

WOODPECKER HARVEST BACKGROUND:

The current conditions of the McDonald-Dunn reflect its decades-long history as a working forest and do not reflect the natural structure nor function of the historical forests of the area, which were primarily oak savannah and likely open conifer forests, stewarded by the Kalapuya for generations prior to Euro-American colonization.

The portion of the forest where the Woodpecker Harvest is taking place is dominated by dense stands of Douglas-fir, planted and stewarded by the College of Forestry after the forest was acquired by OSU via generous donations nearly 100 years ago. These forests have been planted, thinned and nurtured with the intention of future forest management, including the types of harvests currently planned.

There is much interest in lengthening rotations and evaluating alternatives to large clearcut-based, even-aged forest management. The Woodpecker project represents both extended rotation lengths with retention of legacy trees and provides research and demonstration projects achieving structural and compositional complexity on the forest. Forestry is a long-term practice, and our efforts are aimed at achieving forest conditions 10 – 50 years into the future.

The Woodpecker project is planned in two phases, using three silvicultural approaches outlined in Theme 4 of the existing [forest plan](#). The phases are designed to support diverse plant and wildlife communities and healthy forest ecosystems. The three silvicultural approaches in the Woodpecker project include:

- 1: Thinning to support the health and vigor of the forest by reducing competition for resources (e.g., light, water, nutrients) between mature trees growing too close together.
- 2: Oak restoration, which entails removing Douglas-fir and other species growing close to native Oregon white oaks to allow the oaks to flourish. Oregon white oaks are an important part of both the historical and current cultural and ecological landscape on the McDonald Dunn Forest and surrounding areas. We have received strong guidance from Oregon Tribal Nations that as a land-grant institution, we are obligated to do oak savannah restoration on college forests. Portions of the Woodpecker project fulfill this request from Oregon Tribes.
- 3: Patch cuts, which create structurally diverse and complex forests with trees of varied sizes (diameters), heights, and ages. The intent of these operations is to remove trees from small patches (each <4 acres) to create a multi-aged forest with small gaps across a landscape scale.

No harvest is occurring in reserve areas of the McDonald-Dunn Forest. We strive to preserve legacy trees unless they are determined to be structurally deficient and/or pose a significant threat (or hazard) to infrastructure (such as roads or structures) or recreational forest users.

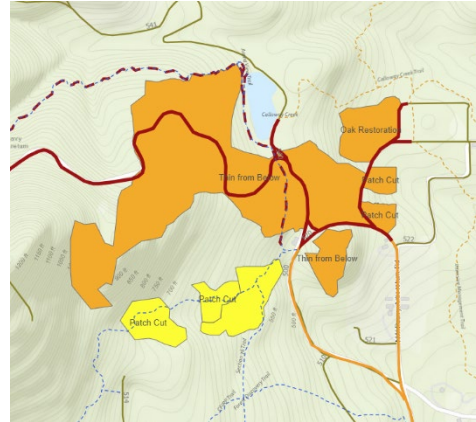
The Woodpecker project aligns with the long-term interests of supporting, studying and restoring healthy forest ecosystems in the Peavy Arboretum area for many generations to come. By integrating three silvicultural approaches in close proximity to one another, this project provides extensive opportunities for teaching and outreach demonstrations, in addition to the research opportunities associated with evaluating alternatives to large clearcut-based, even-aged forest management.

[Learn more here.](#)

WOODPECKER HARVEST FAQ:

Q: Where is the Woodpecker Harvest taking place?

A: The Woodpecker Harvest is taking place in Peavy Arboretum on the McDonald Research Forest on a 64-acre stand near the Forestry Club Cabin and Cronemiller Lake. An interactive map of the harvest can be [found here](#).



Q: Why is this harvest being done?

A: Active management is a core tenet of the research forests' mission as a tool for teaching and demonstration. The McDonald-Dunn is a managed forest and this stand has been planted, thinned and nurtured with the intention of future forest management. The plot where the Woodpecker Harvest is taking place was last thinned in 1999. The current selective-thinning project will release larger trees, allowing them to continue to grow well. The harvest will also restore conditions to allow native oak to flourish and there will be three smaller patch cuts (< 4 acres) to create future conditions for multi-aged forest across a landscape scale.

Q: What about profit? Doesn't the college make a lot of money from logging?

