



Fire season in Oregon this year has been fairly active, but much less acreage has burned than in 2024. Hopefully the mild, and as described by ODF “natural”, wave of weather patterns continue through August and September. Continuing from last month on the topic of harvesting along property lines, take these basic steps if your harvest is along the line: 1) Plan ahead of time, even years in advance, to allow for extra legwork. 2) Contact your neighbor so they are aware of the plan. Also, see if the neighbor would be interested in sharing the survey cost. 3) Walk the line and look for monumentation. 4) Determine if a survey is necessary. If so, be sure the survey is clearly marked by the surveyor and recorded at the county. As I wrote last month, do not move the cut line to avoid a survey - this can create future problems. Keep in mind that timber trespass disputes can involve more than just the timber. Shrubs and soil impacts can come into play and be subjects of a court proceeding. It is best to tread lightly.

**Family Forest Owner
MB&G Client
Yamhill County, OR**

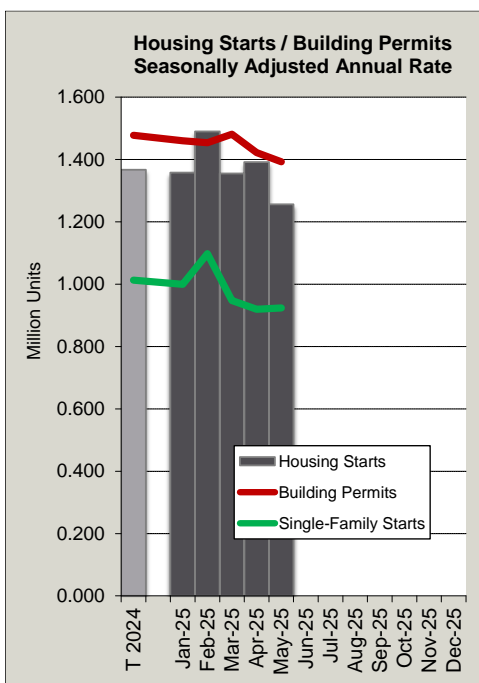
If you need help managing your forestland, or just want to talk forestry,, give me a call at (503) 224-3445 or send me an email at bkeller@masonbruce.com. MB&G has a sophisticated understanding of the forest industry and great relationships with numerous log buyers, loggers, nurseries, and reforestation contractors. MB&G is a full-service outfit that works with a wide range of forest landowners and offers a complete set of services, including timber harvests, silviculture, management plans, timber cruising, forestland valuations, and road maintenance. Thanks – Brent

MARKET WATCH: HOUSING, LUMBER AND LOGS

HOUSING STARTS

Housing starts decreased 4.6% in May, to 1.26 million units, and they were down 4.6% year-over-year. Single family starts fell 0.4% in May, and year-over-year they were down 7.3%. Random Lengths reports that housing starts dropped to pandemic levels in May.

May building permits decreased 2% from April to 1.4 million units, and were down 1% year-over-year. Single-family permits decreased 2.7% from April to 0.90 million units, and were down 6.4% from the same month in the prior year.



May 2025 Housing Starts (millions)

	May 2025	Apr 2025	Monthly Difference	May 2024	Annual Difference
All Starts	1.256	1.392	-9.8%	1.316	-4.6%
Single-Family Starts	0.924	0.920	0.4%	0.997	-7.3%
Building Permits	1.393	1.422	-2.0%	1.407	-1.0%
Single-Family Building Permits	0.898	0.923	-2.7%	0.959	-6.4%

