



Promoting and practicing sustainable forestry

Gilchrist Acquisition Backgrounder

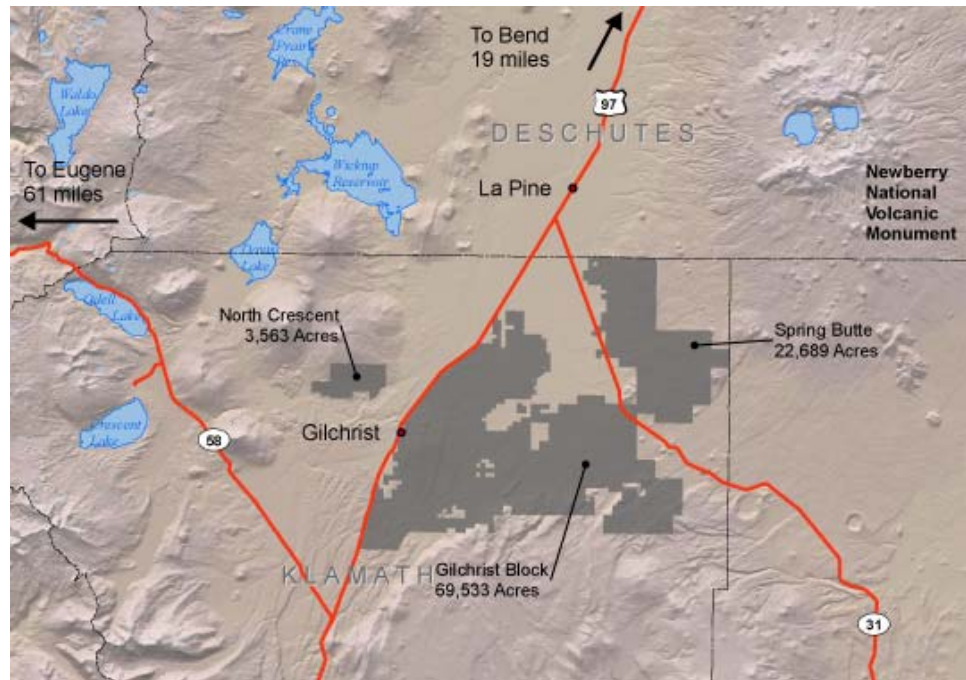


Conserving working forests

Creating a new state forest in Central Oregon

Legislative Authorization Complete. The 2009 Oregon Legislature has authorized the Department of Forestry to use \$15 million in Lottery Bonds toward acquisition of forestlands currently owned by Fidelity National Timber Resources Inc., located in the Gilchrist area of Central Oregon. State acquisition of these lands has the support of the Governor’s Office, Legislative leadership, and the Klamath County Commission. Negotiations are underway this summer and fall, targeting a closing by the end of 2009.

Phased Approach for State Acquisition. The Department of Forestry has studied three specific parcels of the Fidelity ownership and has identified the Gilchrist Block as the top priority parcel for acquisition in the near term. Additional parcels could be acquired in future years as funding is available.



The Oregon Department of Forestry is poised to acquire the Gilchrist Block private forest tract south of La Pine.

The alternative: Forests lost to parcelization

Divide and sell. The Department of Forestry’s early interest in acquiring these lands grew out of the initial concern that they would be lost as working forests. As privately owned lands, these Central Oregon forests are at risk of being fragmented into many smaller parcels. Population growth, changing real estate values, and contraction of the conventional timber industry, particularly east of the Cascades, have produced increasing incentives for owners of large working forests to divide and sell them.

Forest values lost. When large blocks of forestland are fragmented into smaller ownerships, especially when low-density homes are introduced, major challenges emerge, and forest values are lost. There’s more potential for human-caused fires, compounded by more costly and complex fire protection needs. It’s also less likely the land will be managed for forest values. Public access is lost and wildlife habitat is fragmented.

Jobs, wildlife, recreation, revenue

Maintaining working forests is important. If kept together and in forest use, over time, these forests can provide sustainable timber jobs, keep wildlife habitat intact, and secure public access to recreation opportunities. And, in time, a working state-owned forest will provide a steady stream of revenue to local counties.

<p>Heavily harvested land at risk</p>	<p>The Gilchrist-area lands are at risk of being lost as working forests – because economic conditions have forced a succession of past owners to harvest them heavily, leaving predominantly young timber with limited near-term economic value. Creation of a state forest in this vicinity will prevent the land from being divided into smaller parcels and sold.</p> <p>The land needs time to recover. The state can restore these forests over many years, increasing their health and sustainability.</p>
<p>Holds same potential as existing state forests</p>	<p>Cut-over, burned lands restored as working forests. Just as the Tillamook, Clatsop and Sun Pass state forests, once cut-over and / or burned, are being restored as healthy, sustainable working forests, the Gilchrist-area land has enormous potential. Not long ago, these lands supported some of the finest privately owned Ponderosa pine forests in the region.</p> <p>Revenue to local counties. Today, the counties with lands in current state forests have come to depend on forest revenues to provide basic public services.</p> <p>State Forests absorb carbon gases. Forests like the Gilchrist parcels have an important role to play in mitigating climate change by being able to absorb emissions of greenhouses gases from unusually severe wildfires and other sources.</p>
<p>Actively managed to achieve greatest permanent value</p>	<p>Sustainable forest ecosystems. If the state is able to acquire these lands, the intent is to restore and actively manage them to achieve the "greatest permanent value."</p> <p>Economic, environmental, social benefits. As defined in state law and administrative rule, this term means healthy, productive and sustainable forest ecosystems that over time and across the landscape provide a full range of social, economic and environmental benefits.</p>
<p>Sustainable harvests each year with revenue to counties</p>	<p>Sun Pass State Forest serves as model. The 20,700-acre Sun Pass State Forest, located 50 miles south of Gilchrist in Klamath County, serves as a model for this similar eastside land. When the Department of Forestry acquired Sun Pass in the 1940s, the forest had been heavily harvested and considered nearly worthless as forest land. Today, the Sun Pass State Forest is a thriving and healthy forest that provides a wide variety of values.</p> <p>Harvests include leaving trees. The forest management approach on the Sun Pass—and likely on a future state forest in the Gilchrist area—involves taking some younger trees, some middle-aged trees and some older trees – while leaving enough of each age class so the stand can continue to grow into another harvestable unit in a few decades.</p> <p>\$1 million a year to Klamath County. This approach has worked well on the Sun Pass – providing many social, environmental and economic benefits (Klamath County receives about \$1 million in revenue each year from timber sales).</p> <p>It will take time for forest to come back. Of course, it will take some time before these new lands, if the state acquires them, could be restored to a point at which they would be able to provide a substantial range of forest benefits. But the potential, the vision and the commitment to the future of these lands are there.</p>
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