A: The McDonald-Dunn is an actively managed research forest that is achieving outstanding ecological conditions while generating wood products and supporting education, recreation, research and outreach. The condition of the McDonald-Dunn Forest that we know and love today is a direct result of timber harvest and active management that has taken place on the forest over the last 90+ years. The Woodpecker Harvest is a selective-thinning and restoration harvest, aimed at achieving several ecological objectives to support long-term forest health and resilience. This makes the project complex and labor-intensive, and due to the high costs associated with this approach, there will be very limited revenue generated from the harvest. Any revenue that is generated will be reinvested directly back into the forest through replanting, road and trail maintenance, research, recreation management and staffing.

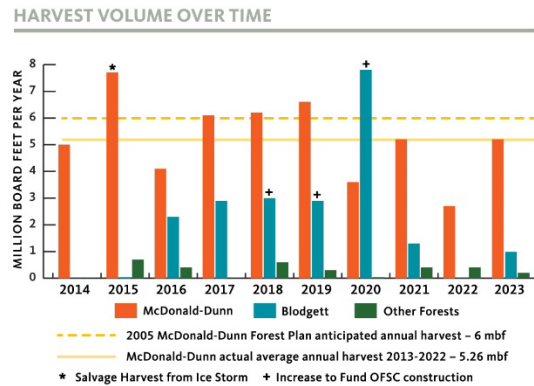
The OSU Research Forests receive zero outside funding — not from OSU, the state, taxpayers or the College of Forestry. They are entirely self-sustaining. Revenue from harvests keeps the forests operational and open to recreational users. After forest operating expenses are covered, any remaining revenue is first contributed to the forest financial reserves, and then to research, teaching and advising. Reserves are required to cover forest operation and staffing costs for a minimum of three years, should timber harvests temporarily decrease or economic conditions result in lower revenue from timber sales. More about the self-sustaining model [is available here](#).

Q: I read that the Woodpecker Harvest is old growth. Why are you cutting old trees?

A: The stand where the Woodpecker Harvest is taking place is not old growth. This project is taking place in a managed forest stand where the average age of the trees is 108 years old. The stand was planted and previously thinned by OSU for the purpose of future active management. In fact, one of the primary ecological objectives of this thinning is to release larger trees, allowing them to continue to grow well. The largest trees and legacy trees within the stand boundary will be retained, unless they are structurally deficient and/or pose real hazard to infrastructure (nearby roads and structures) or recreational forest users.

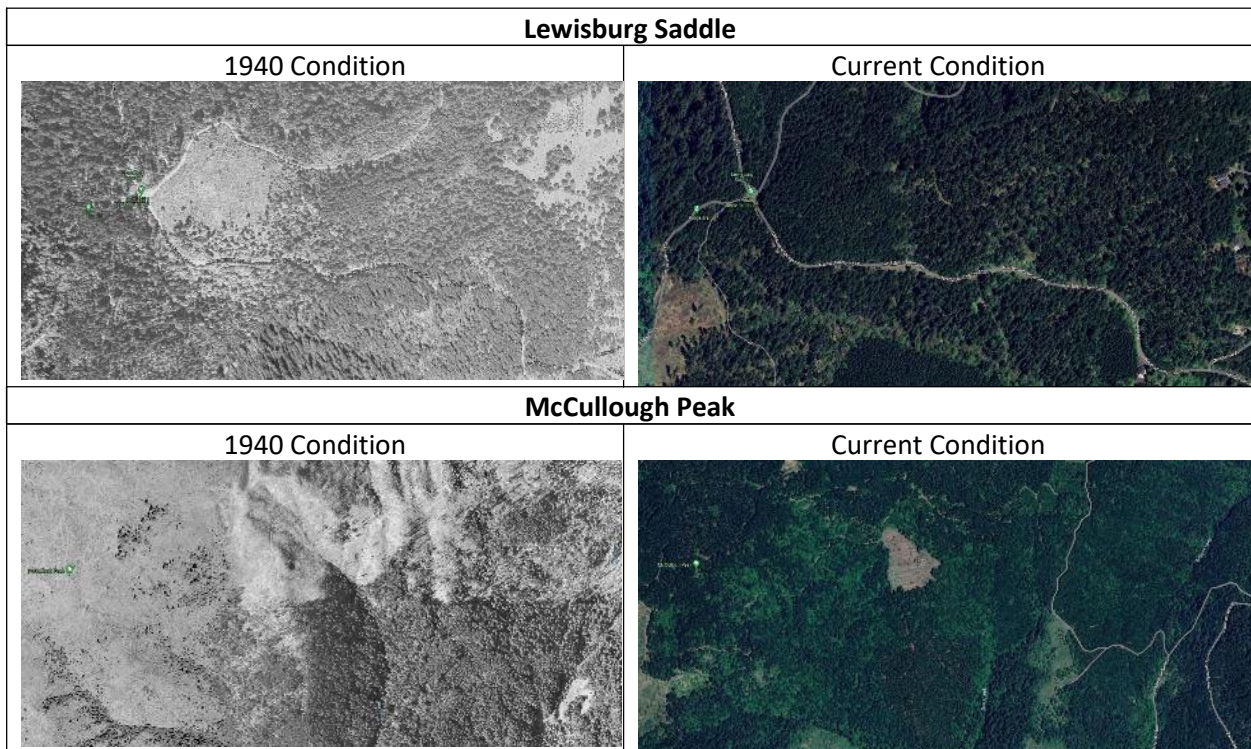
Q: It seems like there has been a lot of logging on the McDonald-Dunn lately. Why is it increasing?

