



## OSU Extension

# Tree health and fire preparedness

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Dying or declining trees stand out in contrast to the lush green of a new growing season in the forest. Bark beetles are the most common cause for dying trees in scattered locations across the Mid-Columbia region. Landowners and others in charge of tree care are advised to take special precautions to prevent bark beetle outbreaks and avoid attracting bark beetles to their trees. The first flight of bark beetles emerge from infested trees and tree debris beginning in April, with periodic emergence through the summer.

You may have heard Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) Forest Entomologist Christine Buhl on the radio talking about threats from bark beetles. She notes that while not every infestation will spread, the likelihood is greater when trees are struggling due to drought or root disease. OSU Extension is working with Christine and other forest entomologists in Oregon and Washington to provide some basic guidance for reducing risks due to bark beetles.

Though bark beetles are native to Oregon forests, recent episodes of drought, fire, and storm damage have increased bark beetle hazards. Major tree species affected are Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. The recommendations for dealing with bark beetles are different for each tree species.

With pine species, tree debris produced during the spring and summer is highly attractive to breeding bark beetles. When possible, schedule tree work such as thinning, pruning, and tree removal for fall and winter (October through December).

Tree debris and slash may be left on the ground during fall and winter time (best if it is scattered). When work on pine trees is done during spring and summer (hazard trees or other urgent needs), tree debris three

to eight inches in diameter should be disposed of within two months via chipping, burning, or hauling away. For more details, see slash management for bark beetle protection at [www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestbenefits/Slashmanagement.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestbenefits/Slashmanagement.pdf).

The Douglas-fir beetle prefers larger trees or logs, at least 10 inches in diameter. Local outbreaks of Douglas-fir beetle can be caused when groups of fallen trees or logs are left in the woods. The beetles breed in the down wood and their population may grow large enough to infest nearby green trees after a year or two. Fire damaged trees may also become infested to hazardous levels. Recommendations to reduce beetle hazards are to remove fallen trees, logs, or infested trees larger than 10-inches diameter before April of the first or second year after the tree falls. When removal is delayed (or not done), the repellent pheromone MCH can be effective in protecting green trees in the area. For more information, visit [www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestbenefits/Douglas-fir-beetle.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestbenefits/Douglas-fir-beetle.pdf) and MCH for Douglas-fir beetle management at [www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestbenefits/MCH\\_2016.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestbenefits/MCH_2016.pdf).

If a tree is completely dead and brown in color (dead for one year or more), bark beetle hazards are minimal. In this case, if trees are not considered hazardous, an acceptable alternative is to leave dead trees standing for wildlife use.

Note that any screen trees removed within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area must be replaced with new trees. Contact the CRG Commission for more information at [www.gorgecommission.org/default.cfm](http://www.gorgecommission.org/default.cfm).

### 'Fire Aware, Fire Prepared'

Reducing the amount of tree debris to mitigate bark beetle hazards also helps reduce fire hazards. But

there are other important steps that everyone can take to prepare for wildfire. To help prepare for another wildfire season, the OSU Extension Fire Program is providing Wildfire Wednesday educational sessions online. Episodes in the webinar series cover key aspects of preparing for and surviving wildfire. Look for the online webinar guide for upcoming sessions as well as video recordings of past sessions at [extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program/online-webinar-guide](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program/online-webinar-guide).

For questions about tree health or wildfire hazards, contact your OSU Extension Forester (Glenn Ahrens at 503-655-8631 [glenn.ahrens@oregonstate.edu](mailto:glenn.ahrens@oregonstate.edu)) or the Oregon Department of Forestry (The Dalles office, 541-296-4626).

### About OSU Extension

The Oregon State University Extension Service shares research-based knowledge with people and communities in Oregon's 36 counties. OSU Extension's partnerships and programs contribute to a healthy, prosperous and sustainable future for Oregon.



Director Michael Friend (right) and DP John Hardham (left) filming with MCEEDD Executive Director Jessica Metta at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center;

## Video wins national award for Columbia Gorge production team

Laughing Deva Productions, a Columbia Gorge-based video production company, has received a Silver Telly Award for their recent video produced for OneGorge. This marks the third Telly Award received by the Laughing Deva team. The Telly Awards honor excellence in video and television across all screens.

OneGorge is an advocacy group comprised of private and public sector leaders working to understand and advocate for the needs of individual communities and the regional community as a whole, according to a press release. In the past, OneGorge has hosted the "Gorgeous Night Out" events at the state capitals in Olympia and Salem, providing legislators and their staff a chance to network and gain an understanding of common issues OneGorge has identified that affect Oregon and Washington. The video was produced because of the unique situation in early 2021 due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. OneGorge contacted Laughing Deva to produce both the video and a live-streamed virtual event to take the place of the regular event for 2021. With the OneGorge video and the live-streamed "Gorgeous Night In" event, legislators were able to gain a full understanding of what OneGorge seeks to accomplish this year in support of regional goals, such as replacement of the Hood River Bridge, land use issues, and emergency management challenges, said a press release.

The video included on-camera appearances by regional leaders from MCEEDD, law enforcement, the Warm Springs Tribe, and county governments of both states. Mayor of White Salmon Marla Keethler and former Hood River Mayor Paul Blackburn co-hosted the March 10 event, live streamed from the theater of the Columbia Center for the Arts. State and Federal Representatives and Senators from Washington and Oregon attended virtually.

Genevieve Scholl, OneGorge program coordinator, said, "OneGorge is grateful to the Oregon and Washington legislators and their staff for continuously listening, helping with legislative action that yields real, tangible results for Gorge communities. Relationships really matter and this open platform that facilitates face-to-face and coordinated advocacy has proven to be very helpful."

Laughing Deva Productions consists of Director E. Michael Friend, Director of Photography John Hardham, and Associate Producer Joe Garoutte.

View the OneGorge video at [youtu.be/va0iuECRQoU](https://youtu.be/va0iuECRQoU).

## USDA to support economic development in National Scenic Areas impacted by wildfires

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development is making priority funding available to support economic development and create jobs in National Scenic Areas, located along waterways, that have been devastated by wildfires.

The funds may be used to establish business support centers; provide funds for job training and leadership development; or to support targeted technical assistance, training, feasibility studies, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses with fewer than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenue, said a press release.

Rural Development is reserving \$2 million under the Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Program for eligible projects in rural communities located on a river or ocean coastline. Priority is being given to National Scenic Areas impacted by wildfires. National Scenic Areas are environmentally-protected, federally-designated locations that have outstanding natural and scenic value.

State and local government entities, nonprofits, and federally-recognized tribes are eligible to apply. Proposed projects must be consistent with any local, tribal, or area-wide community and economic development strategic plans and support other economic development activities in the project area.

These grants are awarded on a competitive basis. Applications must be received by July 6 at 4:30 p.m. In Oregon, applications may be submitted electronically to [or.rd.bp.apps@usda.gov](mailto:or.rd.bp.apps@usda.gov) or mailed to USDA Rural Development, ATTN: Faith Harris, 1220 S.W. Third Ave., Suite 1801, Portland, OR 97204.

Prior to developing an application, interested applicants are encouraged to contact Faith Harris, business and cooperative programs specialist, 503-414-3358, to discuss their project proposal.

Additional information is also available on page 27365 of the May 20 Federal Register.



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**Columbia Gorge News**

[ColumbiaGorgeNews.com](http://ColumbiaGorgeNews.com)

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- Log Yard Operator/ Equipment Operator
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- Chain Puller

Full job descriptions and required application can be obtained at the main office located at 4865 Hwy 35 Hood River, OR 97031.

Job postings can also be found on Indeed.com