

Monitoring Investments in Oregon's Federal Forest Restoration Program

2021-2023 Biennium

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About the Ecosystem Workforce Program:

The Ecosystem Workforce Program is a bi-institutional program of University of Oregon's Institute for Resilient Organizations, Communities, and Environments and the College of Forestry at Oregon State University. We conduct applied social science research and extension services at the interface of people and natural resources. Our publications aim to inform policy makers and practitioners, and contribute to scholarly and practical discourse.

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Images

Cover: Southwest Oregon District's Edge 1 project site. The left side has been thinned, and the right side is unthinned.

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Executive Summary

The Federal Forest Restoration (FFR) Program is a joint effort among the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), federal forest managers, and public lands stakeholders to increase the pace, scale, and quality of federal forest restoration across Oregon. The program supports management for forest resilience on federal lands as well as economic opportunities for surrounding communities. This working paper provides an update on FFR Program investments and outcomes for the 2021-2023 biennium. Reports from the previous biennium (2019-2021) can be found elsewhere¹. Here we report: 1) FFR Program expenditures, 2) economic activity from timber sales and the FFR grant investments, 3) on-the-ground accomplishments of the FFR Program, and 4) stakeholders' perspectives on the FFR Program's successes and challenges.

Key findings

- The State of Oregon was projected to invest a total of \$6.4 million in the FFR Program for the 2021-2023 biennium. In addition, the FFR Program leveraged \$4 million in federal funds from Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) agreements, which included \$2.2 million from Restoration Service agreements and \$1.9 million from Timber Sale agreements.
- **Planning Assistance and Categorical Exclusions (PACE)** investments aim to expand and accelerate the planning of forest restoration treatments. The lack of pre-approved projects that have been through National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance is identified by ODF as a key factor inhibiting the pace and scale of federal forest restoration efforts. PACE investments are intended to assist federal forest man-

1. <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/27901>

agers plan increasingly complex projects that are larger in size in a shorter amount of time. ODF intends to achieve this by supporting innovation in business processes that improve efficiency of the project planning process or have impact beyond the project boundary, and investing in projects that involve multiple partners, are adjacent to non-federal jurisdictions, and integrate multiple resource restoration objectives beyond vegetation management. For the 2021-2023 biennium, the state invested \$674,000 in PACE, which went to NEPA surveys (heritage and botany) on nearly 19,000 acres and a full contracted NEPA Categorical Exclusion (CE) project covering 100 acres.

- **Crew work** funds support seasonal or limited duration, off-season ODF firefighters or employees who work on federal forest activities under GNA agreements. The State invested \$80,000 in crew funds for the 2021-2023 biennium. This work included fuels reduction and forest thinning on Rogue River-Siskiyou and Malheur National Forests.
- **Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS)** grants provide expertise to forest collaboratives to strengthen local forest management capacity. For the 2021-2023 biennium, the FFR Program funded seven applied research and technical assistance projects across five national forests and two BLM districts. These efforts were awarded a total of \$250,000. Projects ranged from studies of forest carbon storage potential to collaborative facilitator training.
- **Collaborative Grants** support facilitation and operating costs for forest collaborative groups, which work to foster collaboration and consensus among stakeholders involved in and impacted by restoration projects. During the 2021-2023 biennium, the state awarded a total of \$477,000 to eight collaborative groups working in eight national forests and two Bureau of Land Management (BLM) districts. Additionally, the grants leveraged an additional \$259,000 in documented in-kind support or matching funds.
- **FFR Program staff** administer the program and serve as liaisons among collaborative groups, agencies, and forest communities. Program staff also plan and implement on-the-ground restoration work performed

under the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA). This biennium, the state invested \$4.2 million on permanent FFR staff including the FFR Lead, five FFR Unit Foresters/Coordinators, eight FFR Foresters, and ten FFR Technicians.

- **Program changes.** For the 2021-2023 biennium, PACE replaced the State-Federal Implementation Partnership (SFIP), which was an initiative that leveraged state capacity to provide services through contracts or agreements to federal agencies. PACE began in the 2019-2021 biennium as a subset of SFIP and has now fully replaced it. Additionally, 16 FFR staff were added to the program, greatly increasing the number of full-time staff available for project planning and implementation and the reducing the program's reliance on staff from other ODF programs or seasonal crews.

Introduction

The Federal Forest Restoration (FFR) Program is administered by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and involves the USDA Forest Service, USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and public lands stakeholders. The goal of the FFR Program is to increase the pace, scale, and quality of forest restoration and resilience efforts on federal lands through collaboration among stakeholders. The FFR Program additionally leverages forest management efforts to support regional economies and long-term vitality for rural communities through collaboration.

The FFR Program has been funded by the Oregon State Legislature since fiscal year 2014. The State has invested about \$15 million in the FFR Program over the four biennia (eight years) prior to the current biennium (FY 2022-2023) and a total of \$21 million including the current biennium.

Six strategic program areas make up the FFR Program:

1. **Planning Assistance and Categorical Exclusions (PACE)** is an initiative that began in the 2019-2021 biennium to expedite the pace of restoration project planning. PACE invests in innovations in planning and data collection to accelerate the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) approval process and create more ready-to-implement projects.

2. **Crew work** funding is utilized for temporary or limited duration off-season firefighters or ODF employees from other programs working on federal forest GNA activities.
3. **Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS)** grants are awarded to technical assistance providers, such as universities, non-profits, or businesses, to assist forest collaborative groups in expanding scientific and technical capacities. TASS projects range from scientific research to outreach and communications assistance.
4. **Collaborative Grants** are awarded to forest collaborative groups to increase capacity and expand collaboratively managed restoration projects on federal lands. Collaborative Grants are primarily used to develop or expand zones of agreement (ZOA), which are collaborative agreements focused on establishing shared goals related to a restoration project, forest planning allocation unit, forest type, or specific ecological issue.
5. **ODF FFR Program staff** are responsible for facilitation of the FFR Program, including planning, implementing, and monitoring forest resilience treatments; managing activity tracking data; coordinating among collaboratives, agencies, and communities; and inte-

grating FFR Program activities with related agency initiatives or programs to conduct cross-boundary restoration work.

6. **Project management** includes legal, administrative, and communication support for the FFR Program, including program monitoring and evaluation.

This working paper reports on FFR Program investments during the 2021-2023 state funding biennium. It additionally outlines the impact of those investments on organizational relationships and local economies, as well as successes and challenges of the Program. This report is one of a series of prior FFR Program monitoring reports written by the Ecosystem Workforce Program and provides an update to the Monitoring Investments in Oregon's FFR Program 2019-2021 Biennium report¹.

As FFR investment streams and sources grow more numerous and complex, we continue to report only on outcomes and metrics that are directly provided by ODF through the FFR Program. This report also contributes more broadly to the growing effort to monitor progress and effectiveness of state and federal investments in forest restoration. The purpose of these efforts is to inform program management and policy to ensure implementation is effective and outcomes meet ecological, social, and economic goals.



Approach

We collected and analyzed quantitative data from ODF documents and staff, as well as qualitative data from stakeholder interviews. Here we report: 1) FFR Program expenditures, 2) economic activities within Oregon supported by FFR Program expenditures and timber sales, 3) on-the-ground outcomes of FFR Program activities, and 4) stakeholder perspectives on successes and challenges of the FFR Program.

Calculating FFR Program expenditures

We calculated cumulative FFR Program expenditures and present these figures in three different forms: 1) biennium expenditures, 2) program area expenditures, and 3) geographic distribution of expenditures (by national forest or ODF District). We cross-checked budgets, grant agreements, and contracts to determine budgeted and actual expenditures. We report cumulative expenditures from State allocations to the FFR Program, federal cash, and timber receipts separately. We reviewed GNA agreements for federal contributions, including cash and timber receipts. However, we did not include the GNA agreement funds in the economic analysis in this report, which focuses on state investments in the FFR Program only.

Our reporting timeline occurred prior to the end of the 2021-2023 biennium; thus, some FFR Program funds had not yet been spent at the time of writing. Consequently, we report those funds as “allocated”, rather than actual expenditures.

Calculating economic activity from program expenditures

FFR Program investments support jobs across several sectors as they flow through the economy. We estimated the impact of FFR investments on Oregon's economy with the economic model IMPLAN, along with tools and procedures developed by the Forest Service. To understand project activities and expenditures, we reviewed project budgets, collection agreements, and final expenditure reports. To focus on the Oregon economy, we removed funds allocated to out-of-state cooperators. Using the Forest Service's analytical approaches, we categorized

project activities into different types (e.g., scientific studies or on-the-ground technical surveys) and linked those types to sectors represented in IMPLAN to estimate economic effects across the state. To estimate the economic activity from timber sales, we applied the analytical methods used by the Forest Service, which translate sale volumes and an assumed wood product mix into economic activity.

We describe FFR Program economic impacts in terms of annual jobs and gross regional product. Job figures represent 12-months of full or part time work. Two jobs lasting six months or three jobs lasting four months both represent one 12-month job as reported here. Gross regional product is the state level equivalent of gross domestic product and represents “value added” by businesses and workers to the final goods and services produced. This value can be defined as the final price of the goods and services produced minus the cost of the non-labor production inputs. For jobs and gross regional product, we estimate both the direct and secondary economic effects. The direct effects represent impacts of initial FFR investments, such as jobs supported by FFR Program contracts. The secondary effects are impacts realized later on as businesses sell to each other and employees spend their income resulting from the direct effects.

Calculating on-the-ground accomplishments

We include 1) NEPA surveys and other work completed by contractors funded by PACE, 2) ODF crew and staff project work completed on federal forests, 3) technical assistance and scientific projects funded through TASS, and 4) restoration treatments and timber sales associated with collaboratively planned projects. We obtained details of the nature and extent of PACE and TASS accomplishments through outcome reports, grant contracts, and interviews with grant recipients. We initially utilized tracking information provided by FFR Program staff to understand tangible, on-the-ground accomplishments of the FFR Program, then sought further clarification and additional information through communication with FFR Program staff. We used the Forest Service's Forest Activity Tracking System database and timber sale information from Forest Service staff to identify the quantity and type of implementation activities linked to FFR Program-funded collaborative groups.

Stakeholder perspectives

We conducted 14 semi-structured interviews between February and April 2023 with ODF staff and FFR Program funding recipients. The purpose of the interviews was to solicit qualitative feedback about the FFR Program and the implementation of FFR Program-funded projects, such as successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. A full list of interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

For the Collaborative Grants component, we conducted interviews in May 2023 with representatives from each of the eight funded forest collaboratives. These interviews focused on identifying continuing or new on-the-ground

projects that the funded collaboratives have worked on as well as non-project specific activities that enhance project efforts. We also asked about factors that helped or hindered the collaborative's capacity and how they used the Collaborative Grants. To see a full list of interview questions, refer to Appendix B.



Results

Overview

Total FFR Program Funding, 2021-2023

The State of Oregon invested a total of \$6.4 million in the FFR Program for the 2021-2023 biennium, which was allocated across each of the six program areas (Figure 1).

