

**MANAGEMENT:**  
Tribes have different approach to land

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is one of the first to have timber land again.

Vredenburg said between the time the tribe was occupying its ancestral lands and now, the forest has changed dramatically, with more timber crowded together.

Gordon, who's also the co-chairman of the three assessments for the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act, found through his site visits across the country that where tribal lands exist, forest management is going well, but the tribes are underfunded and the lands are increasingly threatened by wildfire, disease, insects, development, climate change, urbanization and declining access to markets.

"With the small amount of land they have now, we're trying to employ modern techniques while blending traditional knowledge and we're looking at using a variety of different approaches from

variable retention harvesting and reintroducing fire to those landscapes in a thoughtful way," Vredenburg said of Cow Creek.

"That does include logging, and while logging can be controversial, our goal is to leave a plot in the position where it can become healthy again and to contribute to it being healthy now, whether it's through thinning or other methods," Rondeau added.

Cow Creek had a treaty in 1854 to designate a permanent reservation, but the treaty was never recognized. The tribe is hoping that Congress will finally create the reservation. In the meantime, Cow Creek has a goal to buy back its historic forestland that is now under federal ownership.

"I wish them well in their efforts and I'm very glad they continue to work toward forestry management as a long-term economic development tool," said Wayne Shammel, the former attorney for Cow Creek. He retired from that position in 2014 after 19 years of providing legal counsel, drafting legislation for land acquisitions and lobbying to get the lands placed in a trust.

"It's been in the long-term

strategic plan of the tribe since its restoration and having been there a long time it's nice to see they're continuing their efforts to not just acquire land but work cooperatively with the regional timber companies and forestry management," Shammel said. "It looks like some of their efforts are beginning to mature. I know they've completed some sales and they have done some harvests and things seem to be progressing well and I'm happy for them."

Though the Cow Creek Tribe and the Confederated Tribes haven't been able to regain a large portion of their ancestral lands, they do a good job with what they have, Gordon said.

"They do a very good job of blending the objective of environmental health and timber production ... they're able to do both," Gordon said.

"The forests these tribes are in are some of the most productive forests anywhere."

Though the Cow Creek Tribe has yet to regain much of its original land, it does manage what it has sustainably, according to Gordon.

Before coming to work for the tribe, Vredenburg helped manage the Coquille Indian Tribe's portion of regained land, according to the parameters of the Northwest Forest Plan, protecting water quality, habitats and old-growth stands while producing an average of 3 million board-feet per year.

"They did so successfully, so that's the only land under the Northwest Forest Plan where both the environmental and timber targets have been met," Gordon said.

Douglas County has been the epicenter of controversy around timber harvest and endangered species,

particularly the spotted owl, but Vredenburg and Rondeau said Cow Creek can help provide models of a good approach to forest management that not only maintains the forest and its surrounding community, but improves it.

"I'm hoping through Tim's leadership and the tribe's historical desire to improve the landscape, we can provide methods and examples for others in the timber industry and environmentalists that can learn there is a happy medium," Rondeau said.

"That's one of our hopes in the Elliott project and really through anything the tribe works on, using traditional knowledge and blending that with modern technology and science to show relevant and effective management methods that support all the things we care about in the forest," Vredenburg said.

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