

Living Among Timberlands

Hood River County contains over 284,000 acres of forestland; so chances are that you live close to some timberlands. Of this forested area the USDA Forest Service owns 70%, Hood River County 11%, Longview Timber Company 10% and the remaining 9% is in smaller privately and publicly held tracts.

Management

How the timberlands around you are managed depends largely on who owns them and what rules they have to follow.

Regulation of USDA Forest Service lands is guided by the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan and other federal environmental laws. The Plan is an overall vision for the Pacific Northwest that allows for some production of timber products while protecting natural resources.

Private and non-federal public lands are regulated by the Oregon Forest Practices Act. The goal of the Act is to offer opportunities for the continued growth and harvest of forest tree species as the leading use while protecting soil, air, water, scenic, fish and wildlife resources.

So what can you expect?

Common forest management activities in Hood River County may include preparation of the land for planting, vegetation control with herbicides, reforestation, pre-commercial thinning, road construction, commercial thinning, clearcut harvesting and slash treatment. During the harvest you can expect to hear chainsaws, see logging trucks, smell burning slash and see a changed landscape. Remember, just because there are trees next to you when you move in, does not mean they will be there forever, especially if you don't own them.

Economic Contribution

The forests in Hood River County contribute significantly to the local economy by providing raw wood products and a haven for recreational activity. Hood River County forests alone contribute nearly 44% of the county's general fund through sustainable harvest

Resources

Hood River County: www.co.hood-river.or.us

WSU Extension Forester: (509) 427-3930

Oregon Dept. of Forestry: www.oregon.gov/ODF/



management of its 31,000 acres. There are two forest products mills in the county and two more just outside its boundaries. Additionally, there is a thriving retail sector devoted to forest recreation activities such as trail use and hunting.

What are your rights?

Regardless of who owns the land, forest products may not be harvested without written permission or a permit from the landowner. Also, a transport permit from the landowner is required to transport special forest products including firewood, plants, rock and Christmas trees.

Some landowners may allow public access on their private forestland. However, landowners or the Oregon Department of Forestry may prohibit certain activities or control access during times of high fire danger to prevent wildfires.

How can you find out about upcoming timber harvests? You can maintain a subscription from the Oregon Department of Forestry to notify you when operations may occur on specified lands for an annual fee. Otherwise, maintaining communication with neighbors may provide sufficient information regarding their plans and activities.

Article written in cooperation with: Doug Thiesies of the Oregon Department of Forestry and Henry Buckalew of the Hood River County Forestry Department