost to Oregon and the Nation is escalating at an alarming rate. In 1990, 19% of the Forest Service Budget was spent fighting Fires. Just 20 years later it is upwards of 50% of the Forest Service's entire national \$4.5 Billion dollar budget! ---- \$2.25 Billion is spent fighting Fires. Today we are spending on Average \$5,000 per acre in Oregon suppressing fires. Just the most recent 6,000 acre Mount Hood Fire cost all of us as tax payers \$20 million or about \$3,333 per acre -----this is not sustainable !!!!

Map of our east side communities and mill infrastructure:

Beyond the loss of the standing volume of trees, we are losing priceless living wage mill and forest jobs At present we have 12 remaining mills operating in Oregon's Frequent Fire Forests. It is vital that we do everything possible to keep these mills open if we are to accelerate restoration across Oregon's fire-prone forests.

Image of TNC field scientists:

Our forest ecologists identified the need to aggressively and yes proactively treat 500,000 acres of Oregon's most fire prone forests and sustain this pace of work for the next 25 years. If tackled at this essential scale, this would build back forest resiliency, generate 1000s of living wage forest and mill jobs and enhance the water supply of our communities, help meet growing agricultural demands and benefit tourism as well as fish and wildlife.

The scope of this problem has been known by our political leadership for some time. Our Governor in his first term set out a bold vision for sustainable management of our Forests.

More recently ODF has convened a diverse Federal Forestland Advisory Committee including a number of you in this room. This group was charged with identifying the barriers and development of a plan to get to restoration at scale.

Collaborative Image:

The most daunting of challenges was that of a lack of trust that had led to a historic lockdown of our national forests, a near collapse of our mill infrastructure and forest sector labor force. Biologically we saw a collapse in the resiliency and natural benefits of our forests ---a no win situation for Oregon and not the legacy we want to leave to our children.

Governors Collaborative Map series:

Under John K's leadership Oregon Solutions was called into service. Backed by sustained deployment of detailed science provided by The Nature Conservancy and others, community leaders many in this room - business leaders, environmental groups began to convene and collaborate on a new vision for our forests and along the way trust and mutual respect is slowly being rebuilt.

Collaborative team in office and field:

Progress was originally slow but is now building momentum. 10 years ago Oregon's National Forests were treating approximately 40,000 acres a year, today we are back to 155,000 acres....Yes, we are not at our target of 500,000 but we are progressing in the right direction.

Trust in the forests,

The Forest Service is listening to the advice of these community collaboratives and little by little larger and larger contracts are being let for meaningful forest health. Thinning's putting people back to work and providing product to mills and a growing number of wood pellet plants and biomass facilities.

Beautiful forest image:

Let me now turn it over to Brett Brownscombe to discuss the Governors unique approach to breaking through the barriers and putting Oregon back to work in our Forests.

