

# Logging

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tainty as to how much harvesting will take place.”

Most of the salvage logging is to be prepared and sold by June 30, 2021.

Oregon Department of Forestry spokesperson Jason Cox said there were three active timber sales which were being cut in the forest at the time of the fire, including one that was in the footprint of the fire.

“On the sales that weren’t in the burned areas, those weren’t affected,” Cox said.

The forestry department says it plants about 250,000 seedlings in an average year, roughly enough for 500 acres of

initial planting. To accomplish the reforestation needs, it will need about 3 million seedlings and another 3 million to 4 million seedlings for long-term reforestation.

Over 1 million acres of Oregon forests were scorched in the Labor Day wildfires. An estimated 40% of the damage occurred on private timber land. Early estimates put the economic impacts of the wildfires at \$1 billion.

Trees weren’t the only structures damaged by the wildfires.

In the 190 miles of road inside the perimeter of the wildfires in the Santiam State Forest, 79 miles of road have hazard trees that need removal, including 43 miles with high numbers of hazard trees.

There have been 19

sections of road that will need some restoration work, including debris removal, road repair and bank stabilization. And 112 of 1,254 culverts in the fire-damage area need replacement and 234 more will require maintenance.

The state opened a 30-day public comment period on the plan Monday and it runs through 5 p.m. on Dec. 23. Comments on the plan can be submitted at <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/recreation/pages/comment.aspx>, by email at [odf.sfcomments@oregon.gov](mailto:odf.sfcomments@oregon.gov) or in writing at ODF Public Affairs, 2600 State St., Salem, OR 97310.

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The Oregon Department of Forestry has developed a plan to salvage log parts of the Santiam Forest damaged in the wildfires. ABIGAIL DOLLINS / STATESMAN JOURNAL



A burned hillside outside of Gates, Oregon.

ABIGAIL DOLLINS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

# Mink

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Oregon has the nation’s fourth-largest farmed mink industry, after Wisconsin, Utah and Michigan. All three of those other states have had outbreaks on mink farms.

State and national environmental groups have been raising alarm about possible infections Oregon’s mink industry, the Statesman Journal reported last week.

“This was so foreseeable,” said Lori Ann Burd, with the Center for Biological Diversity, one of the groups urging Oregon to take action. “We’ll certainly be following up with the agency to demand answers and to find out what they’re doing to mitigate this outbreak and public health risk.”

In letters to Gov. Kate Brown and state agencies, the groups asked for immediate inspections of Oregon’s mink farms, as well as quarantines and a phased buy-out of the industry.

At that time, state officials said they did not intend to take any of the groups’ recommendations. Oregon’s state veterinarian has been communicating with mink farmers about the outbreaks, Cantu-Schomus has said.

“We have been engaged with the Oregon mink industry for some time, providing information on biosecurity to prevent the introduction of SARS-CoV-2 and were ready to respond,” State



A mass grave is prepared as Danish health authorities, assisted by members of the Danish Armed Forces, work to dispose of dead mink in a military area near Holstebro, Denmark, Monday, Nov. 9 2020. Denmark will cull about 17 million mink after a mutated form of coronavirus that can spread to humans was found on mink farms. MORTEN STRICKER, AP

Veterinarian Ryan Scholz said in a written statement Friday.

“The farmer did the right thing by self-reporting symptoms very early and he is now cooperating with us and the Oregon Health Authority in taking care of his animals and staff,” Scholz said. “So far, we have no reports of mink mortalities linked to the virus but that could change as the virus progresses.”

In Wisconsin, about 3,400 farmed mink have died over the past month after contracting the virus. And in Utah, about 10,000 mink have died since August.

In addition to Denmark and the United States, COVID-19 infections have been reported in the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and Italy and Greece, according to the World Health Organization.

All of the mink in the Oregon outbreak appear to have recovered, Cantu-Schomus said. ODA will test the mink 7-10 days after symptoms resolve, and, if necessary, continue testing every 14 days until no more infected mink are found.

The sample size will be significantly larger and will ensure with a 95% confidence level that if the virus was present it would be detected, she said.

“It is suspected that infected workers introduced SARS-CoV-2 to mink on the farm, and the virus then began to spread among the mink,” Cantu-Schomus said.

ODA is working with OHA, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Centers for Disease Control to investigate transmission dynamics among mink, other animals around the farm, and people, she said.

Last week, ODA offi-



A mink at a Denmark estate where all minks must be culled due to a government order on November 7, 2020. Ten samples from mink in Oregon were found to be positive for SARS-CoV-2, the animal virus linked to COVID-19.

OLE JENSEN / GETTY IMAGES

cialists said they had no plans to do inspections or test mink unless symptoms were reported. Cantu-Schomus was unable to say Friday whether that is still the case.

Michael Whelan is executive director of Medford-based Fur Commission USA, a national non-profit representing mink farmers.

He said the group is offering free COVID-19 test-

ing to farm operators and employees.

“All we can do is just keep reminding the farmers that this is serious and they have to screen all people that get anywhere near the mink,” Whelan said.

Cantu-Schomus was unable to say how many farmed mink there are in Oregon.

“There is no evidence that animals, including

mink, are playing a significant role in the spread of COVID-19 to people,” she said. “Currently in the U.S., there is no evidence of mink-to-human spread. However, investigations are ongoing.”

*Tracy Loew is a reporter at the Statesman Journal. She can be reached at [tloew@statesmanjournal.com](mailto:tloew@statesmanjournal.com), 503-399-6779 or on Twitter at @Tracy\_Loew.*

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