While PACE, TASS, crew work, and Collaborative Grants can usually be linked to specific federal land management units, FFR staff and project management funds are typically allocated to a specific ODF district or statewide. For this biennium, the State of Oregon invested in all 11 national forests, as well as the Medford and Coos Bay BLM Districts (Figures 2 and 3). Willamette National Forest, followed by Rogue River-Siskiyou, received the largest amount of FFR funding for the 2021-2023 biennium.

The State spent a total of \$3.9 million in federal funds from GNA agreements during the 2021-2023 biennium. This included \$2.1 million from Restoration Service agreements and \$1.8 million from Timber Sale agreements.

State appropriations to the FFR Program

The FFR budget (\$6.4 million) allocated for this biennium supported each of the six program areas. The largest investment, totaling \$4.22 million, was made in permanent FFR Program staff. These investments ensure the coordination and oversight of forest restoration activities across the state. Investments through PACE awards accounted for the second largest investment with \$674,000 allocated towards increasing the pace and scale of restoration projects through expediting the NEPA process and ensuring efficient project planning.

The State of Oregon invested just over \$1 million in efforts with a state-wide focus (program management and FFR Program staff) and \$80,000 in crew work. Eight of the national forests received PACE investments, with the largest award going to Ochoco National Forest. TASS awards, which fund technical and scientific service providers supporting forest collaboratives, were distributed among five national forests and two BLM districts, as well as state-wide. Lastly, eight forest collaborative groups working in eight national forests and one BLM District were supported by \$477,000 in Collaborative Grants.

Figure 1. Total FFR Program investments by program area, 2013-2023.

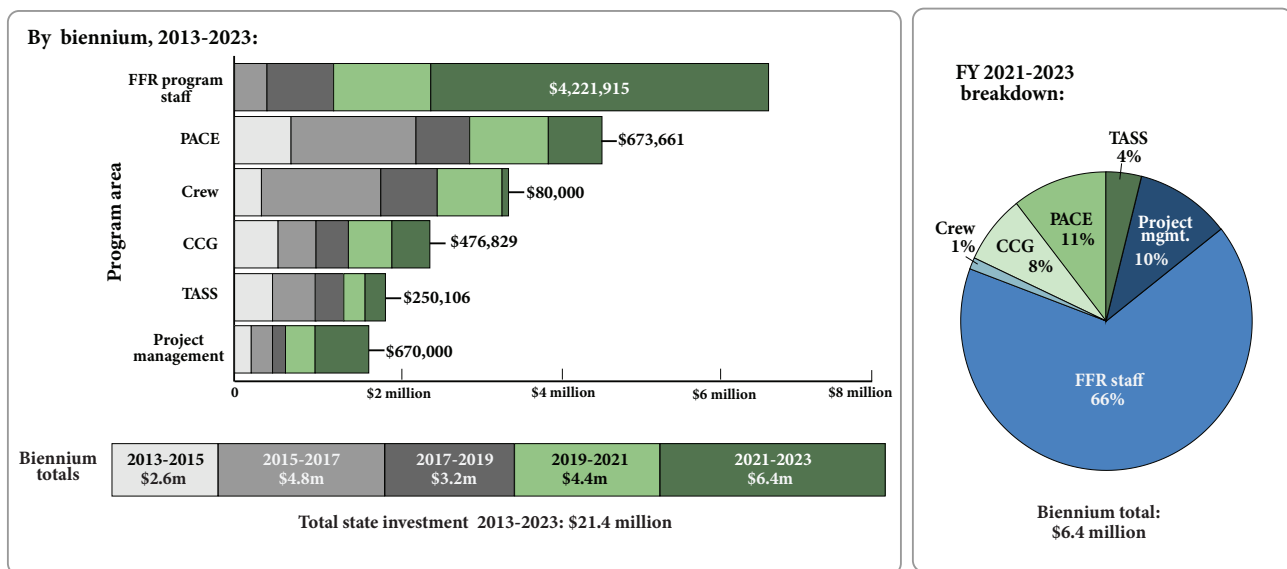


Figure 2. FFR Program total spending by federal land management unit during the 2021-2023 biennium

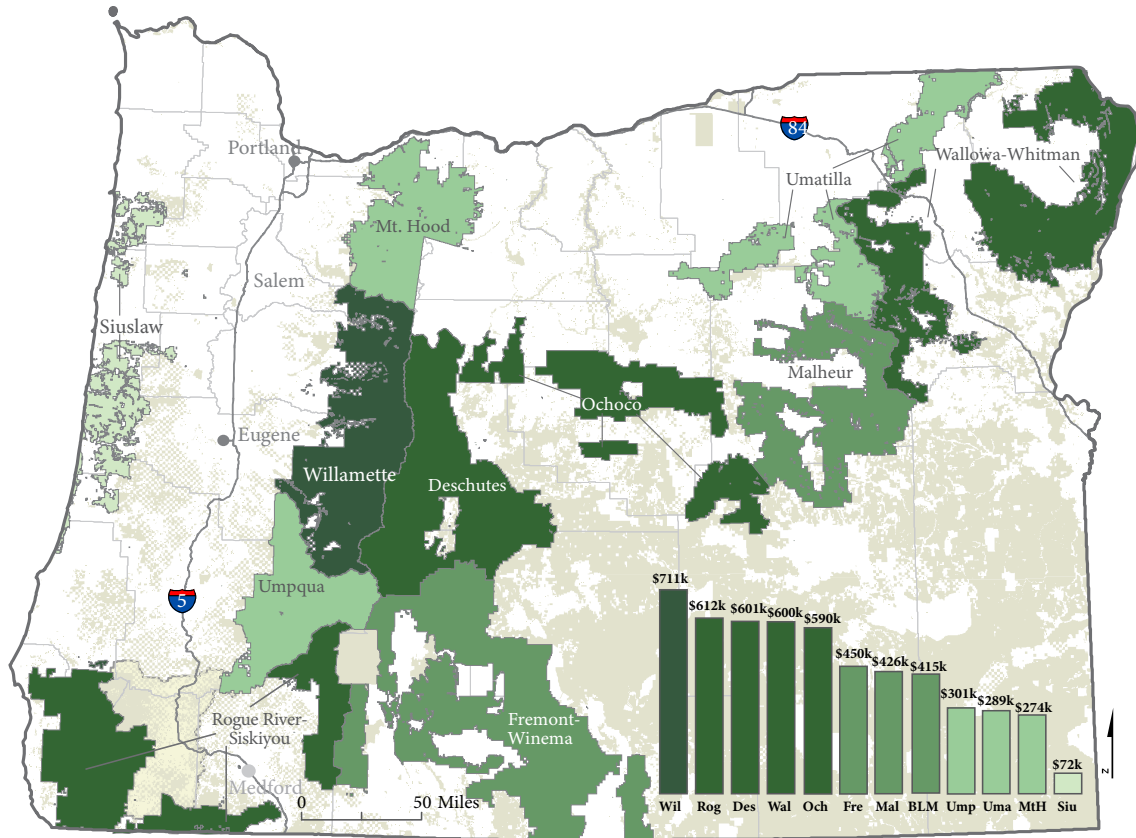
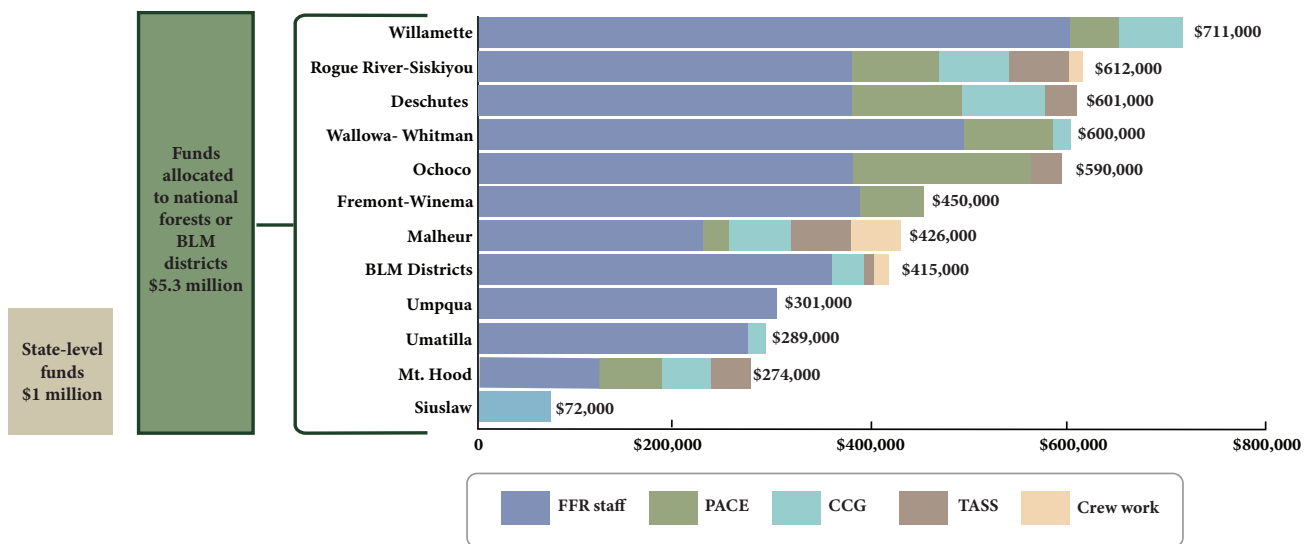


Figure 3. FFR Program spending by federal land management unit and program area during the 2021-2023 biennium.



Federal funding and GNA revenue

Federal contributions to the FFR Program, in the form of GNA revenue through GNA Restoration Service agreements (federal cash) and GNA commercial restoration or timber sale agreements (GNA Revenue), totaled \$3.9 million for the 2021-2023 biennium. This reflects the actual federal funding utilized through May 2023. GNA Supplemental Project Agreements (SPA) that tier to the two Master GNA agreements signed in 2016 and 2022, are the agreement mechanism ODF has with the Forest Service. GNA agreements ODF has with the BLM are standalone GNA agreements. We did not include this funding source in our economic analysis, which was limited to state investments.

Economic Impact

The State of Oregon's investments in the FFR Program during the 2021-2023 biennium have supported an estimated 54 annual jobs and an annual gross regional product (GRP) of about \$5.27 million per year during the biennium (Figure 4). This represents an increase in annual GRP and jobs over the prior 2019-2021 biennium (Table 1). GNA timber sales contributed to 323 average annual jobs and \$25.2 million in average annual gross regional product (Table 2).

On-the-ground accomplishments

On-the-ground restoration accomplishments on federal forestlands resulting from FFR Program investments included: contributing to the establishment of ZOAs by supporting Oregon forest collaborative groups, generation of new scientific insights in restoration ecology, administering commercial and non-commercial fuels treatments and forest health treatments, and completing NEPA-related data collection and planning processes. This work allows federal land managers to mitigate any negative impact to natural and cultural resources from commercial and non-commercial forest resilience treatments, and to adhere to applicable federal laws such as the Endangered Species Act or the National Historic Preservation Act.