A: It isn't. Harvest volume on the McDonald-Dunn has remained consistent, and is below the anticipated harvest volume outlined in the existing 2005 Forest Plan of 6 million board feet per year. Forestry, like many agricultural practices, is rotational. If you've noticed more harvest activity recently, it is likely because there are periods of time where timber harvests on the research forests are more visible to recreational forest users and community members because they are nearby popular trails or local roads.



Q: Why can't you leave the forest natural, the way it was?

A: The existing conditions on the McDonald-Dunn as a whole are not a "natural condition." Stating otherwise ignores the fact that Kalapuya people stewarded the land that is now the McDonald-Dunn for generations prior to Euro-American colonization. The acquisition of the McDonald Forest started in 1926 with lands around Peavy Arboretum and expanded with the majority of the McDonald Forest purchased by 1936. The college has planted, harvested, managed and nurtured these forests since that time. The fact is that the majority of the lands that make up the McDonald Forest would have historically been in oak savannah and fairly open Douglas-fir conifer forests. There are far more trees on the forest today than at any point in the past 120 years. As an example, the photos below compare the conditions in 1940 with today for Lewisburg Saddle and McCullough Peak.



Q: Why do you have to cut trees so close to my favorite trail?

A: The College of Forestry is proud to offer recreation opportunities in the McDonald-Dunn Forest and chooses to do so because we believe that active management and recreation are compatible. While rotational timber harvests may create temporary disturbances to recreation, the college carefully considers — [and researches](#) — the impacts of harvest on forest aesthetics near popular trails and landmarks. Forestry is a long-term practice, and our efforts are aimed at achieving forest conditions 10 – 50 years into the future, to ensure that the forest is healthy for generations to come.

Q: Is it true that the OSU Research Forests are public lands?

A: No. The OSU Research Forests are not funded or managed as “public lands” by the state. By design, the OSU Research Forests are fully self-funded through sustainable harvests, with zero funding provided by the College of Forestry, Oregon State University, the State of Oregon or taxpayers. Although OSU Research Forests are legally held in the name of the State of Oregon, acting by and through the OSU Board of Trustees, ORS [352.113](#) gives the university custody and control of all real property. This means that the ultimate authority and responsibility for decisions on the use and management of university resources reside with the Board of Trustees either directly, or as delegated to university staff, as in the case of the research forests. As with all OSU-owned real property, the university is not required to open the research forests to the public. However, the College of Forestry has chosen to provide recreation opportunities on the McDonald-Dunn Forest and supports these efforts with revenue generated by the forest.

Q: Why didn't you request public input on this harvest?

A: Harvests are planned approximately 1.5 years in advance of taking place, according to the existing [forest plan](#). This allows us to secure contractors, conduct ecological and cultural surveys and minimize impacts on the forest ecosystem and recreation. The college is open to input from the public regarding management decisions, but ultimately must choose what aligns with the forest management plan and fulfills the research, education and outreach missions of the university.

Q: Aren't there other ways to fund the forest? What about selling carbon offsets?

A: OSU has and continues to explore [alternate ways](#) to generate revenue for the forests. Active management will always remain a core tenet of the research forests' mission as a tool for teaching and demonstration, and provides a proven sustainable model for forest operations. Other revenue generation options such as recreation and parking fees would limit equitable access to the forest and are therefore not a viable option. Due to the way the carbon offset markets work, carbon revenue is also is not a viable option. Beyond issues with current [carbon offset protocols](#), even if all timber harvest were stopped on the McDonald-Dunn forest, the “carbon revenue” that replaced the harvest would only cover a fraction of the forest operational costs — generously estimated at less than half of the annual road maintenance budget.