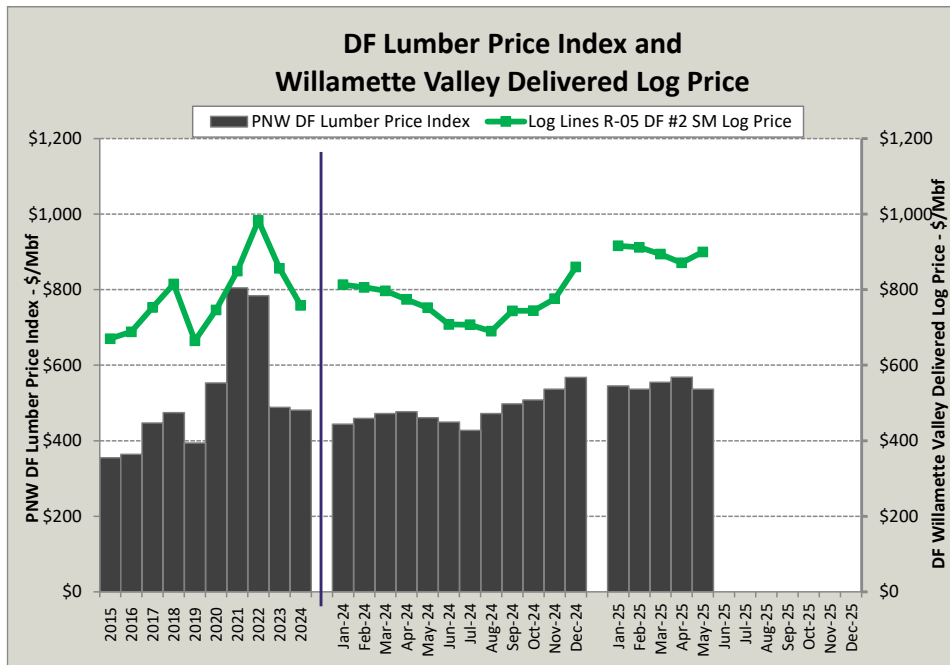
LUMBER & LOGS

Published DF log and lumber prices were mixed in May, as shown below.

May published DF #2S log prices increased 3.3% over April, to \$900/Mbf. May log prices were 19.7% above a year ago, and they were 9.3% above the 5-year average of \$823.

At \$536/Mbf, the May DF lumber index price decreased 5.6% from April. Lumber is up 16.3% over a year ago and is 13.8% below the 5-year average of \$622.

While log prices were up in May, with housing starts falling to pandemic levels, log prices are likely to soften in the coming months.



May 2025 Douglas-fir Prices							
	May 2025	Apr 2025	Change from Previous Month	May 2024	Change from Previous Year	5 Yr Annual Average	Current Month Compared to 5 Yr Annual Avg
Logs	\$ 900	\$ 871	3.3%	\$ 752	19.7%	\$ 823	9.3%
Lumber	\$ 536	\$ 568	-5.6%	\$ 461	16.3%	\$ 622	-13.8%

Lumber Track

YTD Western Mill Production through April 2025 was up 2% relative to April 2024. April production was also 0.6% lower than the prior month.

YTD production through April, as a percent of capacity, was up 3% when comparing 2025 to 2024. At 82%, April monthly production as a percent of capacity was up 3% when compared to the prior month. (*Western Lumber Facts, (6/9/25)*)

Western U.S. Softwood Lumber Production			
YTD Total (Bbf)		Monthly Total (Bbf)	
April 2025	1.22	April 2025	4.50
April 2024	1.19	March 2025	4.53
Percent Change	2%	Percent Change	-1%
YTD Production as a % of Capacity		Production as a % of Capacity	
April 2025	79%	April 2025	82%
April 2024	76%	March 2025	79%
Percent Change	3%	Percent Change	3%

INDUSTRY NEWS



New U.S. Wildland Fire Service

A few days before the announcement of the June 12 Presidential Executive Order, Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Interior outlined a proposal to create a single federal wildland fire agency.

The suggested name would be the U.S. Wildland Fire Service, and it would consolidate the wildland fire programs of the USDA and the Department of the Interior, along with four other agencies. The goal will be to create “an integrated, cost-efficient, and operationally more effective organization.”

In his Executive Order press release, President Trump instructed the agencies to create a consolidated organization that will streamline governance, encourage and modernize wildfire preparedness and response, and strengthen wildfire mitigation.

The Executive Order also instructs the agencies to identify and attempt to remove barriers and hindrances to wildfire prevention, detection, and response, and to create year-round fire readiness. (Boise Public Radio News 6/10/24, White House 6/12/25, NASF 6/13/2025)

[The Executive Order pertains only to federal firefighting organizations. State and local natural resources departments and rural fire districts, which respond to most fires, are unaffected. State and local agencies comprised of approximately 100,000 firefighters, 100,000 fire engines, 2,900 bulldozers, and 620 aircraft. These agencies are responsible for the management of over 1.5 billion acres of land and respond to more than 80% of all wildfires nationwide, and they are typically the first to respond.]

National Active Forest Management Strategy

On May 29, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins announced the U.S. \$200 million investment to implement the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service's National Active Forest Management Strategy. The strategy supports the President's Executive Order for the Immediate Expansion of Timber Production

The Forest Service is tasked with increasing timber harvest on national forests by 25%, with an overall goal of 4 billion board feet harvested annually by fiscal year 2028. Rollins stated the Forest Service needs to grow the timber program reasonably and sustainably over time, while making their processes more simple, responsive and integrated.

The USDA Active Forest Management Fact Sheet indicates the strategy includes acceleration of NEPA reviews, using more stewardship partnerships, accelerating the rate and scale of post-wildfire salvage and reforestation, using long-term timber contracts (10+ years), and reducing or eliminating burdensome practices not required by statute. (USDA 5/29/25, 5/30/25, 6/26/25)

Roadless Rule is Rescinded

Using terminology like "absurd obstacle" and "overly restrictive." Brooke Rollins of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced in June that the U.S. will be rescinding the 2001 Roadless Rule in U.S. Forests.

