



AP Photo/Rick Bowmer

The Dollar Lake fire smolders in 2011 near Laurance Lake on Mount Hood. notforsale

Fires, low timber revenues plague Forestry Department

The agency spent more than it took in

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Harsh fire seasons and lower than expected revenues from timber harvests have and may continue to put state forests in a tough financial spot, according to the Oregon Department of Forestry.

The agency's state forest program, as of late January, spent more than it realized in revenue during the ongoing two-year budget period. And the agency says the state's Forest Development Fund, which funds state forests, will go into the red starting in 2022. Previous projections estimated that could happen in 2020.

The head of the agency's administrative services division told the Board of Forestry Wednesday that there are several other budget issues to "watch out" for, including lower-than-expected revenues from harvests of timber and other forest products.

Timber harvest tax revenues are about 9 percent lower than projected when the state was crafting its budget in 2015, due in part to a downturn in the Asian market in the intervening months, according to Satish

Upadhyay, head of the Department of Forestry's administrative services division and the chief financial officer for the agency.

And due to large wildfires in Oregon in 2013, 2014 and 2015, the amount of accounts receivable — essentially, money the agency has spent and is waiting to have reimbursed by other entities — is substantial.

"We have a huge amount of accounts receivable," Upadhyay told the board.

The amount is currently about \$92 million, Upadhyay said, with about \$80 million in costs incurred due to fires. The single largest entity that needs to reimburse the department is the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which owes the state about \$40 million to \$45 million, but there are several technical hurdles to leap before the state receives that money.

In the event that the department doesn't have enough cash on hand, it has a line of credit with the state treasurer.

"We've been using that quite a bit lately," said Upadhyay.

The current two-year budget for the agency approved by the Legislature is about \$432 million. Most of the department's revenue comes from other funds, such as timber sales, although about 21 percent comes from the state's general fund.

Gov. Kate Brown has proposed a \$349 million over-

all budget for the department for the next two years. That decrease from \$432 million is due in large part to the cost of unusually large wildfires.

However, in the face of a \$1.6 billion gap between expected revenues and the costs of maintaining existing services, the Legislature may reduce the department's expected budget further by cutting back on expenses in some of the Department of Forestry's programs.

Meanwhile, though, the department says it is making progress on implementing suggestions made by the Secretary of State's Office in an audit last year.

The audit found several significant issues: recent harsh fire seasons taxed Department of Forestry personnel and took away from the agency's other programs. Auditors recommended the agency conduct long-range workforce planning, better evaluate whether its fire prevention and detection measures were effective, and increase its fire mitigation efforts.

But Doug Grafe, head of the agency's fire protection division, said things were trending in the right direction.

"We're in a very good place," Grafe told the Board of Forestry Wednesday.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

Split vote advances Brown's nominees for environmental panel

By **PETER WONG**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown's three nominees for a new majority on the Environmental Quality Commission have advanced to a vote of the full state Senate.

But in a 3-2 vote Wednesday by the Senate Rules Committee, minority Republicans served notice they want the Legislature to weigh in on a pending plan for how the commission regulates toxic air pollution from industrial sources.

The shift that a Brown-appointed advisory panel recommends would focus state efforts on cumulative effects of pollutants on public health, rather than the amounts generated by individual plants.

The commission is the policy-making arm of the Department of Environmental Quality, which regulates a variety of pollutants.

The Republicans praised Brown's nominees — a scientist at Oregon State University, a tribal council member who has worked at the Department of Environmental Quality, and a retired wood products executive.

"Our bone of contention is not with the three of them, but for the next 48 hours, with the governor," said state Sen. Brian Boquist of Dallas.

"It is this notion of creating policy without regulatory or statutory authority. It is one of those constitutional clashes between the executive and legislative branches. I believe most of that will be resolved in the next day or two."

Although he voted "no," Boquist said he expects he will vote for the nominees when their names come up for a vote by the full Senate for four-year terms.

Brown abruptly fired three

commissioners in March and replaced them in what Boquist called "unusual circumstances." She said she disputed their process, but not the result, of hiring Richard Whitman as permanent director of the Department of Environmental Quality.

Such mass firings are rare, although Neil Goldschmidt requested and received resignations from all five members of the Oregon Transportation Commission upon becoming governor in 1987.

No quid pro quo

All the replacement nominees told the committee their appointments were not contingent upon automatic support of the new plan, which would allow the department to regulate pollutants generated from several sources in the same area even if an individual's pollutants are considered at a safe level.