For the 2021-2023 biennium, the FFR Program accomplished approximately 3,800 acres of commercial fuels treatments and 28,000 acres of survey and project preparation including timber cruising, marking, sale layout, and other activities for future commercial treatments. The FFR Program also implemented 18,000 acres of non-commercial restoration treatments and 650 acres of restoration monitoring.



Figure 4. Average annual GRP and jobs supported by FFR Program investments by program area, 2013-2023.

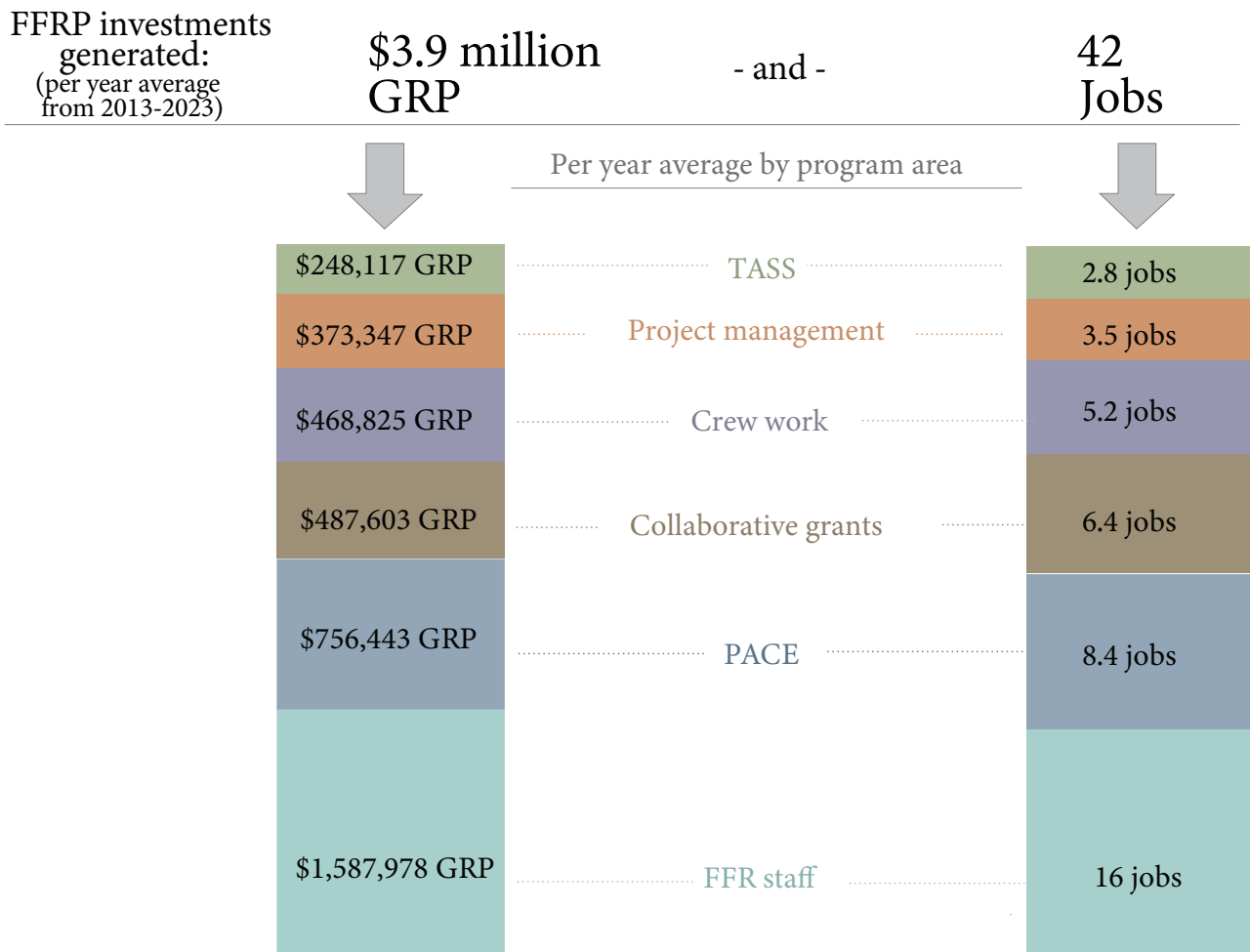


Table 1. FFR Program investment impact on jobs per year and annual GRP by biennium, 2013-2023.

	2013–2015	2015–2017	2017–2019	2019–2021	2021–2023
Investment per year	\$1.3 million	\$2.4 million	\$1.6 million	\$2.1 million	\$3.1 million
Jobs per year	36.6	49.3	32.9	33.1	54
GRP per year	\$2.7 million	\$3.9 million	\$2.6 million	\$3.5 million	\$5.3 million

Table 2. Statewide economic activity from GNA timber sales during the 2021-2023 biennium.

Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
133 jobs	323 jobs	\$12 million	\$25.2 million

Program area summaries

In the following sections, we summarize investments in and highlight key outcomes of each of the six FFR Program areas.

Planning Assistance Categorical Exclusions (PACE)

PACE investments provide funding to federal land management units to complete surveys, analysis, and documentation, as required under NEPA, prior to implementing restoration activities. Forest Service and BLM staff work with FFR Program Unit Foresters/Coordinators to develop priority projects and apply for PACE investments. These applications are then reviewed by FFR Program staff and external reviewers familiar with federal forest planning needs and are selected based on a project's ability to achieve FFR Program goals for the biennium. The overall purpose of the PACE investments is to support innovation and efficiencies related to NEPA planning processes, expand capacity for NEPA surveys within large planning areas, and

to contract all necessary surveys and documentation for NEPA Categorical Exclusion projects within priority landscapes. For example, many of this biennium's PACE-funded projects completed heritage and botany surveys in areas of high priority for wildfire risk reduction management. These surveys will allow for a more efficient NEPA approval and support future forest resiliency projects.

The priorities for the PACE investments in the 2021-2023 biennium were:

- To complete the planning of projects that would not have otherwise happened or would have happened years later had the FFR Program not been involved.
- Invest in projects that involve multiple partner organizations and have the potential to be combined with treatments on non-federal lands.
- Invest in projects that will result in the implementation of forest health and fuels treatments that will address landscape and community wildfire risk concerns.

Figure 5. PACE investments by national forest during the 2021-2023 biennium.

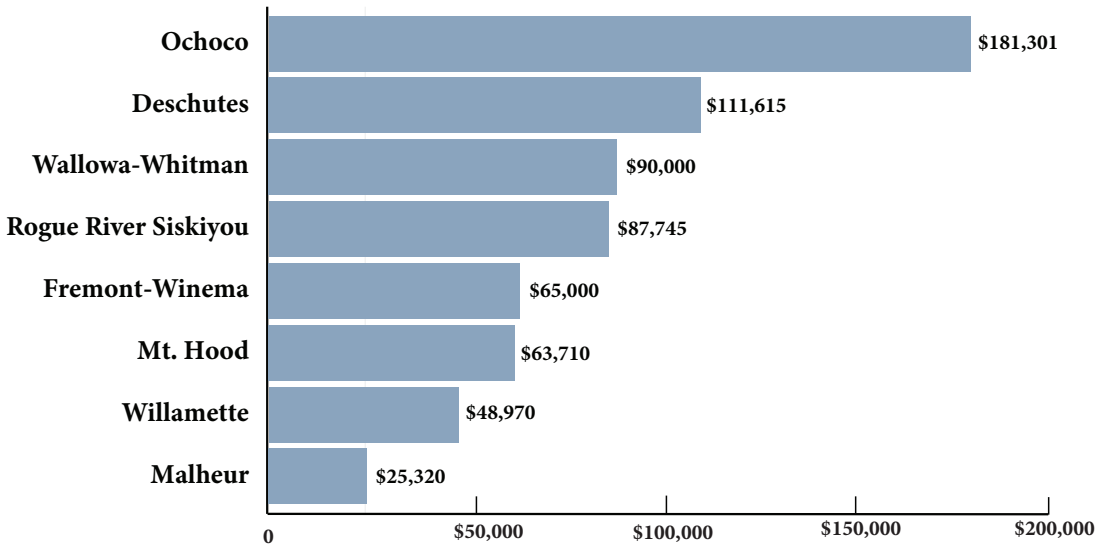


Table 3. Statewide economic activity from PACE investments during the 2021-2023 biennium.

Two-year biennium allocation	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$673,661	1.8	5.1	\$258,436	\$568,649

- Plan landscape scale and highly complex projects, as opposed to smaller lower complexity projects pursued in previous biennia.
- Invest in projects that support future commercial and non-commercial projects implemented by the FFR Program through the GNA.
- Invest in multiple resource restoration objectives beyond vegetation management.
- 2,000 acres of surveys supporting a project what will help restore a forest within the municipal watershed of the city of Medford on the Rouge-Siskiyou National Forest.
- 250 acres of surveys for fish passage and floodplain restoration work on the Willamette National Forest.
- 6,000 acres of botany surveys for a landscape scale project that will support future commercial and non-commercial GNA projects and conventional Forest Service projects on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.
- One contracted NEPA Categorical Exclusion project encompassing 100 acres on Malheur National Forest.

Investments and economic activity

This biennium, State investments in the PACE initiative totaled \$674,000 and funded projects on eight national forests (Figure 5). State funding for PACE projects has supported an average of 5.1 jobs within Oregon's economy each year of the biennium and contributed an average of \$569,000 in gross regional product each year of the biennium (Table 3).

On-the-ground accomplishments

Investments in the PACE investments resulted in several on-the-ground accomplishments, including:

- A total of 12,977 acres of heritage surveys for NEPA projects on Rogue River-Siskiyou, Deschutes, Malheur, Ochoco, Willamette, and Mt. Hood National Forests.
 - 3,227 acres of surveys for three separate planning areas that included a steep slope pilot study on the Ochoco National Forest, which will have an impact on projects across eastern Oregon.
 - 1,300 acres of surveys on a project Deschutes National Forest that will contain forest thinning and prescribed fire and is within a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) boundary and addresses community wildfire risk concerns.
 - 500 acres of surveys for a project within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and in a mixed ownership landscape near Fall River Estates on the Deschutes National Forest.

Stakeholder perspectives

Stakeholders involved in PACE projects discussed their appreciation for how ODF allowed PACE investments recipients to have more flexibility over project implementation. One challenge investment recipients faced was soliciting project feedback and input from Forest Service staff, who often had long response times to emails and calls. PACE project contractors additionally faced project delays and setbacks related to wildfires, weather, and COVID-19. Interviewees pointed out that ODF requested that contractors complete final deliverables prior to reimbursement; thus, project delays also slowed invoice submission and reimbursement, invoice submission also had to be delayed. However, interviewees reported that once invoices were submitted, the reimbursement process was easy and went smoothly. As one interviewee noted, "This was a remarkably smooth project compared to other NEPA work I've done."