The Roadless Rule was a Forest Service rule that prohibited road construction, reconstruction and timber harvesting on more than 58 million acres of national forests including 2 million acres in Oregon.

Those celebrating this change claim that rescinding this rule will open the door to improving fire prevention and responsible timber production.

Opposition to this rule change was expressed by Rachael Hamby, policy director for the Center for Western Priorities, who fears the rule rescission will harm clean water, wildlife, Western communities, and recreation on public lands. (USDA & Capital Press 6/23/25)

New Study confirms U.S. Timber Supply is Sustainable

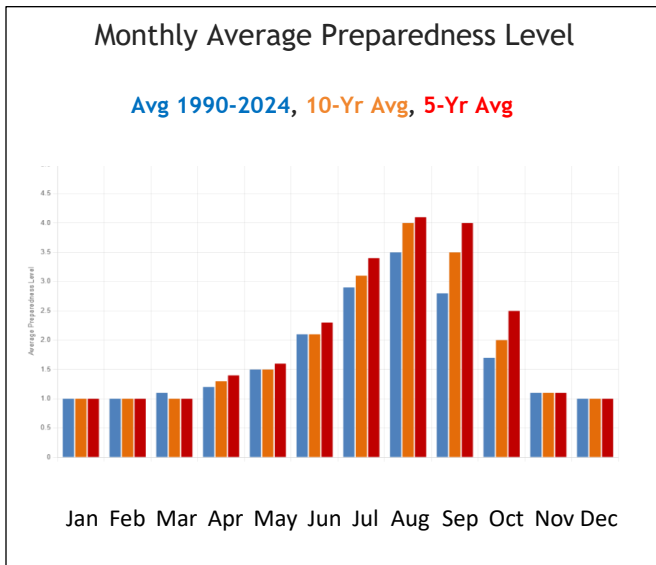
According to a new analysis by David Wear, at Resources for the Future institute, and John Coulston, at the USDA, combined timber harvest and planting projections using current management and regeneration practices can sustain future demand. Some of the key points they reported are below:

- Price affects timber supply/harvest in every region and ownership class except for the public lands in the Pacific Northwest (PNW).
- Nationwide, a 1% increase in sawtimber price yields less than 1% increase in supply. The only exception to this is in the PNW, where a 1% increase in price yields a 1.5% increase in supply.
- Landowners in high production regions increase reforestation by 0.5% for every 1% increase in sawtimber price.

Analysts conclude that the combined harvest and planting modeling show no signs of unsustainable harvest or future timber scarcity. (Lesprom 6/21/25)

National Wildland Fire Preparedness Levels

On June 21st, the USDA raised the national wildland fire preparedness level to Preparedness Level 3. The historical average monthly preparedness levels are illustrated in the chart below.



Preparedness levels are dictated by fuel and weather conditions, fire activity, and fire suppression resource availability throughout the country. The five preparedness levels range from the lowest (1) to the highest (5).

Level three calls for the national mobilization of resources as required to sustain incident management operations in active geographic areas. National priorities are established to address the demand for shared resources among active geographic areas. There is a moderate to high probability that drawing down resources from non-active geographic areas may pose a risk should existing conditions change. (USDA 6/21/25, National Interagency Fire Center 6/24/25)

USFS Invites Wildland Firefighters Back

After thousands of Forest Service employees voluntarily took a deferred resignation and others were fired, the Forest Service is inviting those with Red Cards (incident qualified) to return to work, even though they are technically on administrative leave. Participation is voluntary and those who return will be paid for their time at work.

This invitation expires at the end of the Deferred Resignation Program timeline; however, there are options to extend. It is thought that this will likely bring in a large number of Red-Carded individuals back into the system for this fire season. (The Hotshot Wake Up 6/6/25, Nevada Public Radio 6/11/25)

The Forest to Homes Act

The Oregon Legislature approved the Forest to Homes Act in June 2025. With its passage, this Act will allow individuals who complete a one-day training course to become certified to grade lumber. Once certified as a grader, a certified mill owner could sell lumber directly to a homeowner or a builder.

Senator Todd Nash said in a press release, "This bill restores local self-sufficiency by making it easier for small mill owners and landowners to mill, grade, and use their own lumber. It's a win for rural Oregon, a win for housing, and a smart way to reconnect with sustainable forestry practices." (Wallowa County Chieftain 6/6/25)

Non-Wildfire Tree Deaths in Oregon

ODF air and ground checkups indicate that in 2024, Oregon's forests had "unprecedented" damage to trees from both wildfire and insects.