"If the governor appoints you, I certainly would listen to her input," said Robert "Wade" Mosby of Lake Oswego, the retired wood products executive. "It does not mean I would rule with what the governor says; that was never implied."

Mosby has worked for several companies, including the privately held forest products company now known simply as Roseburg, although it is based in Springfield. He was a senior vice president for Collins, another company based in Portland.

"We recognize the desire that there needs to be a better path in Oregon for managing and regulating air toxics," said Kathleen George, a council member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and a former Department of Environmental Quality employee who worked with small communities for compliance. "The details of that have

not been shared with us beyond an overview of the air quality program."

"The minute you talk about using a natural resource, it is automatically contentious," said Molly Kile, an associate professor at Oregon State's College of Public Health and Human Sciences, who specializes in how exposure to chemicals affect public health.

"It is important that you hear from different stakeholders involved," she added, especially those who are often unrepresented in these public debates.

Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli of John Day responded: "I think the reticence of these members to comment without full information gives me confidence that they understand the complexities of these issues."

Tough job ahead

Brown appointed the advisory panel last year after public reaction to pollutants generated by two Portland eastside glass-makers — Bullseye Glass, which is now in compliance, and Uroboros Glass, which was sold in December and its production moved to Mexico — and by Precision Castparts at its plant in southeast Portland.

The panel's plan also calls for the state to set health-based concentrations for 215 toxic air pollutants, up from the current 52. Formal rulemaking by the commission would start in a year.

Majority Democrats were largely silent. But Sen. Lee Beyer of Springfield, who sat on the Public Utility Commission from 2001 to 2010, had an observation for the nominees.

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Seaside man in standoff accepts plea deal

By **JACK HEFFERNAN**
The Daily Astorian

The Seaside man involved in a standoff with police in January reached a plea deal earlier this month with the Clatsop County District Attorney's Office, agreeing to supervised probation.

Brian Wallin, 49, locked himself inside his home on Whispering Pines Drive for nearly 64 hours. He fired a number of shots before surrendering to police.

Wallin's mother exited the home uninjured shortly after the standoff began. He shot and killed the family dog during the standoff.

Wallin was later indicted on six counts of unlawful use of a weapon, seven counts of reck-

lessly endangering another person and one count of first degree aggravated animal abuse. He pleaded no contest to one count of unlawful use of a weapon, one count of aggravated animal abuse in the first degree and two counts of recklessly endangering another person.

In addition to three years of supervised probation, Wallin agreed to serve 90 days in jail with credit for time served and treatment court with a mental health evaluation. He also agreed to forfeit all weapons and not care for animals for 15 person.

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8 Alice Winifred Herrmann 97
8 Nels Irving Rasmussen 93
10 Katherine Ann Lemke 73
12 Stanley Robert Helligso 73
13 Verna Elina Branthover 99
13 Patricia Bradshaw Button 89
14 John Benham Spring 80
17 Paul Virginius Mossberg 93
18 Erma Mae Houck 91
19 Richard Herman Babcock 89
22 Kenneth Raymond Kelly 88
22 Marian Joan Bauer 86
27 Phyllis Alene Linehan 87

**Heaven's Honor Roll
February of 2017**

5 Geraldine Mabel Holmgren 92
6 William Melvin Roach 46
8 Henna Marja Lammi 90
11 Marjorie Ruth Wilcoxon 96
11 Lionel Richard Cloutier 64
12 Brandon Allen Getten 29
14 Alice Lorene Merrill 84
16 Joan Elizabeth Roberts 74
17 Doris Jean Abrahamson 94
17 Pamela Ellen Lindstrom 58
18 Elvi Kristina Brunner 88
18 Michelle Marie Berry 47
18 Dennis Tim Waddell 75
20 Gertrude Maria Rinell 92
20 Lawrence Alan Pfund 59
21 Sherman Daryl Birney 76
23 Jay Severin Westerholm 68
24 Joan Memrie Logan 92
26 Carylon Maurine Viuhkola 68

**Heaven's Honor Roll
March of 2017**

3 Roberta Jean French 82
5 Lillian Louise Nimmo 88
7 Jerry E. Davis 81
7 Virginia Kathryn Lee 87
7 Thomas Anthony Rudolphi 86
10 Lynn Jimette Brown 60
11 Ruth Charlotte Huckaby 85
13 Steven Edward King 61
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