The majority of PACE investments this biennium went towards heritage surveys to support NEPA processes. Interviewees discussed the labor shortage challenge in archeology, and how this led to difficulty finding crews for PACE-funded heritage surveys.

Crew Work

This biennium, FFR crew work funding supported off-season firefighters performing fuels reduction and chainsaw work on Rogue River-Siskiyou and Malheur National Forests, as well as the Medford BLM district.

Investments and economic activity

The Program invested a total of \$80,000 in FFR crew work for the 2021-2023 biennium. This funding is allocated by ODF district (Table 4), with the Southwest Oregon and Central Oregon District receiving funding this biennium. The largest amount of funding went to Malheur National Forest (Figure 6). The FFR Program budget for crew work decreased substantially from the 2019-2021 biennium, during which \$810,000 was allocated to crew work. According to ODF, the reason for the decrease in state funding for crew work in the 2021-2023 biennium was due to increased availability of federal funds and GNA Revenue, which are

alternative fund sources to FFR Program crew funds. Also, the FFR Program's increase in permanent, full time staff in the 2021-2023 biennium reduced the need for off-season firefighters to perform needed restoration work.

FFR crew work investments have supported an average of 0.6 jobs and \$67,529 in gross regional product within Oregon's economy each year of the biennium (Table 5).

On-the-grounds accomplishments

- Crew work funds supported work on Malheur National Forest, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, and Medford BLM district. These crews boosted federal agency capacity to implement on-the-ground restoration projects and facilitate pre-sale work, often associated with GNA projects. For the 2021-2023 biennium, FFR crew accomplishments included:
- Funding fuels reduction and project preparation work performed by firefighters working outside of the fire season.

Table 4. Federal land management units associated with the Oregon Department of Forestry's administrative units.

ODF Administrative Unit		Federal Land Management Unit(s)
Area	District*	National forest/BLM District
Eastern Oregon Area	Central Oregon District	Deschutes National Forest Malheur National Forest Ochoco National Forest Mt. Hood National Forest (Barlow and Hood River Ranger Districts) Prineville BLM District
	Klamath-Lake District	Fremont-Winema National Forest
	Northeast Oregon District	Umatilla National Forest Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
Southern Oregon Area	Coos Forest Protective Association (FPA)	Coos Bay BLM District
	Douglas FPA	Umpqua National Forest Roseburg BLM District
	South Cascade District	Willamette National Forest (Middle Fork and McKenzie Ranger Districts)
	Southwest Oregon District	Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest Medford BLM District Roseburg BLM District
	Western Lane District	Coos Bay BLM District
Northwest Oregon Area	North Cascade District	Mt. Hood (Clackamas and Zigzag Ranger Districts) Willamette National Forest (Detroit and Sweet Home Ranger Districts)
	Tillamook District	Siuslaw National Forest
	West Oregon District	Siuslaw National Forest

* Two additional districts, the Northwest Oregon District and the Walker Range FPA, do not have any federal land management units associated with them and are not included in this table.

Figure 6. Crew work expenditures by federal land management unit during the 2021-2023 biennium.

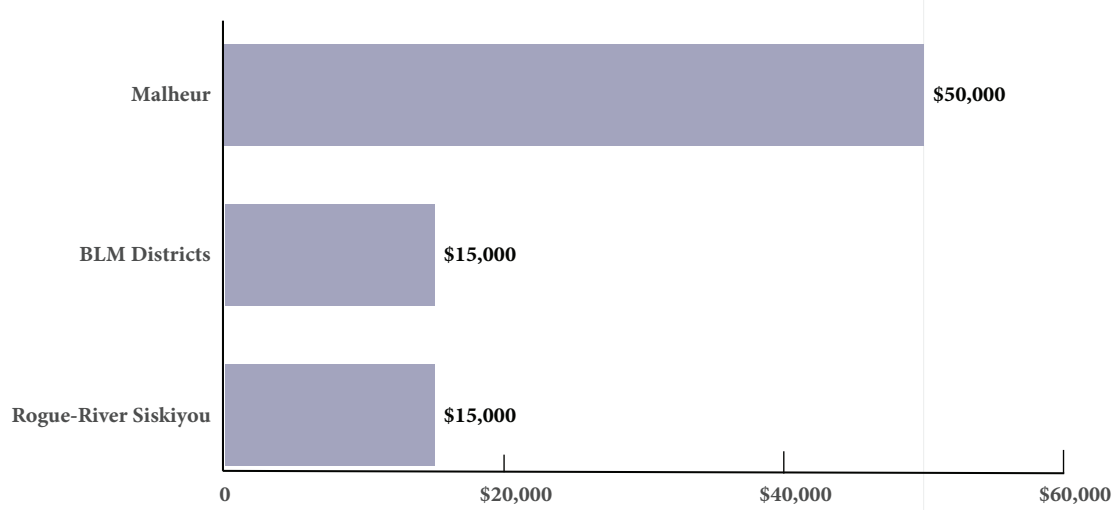


Table 5. Statewide economic activity from crew investments during the 2021-2023 biennium.

Two-year biennium allocation	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$80,000	0.2	0.6	\$30,690	\$67,529



Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS)

The Technical Assistance and Science Support (TASS) grants provide forest collaborative groups with support related to applied scientific research and technical capacity. Applicants work with their local forest collaborative group, and the FFR Unit Foresters/District Coordinators, to develop project proposals. The FFR Program team and external reviewers review proposals and select projects based on the scientific and technical needs of the forest collaborative groups.

Investments and economic activity

Seven individual projects received TASS grants for the 2021-2023 biennium, together receiving a total of \$250,000 from the FFR Program. These awards ranged from \$20,000

to \$60,000 (Figure 7) and involved five national forests, two BLM districts, and one statewide project.

These TASS funds supported an average of 2.1 jobs and contributed to an average of \$202,000 in gross regional product within Oregon's economy for each year of the biennium (Table 6).

On-the-ground accomplishments

TASS grants supported six forest collaboratives through five technical assistance providers leading seven projects during the 2021-2023 biennium (Figure 8). These projects included:

- An evaluation of critical ecosystem functions, such as carbon storage potential, across Malheur National Forest.

Figure 7. TASS investments by federal land management unit during the 2021-2023 biennium.

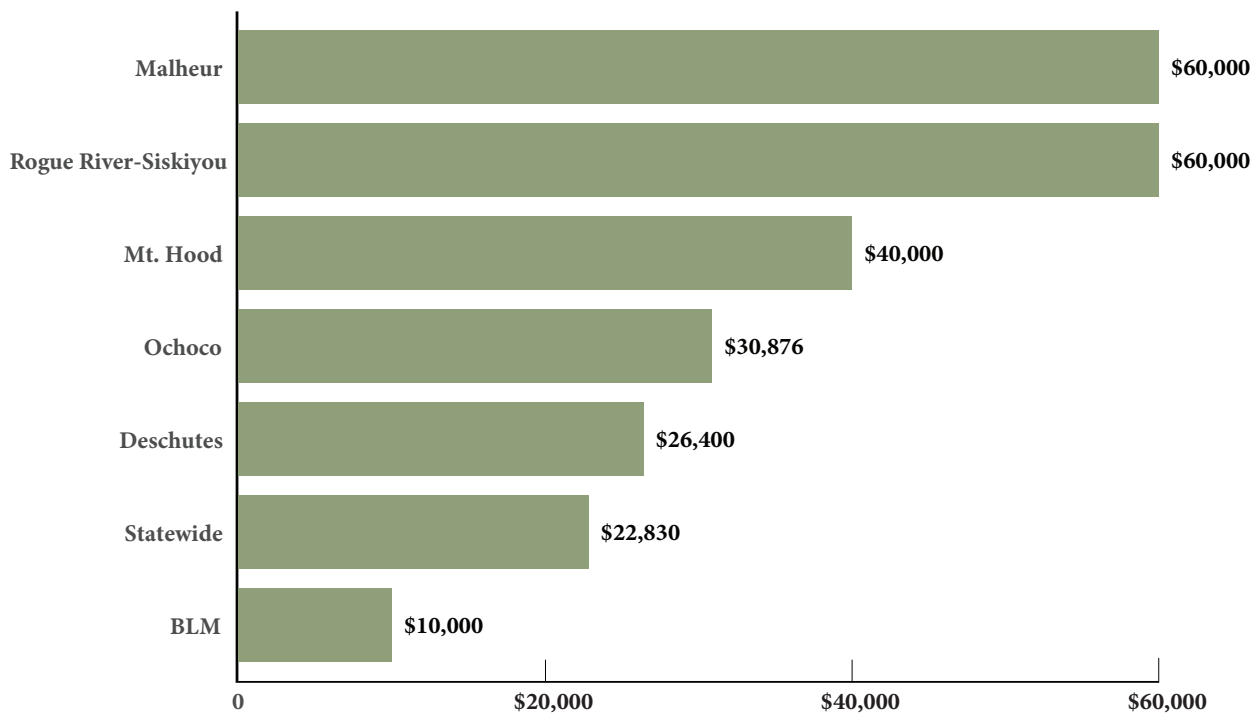


Table 6. Statewide economic activity from TASS investments during the 2021-2023 biennium.

Two-year biennium allocation	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$4.2 million	0.9	2.1	\$88,863	\$202,058

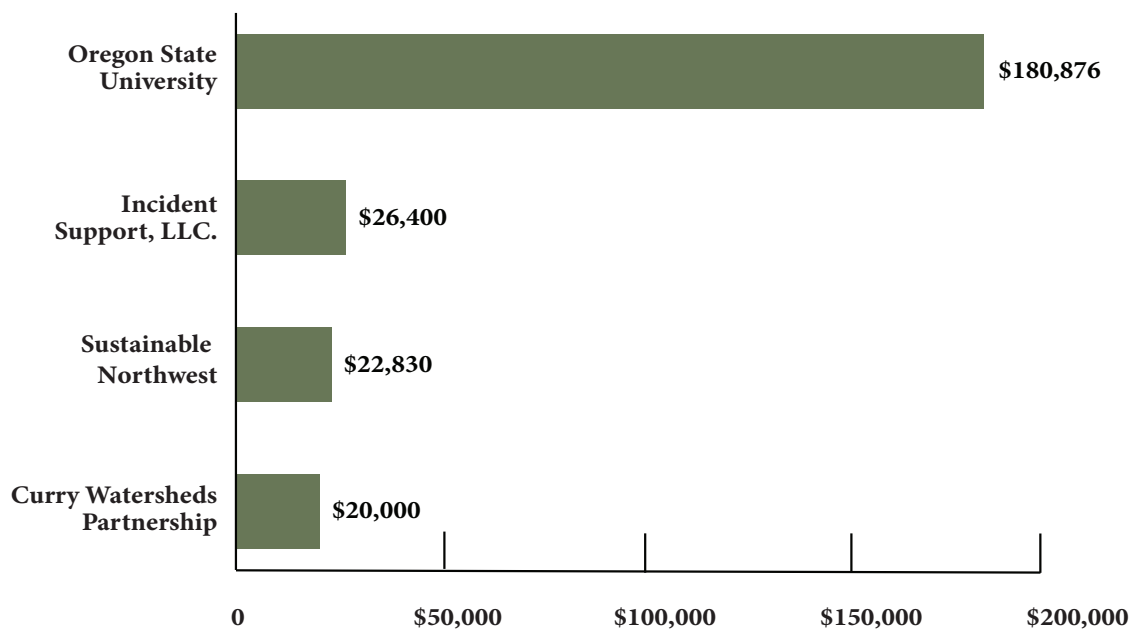
- Assessment of user-made roads and trails data for integration into landscape-scale restoration agreements in Deschutes National Forest.
- A fire history study focused on moist mixed conifer on the east side of Mt. Hood National Forest to inform appropriate restoration treatments.
- Facilitation of a statewide forest collaborative leadership network, which met monthly to share strategies and problem solve.
- A historic forest stand study, synthesizing previously collected data, to inform management of Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and Medford BLM District.
- Evaluation of soil health impacts of harvest methods to inform restoration treatments within Ochoco and Malheur National Forests.
- An analysis of the impact of sediment loading from degrading roads on watershed and habitat health in Rogue-River Siskiyou National Forest and Coos Bay BLM District.

