Oregon Forest Practices Act:

Adaptable and informed by sound science

The Oregon Forest Practices Act reflects Oregonians' desires to use and enjoy Oregon's forests and protect its natural resources. It was the first law of its kind in the U.S. when the state Legislature passed it in 1971, and the Act and its rules have been changed many times in response to new scientific findings and evolving public needs and interests.

In a process that incorporates public input, the Board of Forestry – a seven-member citizen board appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state Senate – approves detailed rules to implement the Act's requirements. Here is a list of significant changes in the Act and its rules, which regulate forestry on private and state-owned lands.

2010

March 2012	Removed tree replanting requirements along roads, addressing dangers that blown-down trees pose to public safety, highways, bridges and utility lines.
Oct. 2007	Changed rules to allow foresters to use more information, rather than only fish-counting results, to better determine if fish are present in particular streams, enhancing protection of fish and their habitat.
Oct. 2006	Required strategic distribution of trees left along streams, to reduce erosion and improve fish habitat.
Sept. 2006	Enhanced rules to allow artificially obstructed fish-passage streams to be designated "fish" streams, to protect water quality and fish habitat.
Oct. 2002	Enhanced rules related to erosion and landslides, to improve public safety.
July 2002	Strengthened forest-road and timber-harvest rules, to protect water quality.
Sept. 1996	Enhanced rules for applying pesticides after forest operations.
July 1995	Bolstered civil penalty and enforcement rules.

2000

Jan. 1995	Revised rules to quickly replace trees recently harvested and ensure that replanted forests thrive; also required reasonable, site-specific and science-based solutions for successfully growing new forests.
Sept. 1994	Upgraded tree-retention rules and water-body classifications, to protect streams. Enhanced rules to encourage stream improvements and protect water quality.
Jan. 1993	Clarified definitions of spacing and size requirements for clearcuts. Updated rules for listing scientifically and ecologically significant biological sites.
May 1992	Strengthened criminal and civil penalty enforcement rules for tree retention, clearcutting, stream protection and scenic view violations.
Oct. 1991	Created wetland protection rules.
July 1991	Increased stream protection, modernized limits on clearcut size and increased the number of standing trees after harvest, based on new scientific findings.
June 1991	Created northern spotted owl protection rules.
May 1991	Enhanced rules for listing sites of endangered and threatened species. Set rules to protect great blue heron.
Jan. 1991	Created osprey habitat protection rules.
July 1990	Adopted rules for listing sensitive bird nesting, roosting and watering sites.

1990

Sept. 1989	Established processes for operators to appeal regulatory orders, and for the public to appeal operating plans.
Sept. 1988	Set operating plan reporting requirements for work near wildlife habitat, wetlands and streams.
Aug. 1988	Improved civil penalty enforcement and procedures.
May 1988	Simplified public access to operating notices and plans. Clarified roles of Regional Forest Practices Committees to improve rule development and public involvement.

1980

July 1987	Increased protections for endangered species; sensitive bird nesting, roosting and watering sites; wetlands; and ecologically and scientifically significant biological sites. Reduced Board of Forestry from 12 to seven members and required that at least four be non-industry members.
April 1987	Implemented major updates to streamside protection, harvest and road construction rules to reflect land-use planning, forestry, fish and wildlife needs. Increased requirements for leaving streamside trees.
June 1985	Reinforced erosion prevention and operating plan rules, to protect water quality and fish habitat.
Sept. 1983	Improved road construction and harvest rules, to address landslide risk and better protect watersheds after 1981 and 1982 storm damage.
Jan. 1980	Shifted responsibility to replant after harvest from operators to landowners.

Sept. 1978	Increased restrictions on use of two herbicides.
June 1978	Enhanced water quality protection rules to, at minimum, comply with the Federal Clean Water Act.
Jan. 1978	Required operators to notify the Department of Forestry 15 days before starting forestry work. Enhanced stream channel protections.
July 1975	Increased pre-harvest operating plan reporting requirements. Strengthened rock and quarry surface-mining rules, to better protect water quality.
July 1974	Strengthened rules to reduce erosion, prevent runoff, limit forest impacts from mechanical equipment and protect water resources.
July 1972	Created the Act's first rules on tree replanting, road construction and maintenance, and stream protection.
1971	Legislature adopted the Forest Practices Act, setting standards for building and maintaining roads, harvesting, applying pesticides and replacing harvested trees, to balance the needs for responsible forestry and protecting natural resources.

1970

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For more information about the Oregon Forest Practices Act, contact the Oregon Department of Forestry, 2600 State St., Salem, OR 97310; 503-945-7200; www.oregon.gov/odf.