

Timber harvests are still in decline, says Oregon Dept. of Forestry

Oregon's timber harvests continued their decline, since 2004, with only 3.80 billion board feet harvested in 2007, a 12 percent decrease from the 2006 harvest volume of 4.33 billion board feet. This is the smallest Oregon timber harvest since the recession-based record low recorded in 2001.

"However, with relatively strong plywood demand, non-residential construction, and fewer log imports from adjacent states, Oregon timber harvests declined less than half of the percentage drop in national housing starts," said Gary Lettman, forest economist with the Oregon Department of Forestry.

The reduction in timber har-

vest volumes came from declining harvests from private forestland owners. An 11 percent, or 344 million board feet (mbf), decrease in volume from forest industry land-owners was accompanied by a 43 percent decline in harvests on non-industrial private lands, which went from 422 mbf in 2006 to 240 mbf in 2007. Federal harvests remained at historically low levels, accounting for less than 10 percent of the cut.

Timber harvests were down in both western Oregon and eastern Oregon. Harvests in all of western Oregon declined 11 percent from 2006 levels, driven primarily by the 44 percent decrease on non-industrial pri-

vate lands, from 351 mbf to 198 mbf.

Rural communities in eastern Oregon continue to lose raw materials for their 10 remaining sawmills, as timber harvesting become increasingly concentrated in the western part of the state. Since 1991, the percentage of timber harvests that have come from eastern Oregon has declined from 31 percent in 1991 to 11 percent in 2007. In eastern Oregon, much of the 23 percent overall harvest decrease can be attributed to a 97 million board feet harvest reduction by forest industry landowners.

Lane County continues to lead Oregon counties in harvesting, despite a 15 percent

decrease to 504 mbf in 2007. Douglas County was second with 479 mbf, while Clatsop and Coos were third and fourth with 338 and 303 mbf, respectively.

Overall, harvests decreased in all western Oregon counties except Curry, Hood River, Linn and Yamhill, resulting in the 11 percent decline in that region.

In eastern Oregon, harvest levels diminished in all counties except Crook and Harney. Despite a 30 percent reduction in harvest volume from 2006, Klamath County continues to har-

vest the most timber in eastern Oregon with 107 mbf in 2007.

This information and more is available in the recently released Oregon Department of Forestry 2007 Annual Timber Harvest Report – a compilation of data relating to timber harvesting and other forest practices in Oregon.

The 2007 report, as well as previous annual reports, is available online on the department's website at www.oregon.gov/ODF/STATE_FORESTS/FRP/annual_Reports.shtml.

Public asked to report any turtles

In an effort to keep Oregon's native turtles healthy, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists ask Oregonians to be on the lookout for turtles this summer and to report any sightings.

"Turtles are often seen on land at this time of year," said Susan Barnes, ODFW wildlife biologist. "They are usually females in search of suitable nesting grounds to lay their eggs. The best thing to do is leave them alone and let them continue on their path."

Barnes also warns motorists driving along streams and rivers to watch for turtles crossing. "Our native turtles are in decline, so anything we can do this summer to protect them is helpful."

How to report a turtle sighting – If you see a turtle, report it via the Internet on the Native Turtles of Oregon Web site, at <http://www.oregonzoo.org/Turtles/> If you do not have Internet access, call your local ODFW office.

Oregon has two native turtles: western painted and western pond, both of which are listed on the state sensitive species list and highlighted in the Oregon Conservation Strategy as species in need of help. Both turtles are dark brown or dull olive, but the western painted turtle is brightly decorated with a reddish lower shell and yellow stripes on its neck and legs. As adults, turtles are 4-9 inches long. Population declines are due to habitat loss, degradation of nesting areas by invasive plants, competition from non-native turtles, illegal

collecting and disease.

Western pond turtles are found in the Coast Range, East Cascades, Klamath Mountains, West Cascades and Willamette Valley ecoregions. Western painted turtles occur in the Willamette Valley and Blue Mountain ecoregions and along the Columbia River.

It is not legal to hold native turtles in captivity. According to Barnes, if you want native turtles on your property, you have to attract them by providing suitable habitat. "Take the build-it-and-they-will-come approach," she said.

Unfortunately, there are also two species of non-native turtles in Oregon that out-compete native turtles for nesting areas, basking sites and suitable habitat. They are red-eared sliders and common snapping turtles. Red-eared sliders have red "ears" (markings) on the side of their heads. Snapping turtles are very large with a big head and long jagged tail; they are especially destructive as they consume native fish, plants and wildlife.

It is illegal in the state to buy, sell, possess or release either of these non-native turtles. If you've just realized you are in possession of a non-native turtle, contact your local ODFW office.

For more information about Oregon's native turtles, visit <http://www.willametteturtles.com/>. To see photos of native and non-native turtles, visit the ODFW website, <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/conservation-strategy/turtles.asp>.

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