Stakeholder perspectives

Interviewees discussed several challenges and successes related to the TASS initiative. Stakeholders mentioned that the short biennium funding cycle is a challenge from both a scientific and monitoring standpoint. They suggested that monitoring of TASS project outcomes (such as this report) would be more effective if implemented during the subsequent biennium. As one interviewee explained, “Whatever impact there will be can only properly be measured several years from now.” Interviewees additionally shared that determining project successes and challenges would not be possible for several years, as the ecosystems would take time to respond to management approaches. Lastly, one interviewee discussed how the short grant timeline prevented providers from thoroughly involving the collaboratives and implementing the more rigorous scientific approaches.

Another challenge stakeholders mentioned was the exclusivity of the recruitment process for TASS grants. One interviewee shared that many applicants learned about the opportunity through their existing connections, and they suggested that ODF could make the program more inclusive by more widely advertising the request for proposals.

Figure 8. TASS funds received by each technical assistance provider during the 2021-2023 biennium.



Stakeholders also discussed successes of TASS-funded projects. Two interviewees highlighted that TASS provided a space for scientific innovation within national forests. They provided examples of this, including projects that filled critical knowledge gaps related to forest carbon stock and historical fire regimes. These interviewees emphasized that the projects would make a difference in informing the way the Forest Service manages federal forests. One interviewee pointed out how the TASS grant supporting collaborative leadership networking has helped increase the pace and scale of restoration work by allowing leaders across the state to share lessons learned. This was highlighted by one interviewee's comment, "Everyone is genuinely excited to be learning from each other and ask questions. People follow up and share lessons learned when others have questions."

Federal Forest Restoration Program Staff

FFR Program staff funds support permanent full-time ODF employees who are responsible for facilitation of the FFR program, including planning, implementing and monitoring forest resilience treatments; managing activity tracking data; coordinating among collaboratives, agencies, and communities; and integrating FFR Program activities with related agency initiatives or programs to conduct cross-boundary restoration work. It additionally supports FFR Foresters and Technicians, who are focused on implementing commercial and non-commercial restoration work under GNA agreements.

Investments and economic activity

The FFR Program allocated over \$4 million to FFR Program staff for the 2021-2023 biennium, which was the largest program area investment (Figure 9). Across the state, this funding supported 25 full-time positions: a statewide FFR Lead, five FFR Unit Foresters/Coordinators, eight FFR Foresters, ten FFR Technicians, and one FFR Crew Lead (Figure 10). GNA agreements provide additional funding

to support some ODF staff from state and private forests division to facilitate GNA work.

These investments supported an average of 37.1 jobs and \$3.6 million in gross regional product within the Oregon economy for each year of the biennium (Table 7).

On-the-ground accomplishments

The FFR District Coordinators and Program Lead oversee crew work and administer PACE and TASS grants. Each coordinator is assigned to an ODF administrative unit (Figure 10) and works with their local National Forests and BLM Districts. The FFR Foresters and Technicians oversee and implement forest restoration work conducted under GNA agreements. These efforts have contributed to the completion of :

- Nearly 30,000 acres of contract NEPA
- 4,000 acres of commercial work
- 53,000 acres of non-commercial work
- 171,000 acres of survey and project preparation
- 1,400 acres of monitoring

Stakeholder perspectives

We interviewed ODF FFR Program staff about their on-the-ground experiences with implementing projects. Three main thematic areas emerged from our discussions: 1) contracting processes, 2) bottlenecks to restoration implementation, and 3) project learning.

Contracting

Consistent with previous monitoring reports, interviewees noted that one of the additive values of the GNA projects managed by the FFR Program related to the inherent efficiencies of ODF's contracting processes in comparison to the Forest Service. This made projects more attractive to contractors. However, one interviewee pointed out that ODF sets a higher insurance requirement for contractor

Table 7. Statewide economic activity from staff investments during the 2021-2023 biennium.

Two-year biennium allocation	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$4.2 million	26.3	37.1	\$2,556,745	\$3,570,632

Figure 9. FFR Program staff investments by federal land management unit during the 2021-2023 biennium.

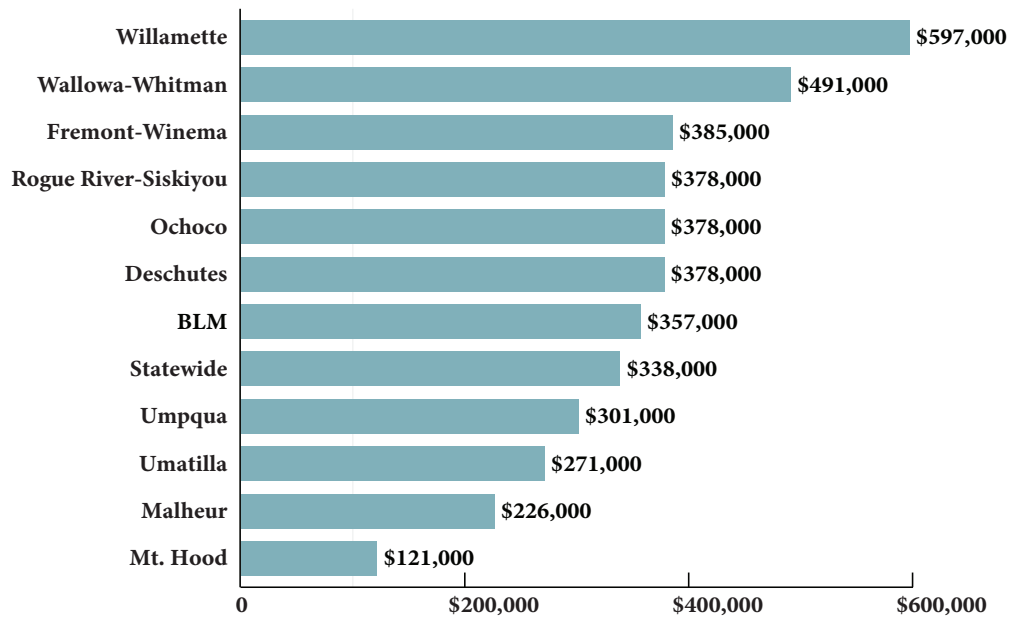
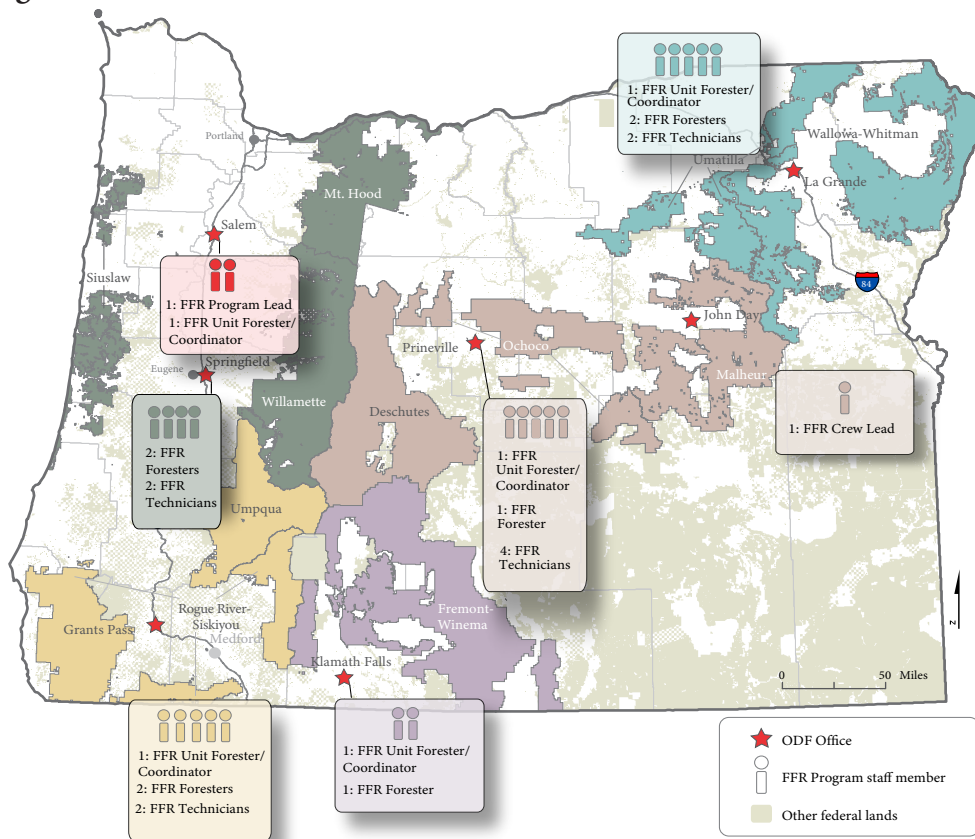


Figure 10. Map of national forests in ODF Districts and FFR Program staff allocations at ODF offices during the 2021-2023 biennium.



coverage than the Forest Service and this made working with the state on GNA projects difficult for smaller operators who cannot afford the extra insurance coverage. Other interviewees reported difficulties in finding operators for projects with lower value timber and for projects where haul distances from wood processing facilities were longer than usual.

Restoration “Bottlenecks”

Interviewees discussed several issues that caused delays in project timelines including:

- “Red tape” and misalignments with funding cycles between agencies.
- Wildfires generally causing delays, but also burning over project areas.
- Fire season restrictions on running equipment in the forest.
- Weather conditions such as snow cover preventing work from being completed.
- Contractor labor shortages.
- Supply chain issues causing problems with equipment repair.
- Lack of seed funding to set up timber sales.

Interviewees reported that some staff turnover within ODF had set timelines back. ODF staff also discussed difficulties related to Forest Service staff turnover and the slow pace of NEPA compliance. On top of this, one interviewee suggested that the Forest Service simply lacked the capacity to sufficiently engage, making it difficult to communicate and to set up visits to project sites.