The damage just from drought, heat, insects and disease was significant. ODF recorded 2.26 million acres of new damage last year that was not related to fires. The majority of the trees damaged were ponderosa pine, true fir and Douglas-fir. The worst-hit areas were in northeastern Oregon and the eastern foothills of the Cascades — particularly in southern Oregon, where large numbers of Douglas firs have been killed by the flat-headed fir borer, which is not typically lethal.

Allocated 2020 Wildfire Recovery Funds Mostly Undistributed

After the 2020 Oregon wildfires, Oregon lawmakers allocated \$150 million for fire recovery. The U.S. Congress authorized an additional \$422 million grant through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

To date, more than 90% of the money remains unspent, even as hundreds await relief.

The agency tasked with distributing the money is Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS). Caleb Yant, chief financial officer of OHCS, claims the delay is largely due to inexperience and bureaucratic red tape. "We had never done this before," he said.

It is reported that OHCS recently came to an agreement with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to loosen restrictions "in distributing the biggest pot of money" to fire survivors. (Axios 6/4/25)

The U.S. Supreme Court Limits the Scope of Reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In May, when the Supreme Court reviewed the facts in the case where environmental groups tried to use NEPA to block a railway line in Utah, based on what might happen in the future if the railway line was built, "the nation's highest court reversed a ruling that ordered federal regulators to scrutinize the railroad's potentially far-reaching indirect environmental effects, such as its capacity to boost oil drilling and refining. The justices declared that agencies are not required to analyze the effects of projects over which they do not exercise regulatory authority."

It is thought that this ruling will end "serial litigation," by environmental groups and allow an increase in the pace and scale of forest management on public lands.

"We are hopeful this ruling will establish a precedent for a more efficient and predictable environmental review process, one that empowers public land managers to carry out projects that reduce wildfire risks, restore forest health and build more resilient landscapes," said Nick Smith, spokesperson for the American Forest Resource Council.

A joint statement released from Mountain States Legal Foundation, Western Energy Alliance, & American Forest Resource Council stated, "This ruling is a critical step toward restoring sanity to a system that has long turned environmental review into an instrument of obstruction. For decades, these groups have improperly wielded NEPA, not as a tool for informed decision-making, but as a legal weapon to stall energy, mining, transportation, forest health, grazing, and even recreation projects vital to our national interest. By rejecting this misuse, the Court has affirmed that NEPA is nothing more than a modest procedural requirement that asks federal regulators to pause, think about what they are doing, and explain it. It is not a means for "anti-everything" groups to stop projects that they do not like, nor for federal judges to put themselves in the regulators' shoes just because the judges want different substantive outcomes."

Wendy Park, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity, said the "disastrous" decision is poised to undermine NEPA, and would allow for more polluting projects to move forward and bureaucrats to ignore harm from federal projects to wildlife and the climate. Park also vowed to continue fighting the Uinta Basin Railway, which the group has challenged for years. (E&E News 5/29/25, Press Release 5/29/25, Capital Press 6/2/25)

Officially Terminated: Oregon Wildfire Hazard Map

In January 2025, Oregon released an updated Wildfire Hazard Map, after the first map was found to be very unpopular with rural landowners whose properties appeared in high or extremely-high risk areas, and who feared that insurance companies would use the map to cancel or increase the premiums on their land-related policies. After five months, an appeals process, and a plethora of negative reactions, the Oregon Legislature has voted to terminate its use.

When the map was revoked, related requirements for property owners in hazard zones to adhere to special construction rules related to their risk were also revoked. However, local jurisdictions can still require property owners to follow fire-safe building regulations. (Oregonian 6/24/25, KOIN 2/17/25)

Supporting Early Seral Forest Environments



The early-seral stage of a forest is important to the ecological value of a landscape. This stage occurs after a significant disturbance when very few live trees remain on site and the canopy is wide open. This stage ends when trees grow in and the canopy closes (10-15 years).

Timber harvesting operations, such as clearcuts, can create early seral habitats. These openings increase plants' and animals' access to needed sunlight, water, nutrients and space, however, they can also lack certain beneficial elements that support biodiversity.

One way to support early-seral forest is to plant flowering vegetation. Wildflowers support entire ecosystems for pollinators, birds, and small animals on a micro scale. Butterflies and other insects, small birds, and animals depend on seeds, nectar, and pollen for their food supply and life support system

It has been found that focused seeding of wildflowers on burn piles and landings typically increases germination success because bare mineral soil is exposed, thus increasing germination rates. Burn piles are the best place for seeding because fire usually creates a concentration of nitrogen in the area and sterilizes the seed bank, decreasing potential competition with invasive species sprouting from seed. (OSU Extension May 2025, USFS Wildflower Ethics and Native Plants 6/26/25)