FOREST RESTORATION TIMELINE

Restoring our dry, fire-adapted forests in Central Oregon is a multi-step process carried out over many years and requiring collaboration among a diverse team of forest scientists, loggers, fire experts, community leaders, and volunteers.

STEP 1 THOUGHTFUL PLANNING

U.S. Forest Service foresters, wildlife biologists, hydrologists, soil scientists, archaeologists, botanists, and other experts work together with the public to prioritize where and what kind of restoration work should occur in the forest to improve wildlife habitat, create healthier forests and streams, and reduce wildfire risk, while minimizing potential negative impacts to recreation, wildlife, land or water.

STEP 2 CAREFUL LOGGING

Removing some of the small and medium trees in the forest, also known as thinning, reduces competition for the limited amount of water in our dry environment on the east side of the Cascades, leaving more room for the remaining trees to grow. Clumps of un-thinned trees are left to provide places for wildlife to hide, while small openings between trees are created to allow snow to reach the ground, replenishing soils and streams, and allowing native grasses and wildflowers to flourish.

STEP 3 MOWING UNDERBRUSH

In the absence of low-intensity fire, flammable shrubs like bitterbrush, manzanita, and snowbrush have filled in the forest floor, crowding out native grasses and wildflowers, and increasing the risk that fires climb into the canopies of trees. Mowing helps reduce this risk, creates space for native grasses and wildflowers to grow, and prepares the forest for the final step, controlled burning.

STEP 4 CONTROLLED BURNING

Controlled burns, also known as prescribed fires, are conducted in the spring and fall by teams of experts under specific conditions of temperature, wind, and humidity, allowing for low-intensity fires that primarily move along the ground consuming needles, pine cones, branches, shrubs, and small trees. Controlled burns improve habitat for plants and animals that depend on fire, recycling nutrients, and sustaining a healthy forest ecosystem.

DESCHUTES COLLABORATIVE FOREST PROJECT

These important forest restoration steps are used together to improve the health of our forest, reduce the risk of out-of-control wildfires, reduce the severity of future wildfires when they do occur, and keep our communities and firefighters safer. Learn more at www.deschutescollaborativeforest.org.

We Count on the Forest, Now the Forest is Counting on Us.