Project learning

In many places in Oregon, the Good Neighbor Authority is increasingly being used to accomplish management goals in federal forest. ODF and the Forest Service have distinctly different approaches to forest management. Interviewees discussed how some of the first projects undertaken together involved learning curves. In some cases, FFR staff relied on expertise and assistance from federal agencies to overcome challenges. In other cases, FFR staff found assistance internally, within ODF. Overall, the use GNA by the FFR Program has formed strong partnerships between the agencies.

Project Management

FFR Program project management funding supports administrative services, training opportunities, stakeholder input processes, and program monitoring and evaluation.

Investments and economic activity

The FFR Program invested \$670,000 in project management for the 2021-2023 biennium (Figure 11). These funds supported an average of 5.8 jobs and \$552,000 in gross regional product within the State of Oregon for each year of the biennium (Table 8).

On-the-ground accomplishments

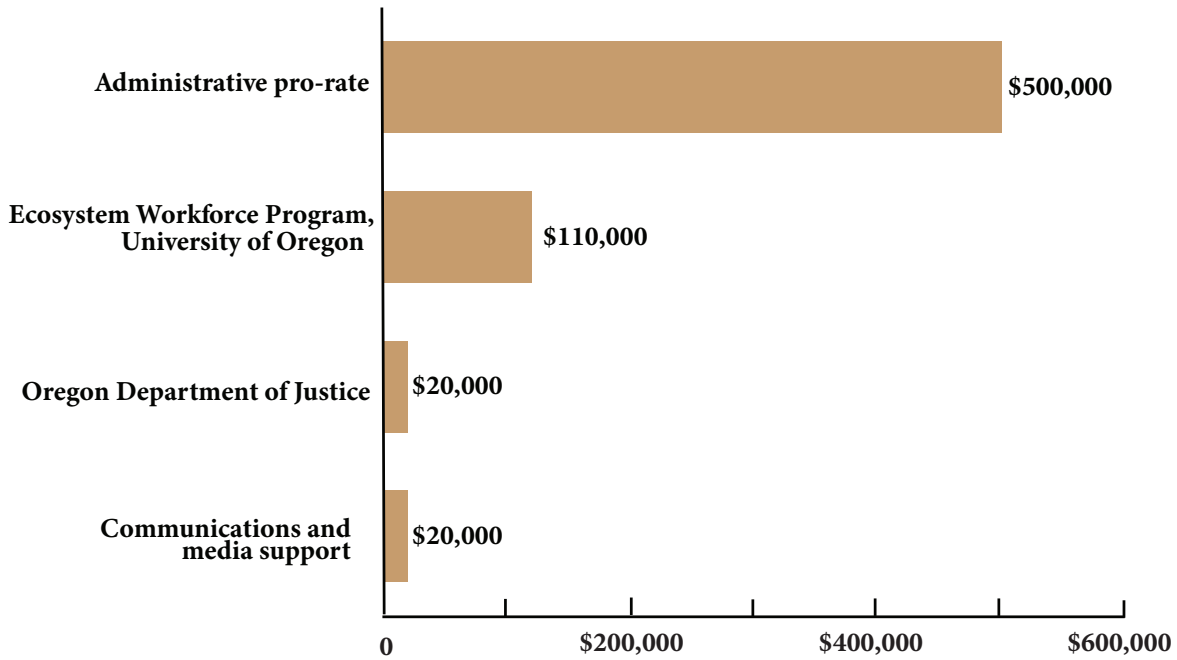
Project management investments resulted in the following outcomes:

- Contribution to ODF’s administrative pro-rate, which funds procurement, human resources, public affairs, and other administrative services for the agency.
- Program monitoring conducted by the Ecosystem Workforce Program at the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, and the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station.

Table 8. Statewide economic activity from project management investments during the 2021-2023 biennium.

Two-year biennium allocation	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$670,000	2.4	5.8	\$238,744	\$551,620

Figure 11. Project management funds received by each service provider during the 2021-2023 biennium.



- Legal services from the Oregon Department of Justice.
- Media and communications support from ODF staff and contractors.

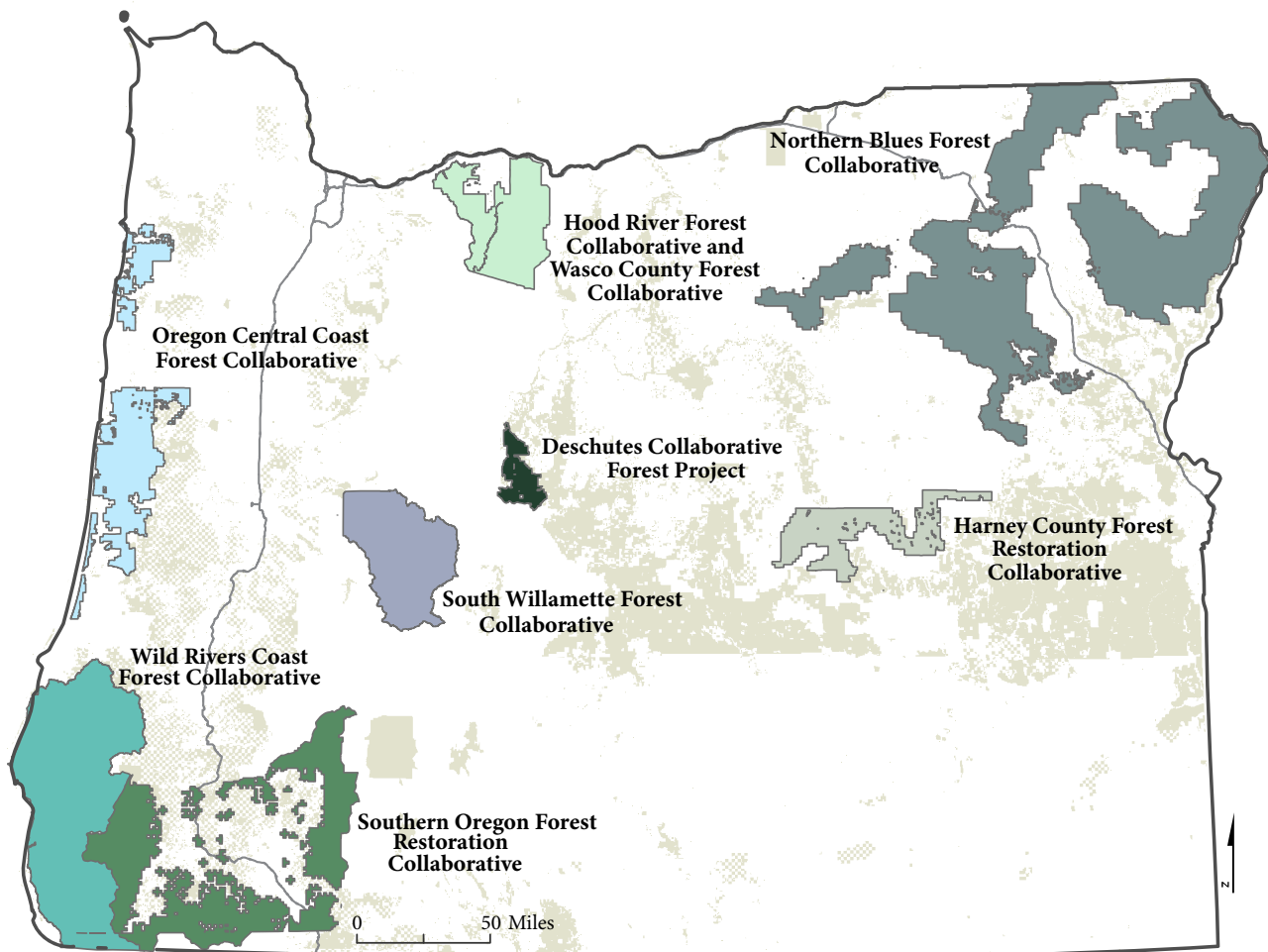
Collaborative Grants

The primary objective of the FFR Collaborative Grants program area is to increase the number, acreage, and complexity of collaboratively planned restoration projects on federal lands. To accomplish this goal, Collaborative Grants are designed to provide financial support to forest collaborative groups. Forest collaboratives are multi-stakeholder groups that help organize and represent diverse organizations and individuals with interests in federal forests management, for example by developing or expanding formal statements

of agreement (“zones of agreement” or ZOAs) with federal forest units within their focal geographies.

Over the past decade, the FFR Collaborative Grants have been a main source of funding for federal forest collaboratives in Oregon. Forest collaboratives provide input on federal forest management by collaboratively engaging with federal forest managers and reaching consensus among partners involved in, or directly affected by, restoration projects in federal forest planning areas. Collaboratives bring together diverse stakeholders to discuss shared interests and values for forest management priorities. They may offer input: 1) before and during the NEPA analysis process as Forest Service units plan specific projects, 2) by creating recommendations for the use of funds obtained through stewardship contracting projects, and 3) by de-

Figure 12. Map of collaboratives receiving Collaborative Capacity Grant funding for the 2021-2023 biennium.



veloping ZOAs, restoration principles, or other statements about management issues beyond the project level. Groups that solely focus on recommendations around the use of retained receipts (“stewardship groups”) have typically been included as collaboratives in existing inventories. Although there is no official definition of what constitutes a “collaborative,” there are at least 20 such groups generally recognized currently on all national forests in Oregon and at least two Bureau of Land Management districts².

For the 2021 – 2023 biennium, the FFR Program funded \$477,000 in competitively awarded Collaborative Grants to eight forest collaborative groups working in eight different national forests and two BLM districts (Figures 12 and 13). Grant awards ranged from approximately \$36,000 to \$85,000 and were administered through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The grants leveraged an additional \$259,000 in documented in-kind support or matching funds. (Table 10). During the biennium, all eight collaboratives worked on ZOAs, while three of the collaboratives also focused on collaborative governance. These three included Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project, Oregon Central Coast Forest Collaborative, and Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative.

Planning acres supported by collaborative input

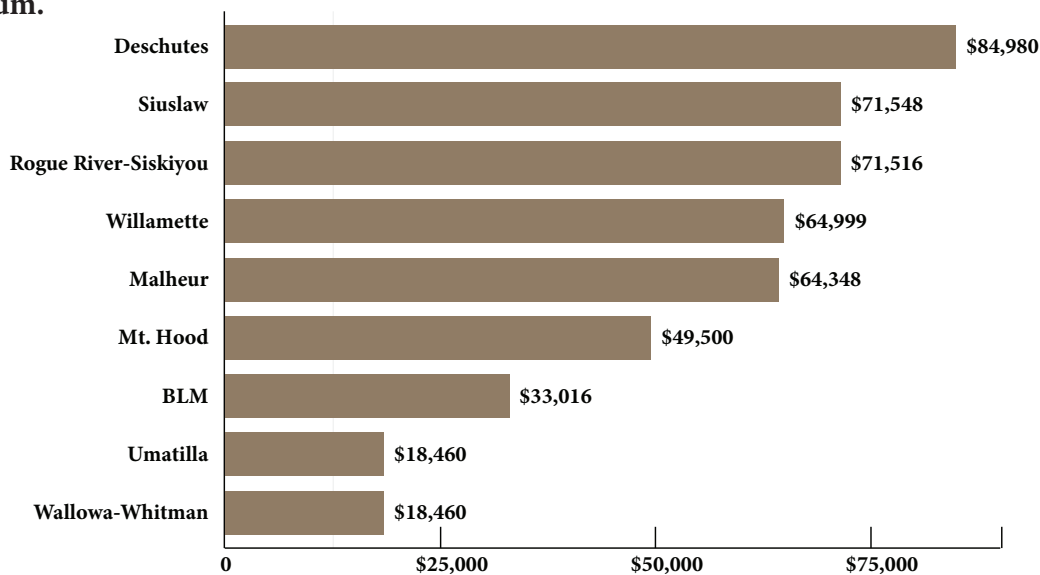
Collaboratives worked on NEPA projects of varying complexity from simpler Categorical Exclusions (CE), Environmental Analyses (EA), to more complex Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). The size and scope of planning areas varied by national forest. (Table 11).

