FAMILY FOREST LANDOWNER FACT SHEET

REFORESTATION: AN INTRODUCTION

WHY REFOREST?

For one, it's the law. Oregon was the first state in the nation to pass laws to ensure continuous harvest of timber on private lands while safeguarding soil, air, fish and wildlife resources. In 1971, Oregon enacted the Oregon Forest Practices Act, which regulates many activities conducted on forestland, including reforestation.

Oregon law requires reforestation when timber harvesting reduces the number of trees below specific stocking levels. You must complete reforestation within 24 months after you're finished harvesting. Depending on site productivity, at least 100 to 200 seedlings per acre must be established. However, most landowners plant 300-400 trees per acre.

Beyond the law, reforesting makes good sense for the environment and for the economy. Since nearly half of the state's land area grows trees, forests can provide multiple benefits. This includes wood products, watershed protection, fish and wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. Our forests can even make an impact beyond our borders, since trees provide cool shade and absorb greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

Today, between 40 and 50 million trees are planted every winter and spring in Oregon. These tree seedlings are carefully planted on government, industrial and family forestlands. It takes good planning and follow-through to assure success in this labor-intensive and expensive work.

Use the guidelines on the back of this sheet to get started replanting, and check the resources on this page for more detailed, step-by-step information on how to replant successfully.

RESOURCES

The following publications are available online at extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog. Click on Forestry, then Reforestation

Successful Reforestation: An Overview
Atkinson, Fitzgerald, EC 1498, 2002

The Care and Planting of Tree Seedlings on Your Woodland,
Elfritz, Atkinson, Fitzgerald, EC 1504, 1998

Selecting and Buying Quality Seedlings
Duddles, Landgren, EC 1196, 1999

The following publications are availabe to order from www.oregonforests.org > publications

Guide to Reforestation in Oregon
Rose, Haase, 2006

Oregon's Forest Protection Laws: An Illustrated Manual
Oregon Forest Resources Institute, 2002

HOW TO REFOREST:

STEP 1:
Carefully plan, evaluate and prepare your site. Consider the condition of the planting site: vegetation present, soil type, aspect (direction the slope faces), wildlife and pests. Site characteristics affect critical site resources necessary for seedling survival and growth, including water, sunlight, temperature and nutrients.

STEP 2:
Choose an appropriate site preparation method or combination of methods. Several methods are available to prepare sites for planting. These methods include mechanical, manual and chemical. Costs depend on site conditions, methods used, existing vegetation and amount of logging debris or slash.

STEP 3:
Select the proper species and seedling stock-type for your site. Different tree species are adapted to different site conditions. Choose seedlings specifically for your seed zone and elevation. You can get tree seedlings for your site by encouraging natural seeding, by transplanting seedlings growing in the wild, or by purchasing high-quality, nursery-grown seedlings.

STEP 4:
Plant conifer seedlings in western Oregon from January through March. In higher elevations or in eastern Oregon, plant as soon as possible after snow melts and the ground thaws, generally late March through April. Keep seedlings cool (34 to 40 degrees F) and moist, and handle them gently at all times. Site conditions dictate the spacing and density of trees. In western Oregon, typical spacing is 10' x 10'. In central Oregon, trees are generally spaced at 12' x 12'. Select good planting spots such as areas of exposed mineral soil that are free of weeds.

STEP 5:
Once seedlings are planted, additional maintenance often is needed to ensure their continued survival and growth. The first two years following planting are critical for survival. New seedlings may require protection from animals, weeds or drought. By the sixth year, your new stand must be "free to grow" (able to outcompete surrounding grasses and brush).

Oregon's Legislature created the Oregon Forest Resources Institute to improve public understanding of Oregon's forest resources and to encourage sound forest practices. ***www.oregonforests.org***

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