- Collaboratives used FFR Program funding to help prepare project-level restoration plans for a total of 1.2 million acres of federal forest land across 25 NEPA planning areas between 2021 and 2023.
- Final NEPA decisions were signed on 10 planning areas covering over 200,000 acres during this time period.
- Groups engaged on 15 other planning areas in pre-scoping or environmental analysis states (decisions not yet signed) covering nearly 1 million acres³.

Implementation of collaboratively planned forest management activities

Collaboratives’ efforts supported a wide range of restoration activities during the 2021-2023 biennium (Table 12). Accomplishments reported here represent work tied to

Figure 13. Collaborative Capacity Grants by federal land management unit during the 2021-2023 biennium.



2. <https://oregonexplorer.info/topics/forest-collaboratives?ptopic=2>

Table 9. Average annual contribution in Oregon gross regional product from collaboratively planned timber sales during the 2021–2023 biennium (millions).

	Harvesting activities	Processing activities	Total
Direct effects	\$9.8	\$20.8	\$30.6
Secondary effects	\$6.4	\$27.3	\$33.7
Total effects	\$16.2	\$48.1	\$64.3

Table 10. Collaborative grants in the 2021-2023 grant cycle.

Group	Federal forest unit(s)	Collaborative governance focus	ZOA focus	Grant \$ awarded	Leveraged funds and in kind
Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project	Deschutes National Forest	√	√	\$84,980	\$71,575
Harney County Forest Restoration Collaborative	Malheur National Forest and Burns BLM District		√	\$64,348	\$1
Hood River Forest Collaborative and Wasco County Forest Collaborative	Mt. Hood National Forest		√	\$49,500	\$52,800
Northern Blues Forest Collaborative	Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests		√	\$36,921	\$17,100
Oregon Central Coast Forest Collaborative	Siuslaw National Forest	√	√	\$71,548	\$16,200
Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative	Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and Medford District of Bureau of Land Management	√	√	\$66,033	\$12,000
Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative	Willamette National Forest		√	\$64,999	\$84,801
Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative	Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest		√	\$38,500	\$4,176
8 groups supported	8 national forests and 2 BLM districts engaged			\$476,829	\$258,653

collaboratives funded during this and prior funding cycles. Additionally, acres are counted by treatment activity in FACTS, which means that an acre may be counted for each time it receives a different activity treatment. Therefore, it is not possible to sum the actual number of acres across activities for a national forest unit. This data likely underestimates some non-commercial activities, since resource area staff vary in the extent to which they fully report their activities in FACTS. Lastly, on-the-ground outcomes rely on the Forest Service's authority and capacity for decision-making and project implementation, and are not only

dependent on collaborative engagement.

- Burning of piled materials had the most activity acres over the biennium with over 45,000 acres (Table 12).
- Piling of fuels was accomplished on close to 28,000 acres and precommercial thinning was accomplished on about 20,000 acres over the period (Table 12).

Table 11. Planning acres collaborated on by funded collaboratives in the 2021–2023 grant cycle.

Group	Total acres collaborated on during 2021-2023 with NEPA decision signed as of spring 2023	Total acres collaborated on during 2021-2023 still under analysis or pre-analysis as of spring 2023	Types of NEPA documents collaborated on 2021-2023
Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project	25,780	28,050	EA, CE
Harney County Forest Restoration Collaborative	73,933	672,023	EA
Hood River Forest Collaborative and Wasco County Forest Collaborative	13,100	NA	EA, CE
Northern Blues Forest Collaborative*	NA	146,000	EA, EIS
Oregon Central Coast Forest Collaborative	NA	40,130	EA, CE
Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative	120,960	21,000	EA, EIS
Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative	NA	54,000	EA, EIS
Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative	NA	NA	NA
Total	233,773	961,203	

*The Northern Blues Forest Collaborative works with both the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests. Acres reported here only reflect Umatilla National Forest, since we were not able to obtain data from the contact for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in time for this report.

- Burning of piled materials and piling of fuels exhibited some of the greatest year-to-year variation in acres accomplished. Burning of piled materials covered nearly 37,000 acres in 2022, which decreased to 12,000 acres in 2023. Piling of fuels encompassed close to 23,000 acres in 2022, while in 2023, it only included about 3,000 acres (Table 12).
 - Over the 2021 – 2023 biennium, those timber sales generated around 339 jobs for timber processing or harvesting and 483 jobs in other economic sectors that support these workers and businesses (Table 13).
 - Timber sales contributed an average of \$64.3 million annually to Oregon's gross regional product (Table 10). These estimates depend on the standard accounting assumption that activities for harvesting and processing occur in the year that timber sale was awarded. However, these activities are usually carried out over many years post-award and do not typically begin in the award year.
- Economic Activity from Collaboratively Planned Timber Sales and Collaborative Grant Dollars**
- Approximately 23.6 million cubic feet (mmcf) of timber was sold from planning areas where collaborative groups participated.

Table 12. Acres of restoration-related activities in planning areas with collaborative input by federal fiscal year*.

Activities	2021	2022	2023
Burning	0	9,840	31
Burning of piled material	0	36,935	11,855
Chipping of fuels	0	257	57
Commercial sale	6,576	12,090	533
Mechanical surface treatment	1,030	5,693	2,102
Other	565	3,507	118
Piling of fuels, hand or machine	2,151	22,544	2,860
Precommercial thin	2,274	14,399	3,568
Silviculture prescription	1,053	1,566	0
Stand survey	4,239	4,495	2,057
Watershed-related restoration	0	923	31

*For 2021, the data includes activities from July 1 through December 31. For 2023, the data includes activities through May 28

Table 13. Average annual jobs supported in Oregon by collaboratively planned timber sales during the 2021–2023 biennium.

	Harvesting activities	Processing activities	Total
Direct effects	130 jobs	209 jobs	339 jobs
Secondary effects	76 jobs	407 jobs	483 jobs
Total effects	206 jobs	616 jobs	822 jobs

Table 14. Statewide economic activity from collaborative grant investments during the 2021-2023 biennium.

Two-year biennium allocation	Average annual jobs supported		Average annual gross regional product	
	Direct effects	Total effects	Direct effects	Total effects
\$477,000	2 jobs	3.6 jobs	\$154,408	\$310,232

- The \$477,000 of Collaborative Grant funds provided to groups over the biennium supported an average of four jobs annually and contributed \$310,000 to Oregon's gross regional product each year of the biennium (Table 14). Two of those jobs were directly related to collaborative operations and the remaining were in other sectors of the economy that sell goods and services in support of collaborative operations.

Collaborative Governance Activities

Collaborative governance focuses on the organizational structure and operations of groups. The Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project, Oregon Central Coast Forest Collaborative, and Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative used their Collaborative Grants to improve their collaborative governance. Activities focused on (1) assessing organizational needs, (2) streamlining processes with partners, and (3) increasing their visibility to federal agencies.

The Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project completed a collaborative governance assessment to identify needs and values related to capacity and relationships. This led to the development of a staffing plan and hiring to increase the collaborative's efficacy. Another group, the Oregon Central Coast Forest Collaborative, established a Memorandum of Understanding with the Forest Service to establish how and when the collaborative would engage in NEPA.

Other forest collaboratives have engaged in periodic meetings with Forest Service to obtain feedback on strategic frameworks, which can align and create synergies for the work. This group also learned more about the Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation process between the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service, to identify how they could be involved in this process.

A few groups also engaged in policy outreach around topics of wildfire, smoke management, and climate change. The Deschutes Collaborative's Prescribed Fire Subcommittee led a process for letter writing with other organizations and collaboratives on the proposed EPA rule change for smoke management and PM2.5, along with regulations for prescribed fire. Additionally, the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative worked on a climate smart briefing paper through their climate change adaptation workgroup.

Zone of Agreement Activities (ZOA)

Forest collaboratives convene diverse stakeholders to dialogue over interests and values for forest management priorities. They can offer input: (1) before and during NEPA analysis as Forest Service units plan projects, (2) by developing recommendations for stewardship contracting retained receipts, and/or (3) providing ZOAs, principles for restoration, and other forest management issue statements that go beyond the project scale. Over time, the uses of ZOAs have expanded from collaborative input at a broader scale to also include input on specific projects (i.e., planning areas), Forest Plan allocation units, forest types, or ecological function issues.

Collaboratives engaged in ZOAs for specific ecological issues that could be applied at scale, rather than limited to a specific project. The Oregon Central Coast Forest Collaborative has focused on developing ZOAs for road and infrastructure decommissioning and maintenance, as well as for marbled murrelet critical habitat management criteria and improvement of habitat diversity. Harney County Forest Restoration Collaborative has engaged in a district wide aspen EA to allow for adaptive management with aspen stands. Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project finalized a ZOA for lodgepole pine and has started developing a ZOA for defragmentation and core habitat expansion.

Other groups have engaged in ZOAs that focus on forest management issues and restoration principles. The Northern Blues Forest Collaborative has been developing a climate change ZOA that may be incorporated into their Sin-



gle Integrated Forest Restoration ZOA. This may include developing a common terminology and understanding, as well as connecting climate change to decision-making processes. The Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative have used their ZOAs to support coordination and collaboration, both at the local level and the federal level. The Coordinating Fuels Group focuses on information sharing, which supports partnerships to leverage funding and staffing capacity and knowledge. At the federal level, ZOAs have supported project collaboration and analysis for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program funding and supported use of the Good Neighbor Authority. As one interviewee stated, “FFR has allowed me to work with agencies that I would not have been funded for otherwise...The FFR funding has been really critical in getting that CFLRP funding off the ground on Forest Service land.”

Stakeholder Perspectives

We interviewed collaborative facilitators about their experiences to identify what built or hindered collaboratives' capacity, as well as how they used the Collaborative Grant funds. Four main thematic areas emerged from our discussions: (1) Forest Service staffing capacity, (2) facilitator capacity and funding gaps, (3) implementation and (4) collaborative engagement in fire planning.

Forest Service Staffing Capacity. Interviewees commonly described three issues with Forest Service personnel capacity: (1) staffing turnover (i.e., full position turnover), (2) details/rotations for 6 months to 1 year (i.e., personnel leave temporarily for a different position and then return to the position), and (3) staffing shortages. Each of these affected collaboratives' ability to maintain momentum in the NEPA planning process in different ways, particularly when working on project-level ZOAs. Some interviewees explained how staffing turnover at the Forest Service was a problem for the collaborative because their key contact continually changed. Since this directly affected the work collaboratives engaged in, some have held discussions to streamline the on-boarding process for Forest Service personnel. Another interviewee described how Forest Service District Rangers often left for a rotation for up to one year. During this time, other Forest Service personnel filled the position. However, NEPA decisions were placed on hold until the District Ranger returned from the detail. Some interviewees mentioned challenges related to Forest Ser-

vice staffing shortages. In these cases, the collaborative's key contact at the Forest Service had less time for engagement because they needed to compensate by taking on work normally completed by others. All of these presented challenges for collaboratives to engage with the Forest Service in dialogue and decision-making and developing a shared understanding of the project.

Facilitator Capacity and Funding Gaps. Many interviewees spoke to the reality that capacity funding for staffing was less common and more difficult to obtain, compared to project funding. Some voiced how this can affect the length of time facilitators spend in these roles. One interviewee mentioned that external organizations, such as Sustainable Northwest, can serve as a bridging organization to provide guidance to newer facilitators. Additionally, some mentioned that various Forest Service units have provided funding to maintain facilitator tenure, since FFR funding functionally provides only 1.5 years of the 2-year state fiscal biennium, resulting in a 6-month funding gap. More consistent funding for collaboratives' capacity, along with support for facilitators on practical guidance in organizational structure and conflict-resolution could strengthen collaborative efforts. This can be especially helpful for new collaboratives or new facilitators, whose role requires being a liaison between people with different backgrounds, perspectives, roles, and duties. It can be challenging to bring people with diverse perspectives together in a way that can effectively facilitate dialogue and decision-making, particularly when issues of trust have been present with various government agencies. As one interviewee said, “It's easy to hate an organization, but most of the time it's a lot harder to hate that organization when you get to know the person”. This is the essence of relationship building and the vital role these collaboratives have served as a bridge builder between the Forest Service and communities.

Implementation. Collaborative members roles have typically required continual engagement in the development of ZOAs and crafting of collaborative governance documents. However, a few groups have found ways to participate in implementation committees for forest management and restoration activities. The Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative has participated in an implementation advisory committee to make use of Good Neighbor Authority and stewardship contracting to help design timely and economical implementation of projects. Additionally, the Southern

Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative has been part of the Rogue Forest Partners partnership, alongside land management agencies and nonprofits in the Rogue Basin, to collaboratively implement and monitor multiple projects (this activity is funded by sources other than the FFR Program). Lastly, the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project has engaged in a pilot project for implementation monitoring across three ranger districts post-treatment.

However, not all groups have been able to engage in discussion around implementation for project-level ZOAs, since there is not a clear pathway for collaborative involvement in implementation. Some interviewees shared how it can be difficult at times for collaborative members to continue to be motivated when much of the work has focused on the planning level. Additionally, some described how participation in the implementation process can help collaborative members better understand the effectiveness of their project-level ZOAs, while also supporting Forest Service personnel capacity for project management.

Collaborative engagement in fire planning. Many interviewees described their involvement with Potential Operational Delineations (PODs). PODs are geographic areas within which relevant information on forest conditions, ecology, and fire potential can be summarized. These are defined by landscape features that could potentially serve as firebreaks and control points during fire suppression activities (e.g., roads and ridge tops). One interviewee spoke to a need to expand the use of ZOAs for PODs, which can serve as a tool to plan ahead for wildfire using a risk management approach. PODs can bring together local fire knowledge and advanced spatial analytics to assist land managers in determining fire management objectives using a shared understanding of risks, management opportunities, and desired outcomes. In 2022, the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative engaged in a PODs CE pilot project which focused on thinning for fire preparation. A few months later, during the Cedar Creek Fire, the collaborative was able to provide treatment prescriptions to the incident command team. These recommendations informed the location and construction of fire lines on the incident and were seen as an effective tool for fire management.

The Forest Service's 2022 national Wildfire Crisis Strategy has led to an increased use of categorical exclusions to further streamline planning efficiencies to maintain forest

health functions and restore resiliency. Using the new authorities given by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Wasco-Hood River Forest Collaborative has been using PODs boundaries to identify placement of fuel breaks for a project level ZOA. Other collaboratives have hosted community workshops on PODs to support the Forest Service in these efforts and communicated the uses of these to their local communities. This included collaborative groups that have been more affected by wildfire in recent years, such as the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative and Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative. One interviewee described limitations around how priority areas from the Wildfire Crisis Strategy have been designated. "Even though, the Rogue Basin has the largest population at-risk in a fire prone landscape in the Pacific Northwest, [it was] not identified as one of the key ones." Given the changes around wildfire frequency and intensity over the last few years, as well as the use of new authorities by the Forest Service for restoring forest resiliency, interviewees stated that they expect collaborative engagement in fire planning and preparation to potentially change in the next few years. This is particularly relevant as demonstrated by the success of the PODs CE pilot project with the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative.

Conclusion

This report serves as an update to the 2019-2021 biennium monitoring report for the Oregon Department of Forestry's FFR Program. It summarizes economic and on-the-ground impacts of the State's investments in forest restoration on federal lands. Qualitative and quantitative outcomes of monitoring efforts demonstrate the additive value of each of the FFR Program strategic investment areas on forest restoration in Oregon.

A total of \$6.37 million was allocated by the state to the FFR Program during the 2021-2023 biennium, and the program leveraged an additional \$4 in federal funds. Across program areas, the state made the largest investment in FFR Program staff, which directly supported 26 jobs. Qualitative results demonstrate that the program continues to support contracting efficiencies through the GNA program and fills collaboratives' technical gaps through the TASS program. The Collaborative Grants have continued to demonstrate the value of collaborative involvement in supporting Forest Service decision mak-

ing. A key example is how during the 2022 Cedar Creek Fire, a pilot PODs CE project's treatment prescriptions were used and viewed by the incident command team as an effective fire management strategy.

Since its inception in 2013, the FFR Program has evolved to include a greater emphasis on GNA agreements and a larger investment in permanent FFR Program staff. With the introduction of the PACE program, the FFR Program's NEPA contracting work expanded, increasing the number of restoration-ready acres on federal lands. While the FFR Program is not filling all federal agency gaps for federal forest restoration, it is meaningfully contributing to the collaboration, planning, implementation and monitoring of forest resilience treatments on federal forestlands. Relative to the size of the FFR Program (state investment and staff), the program has a large impact on how federal forests are managed in Oregon and it continues to provide administrative, technical, and coordination support towards meeting Oregon's federal land restoration priorities.



Appendix A. Interview Protocol for ODF district coordinators, TASS and PACE recipients, and other relevant contacts as needed.

For ODF district coordinators:

- (1) Review (or collect) project areas and confirm that they are accurate, and none are missing
- (2) Fill in status and any other missing information
- (3) If missing, add NEPA planning area for each project

We will collect new “case study” data for NEPA planning areas with at least one ODF project (as listed in project area data collection forms) completed within the current biennium. This case study data will include details about the ODF activities, partners and their involvement in the overall NEPA planning area. We will collect the Qualitative data (Qualtrics instrument) only for NEPA planning areas where all proposed/planned ODF “projects” have been completed within the current biennium.

Interview Questions:

1. Participant name:
2. ODF District:
 - a. COD
 - b. NEO
 - c. SWO
 - d. SCAS
 - e. KLD
 - f. Multiple
3. Activity Area name:
4. Affiliation with project:
 - a. ODF employee
 - b. USFS Staff
 - c. Contractor/purchaser
 - d. TASS recipient
 - e. PACE recipient
 - f. Collaborative member
 - g. Other, please describe:
5. Is any outreach being conducted specifically for this activity area? (e.g., Field trips? Informational dissemination?)

6. What FFR initiatives contributed to this project?
 - a. CCG
 - b. TASS
 - c. PACE
 - d. Eboard
 - e. GNA
 - f. Other

7. Please list all partners directly involved in this activity, including all contractors, purchasers, and sub-contractors.
 - a. Partner name:

 - b. Estimated Involvement (not involved, somewhat involved, not sure, very involved, took the lead)

 - c. Partner type (non-profit, contractor, local gov, state gov, federal agency, private citizen, tribe, other)

8. If PACE/TASS recipient or contractor: Was there any development of infrastructure or acquisition of new equipment that will enable future activities? Please describe.

9. What, if anything, do you think worked well during this project?

10. Did partnerships increase scale or pace of the work? (If so, how?)

11. What if anything do you think could have worked better?

12. Was it difficult to find contractors to do this work?
 - i. In your opinion, why or why not?

13. [if contractor/PACE/TASS] were there any difficulties experience in bidding or getting paid for this work?

14. Were there other factors that slowed progress? (E.g., supply chain issues, labor shortages, regulatory issues, problems with other stakeholders)

15. Will this project increase the use of prescribed fire on the landscape? (yes, no, unsure)

16. Did we miss anything important about this project?

Appendix B: Collaborative Grants Interview/Profile Questionnaire

Each collaborative coordinator received a customized profile that contained information specific to their group.

In gathering this information, I'd really like your honest feedback about how these activities are proceeding and where you see both successes and challenges.

1. **On-the-ground acres:** First, I'd like to confirm the names and acres of the planning areas, stewardship contracts, or other identifiable on-the-ground projects that your group has worked on and/or anticipates working on through the rest of the 2021-2023 biennium with the FFR Program funds. "On-the-ground" refers to specific acres of Forest Service/BLM land that you have had dialogue about, that your collaborative would agree are "collaborative projects." As a frame of reference, we have listed data from the previous 2019-2021 biennium in italics. Please add information for the 2021-2023 biennium below this.

Planning Area	Number of acres for area involved	NEPA status of this area or project as of March 2023	Please describe your group's input and/or agreement on this project during the grant period (2021-2023 biennium)
Projects listed for this collaborative			

2. **Other activities:** Second, please list other non-project specific activities that you are undertaking with your FFR Program grant in 2021-2023. Please provide any comments you have on how you see each activity relating to pace, scale, and/or quality of restorations; or anticipate it will in the future. As a frame of reference, we have added data from the previous 2019-2021 biennium in italics. Please add information for the 2021-2023 biennium below this.

Activity	How does or do you anticipate this activity will increase pace, scale, and/or quality of restoration? Please explain.	What else would you share about progress on this activity?
Activities listed for this collaborative		

3. Is there anything else that really affected your capacity (positively or negatively), or slowed progress, during this time period? (E.g., wildfire, major FS position turnover, facilitator change, new members, challenges from community).
4. Is there anything else you would like to share about how your group has been functioning or about how you've used the FFR Program grant?

