

**GOAL 4**  
**FOREST LANDS**

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**The residents of Benton County value...the land – its beauty and life-sustaining qualities**

**Agricultural and forest lands provide sustenance for residents of the Willamette Valley. These lands and the larger systems of mountains, valleys, rivers and wetlands of which they are part continue to be highly prized economically, culturally, recreationally, environmentally and aesthetically.**

Benton County Comprehensive Plan Value Statement

# GOAL 4

## FOREST LANDS

### Overview

The Coast Range of Oregon, in which the forest lands of Benton County are predominately located, has some of the most productive native forests in the world. The majority of the land within Benton County is forest land, and it is important economically, ecologically and socially that the productivity of these lands be sustained. The policies within this chapter define the manner in which forest lands are preserved and maintained for multiple functions within the economy and ecosystem of Benton County.

As with agricultural lands, preserving forest lands is a statewide priority reflected in the Statewide Planning Goals. Oregon statutes and administrative rules require certain lands to be protected for forestry, with limitations on conflicting uses such as dwellings. Because of the degree to which state law dictates allowable land uses on forest land, Benton County has limited purview. The policies of this chapter reflect Benton County's approach to conserving forest land in a manner consistent with the statewide mandates.

The Benton County Development Code provides the primary basis upon which these policies are implemented. Additional policies found in Goal 5 and Goal 7 provide for methods to reduce risks of wildfire, promote sustainable yields, minimize conflicting uses and protect fish and wildlife habitat within the forest lands of the county. The County further recognizes and supports the essential role of the Oregon Department of Forestry in regulating forest practices and in accomplishing this goal.



Courtesy of Starker Forests, Inc.

# GOAL 4

## Statewide Planning Goal 4

To conserve forest lands by maintaining the forest land base and to protect the state's forest economy by making possible economically efficient forest practices that assure the continuous growing and harvesting of forest tree species as the leading use on forest land consistent with sound management of soil, air, water, and fish and wildlife resources and to provide for recreational opportunities and agriculture.

Forest lands are those lands acknowledged as forest lands as of the date of adoption of this goal amendment. Where a plan is not acknowledged or a plan amendment involving forest lands is proposed, forest land shall include lands which are suitable for commercial forest uses including adjacent or nearby lands which are necessary to permit forest operations or practices and other forested lands that maintain soil, air, water and fish and wildlife resources.

Forest lands should be inventoried so as to provide for the preservation of such lands for forest uses.

Plans providing for the preservation of forest lands for forest uses should consider as a major determinant the carrying capacity of the air, land and water resources of the planning area. The land conservation and development actions provided for by such plans should not exceed the carrying capacity of such resources.

Excerpt from OAR 660-015-0000(4)

## Benton County Goal

### Forest Lands

To preserve and maintain forest lands for growing and harvesting trees and other forest products, watershed functions, conservation, recreation, and agriculture.



# FOREST LANDS

## Policies

- 4.1.1 Forest land shall be reserved for forest uses which include production and harvest of timber and other forest products, forest operations and practices; uses that conserve soil, water, and air quality, and provide for fish and wildlife resources; and agriculture and recreational opportunities appropriate in a forest environment.
- 4.1.2 Forest lands as defined by Goal 4, which are not developed or committed to non-forest uses, shall be protected with zoning designations. Comprehensive Plan Map amendments from Forestry to a non-resource designation shall require an exception to Statewide Planning Goal 4.
- 4.1.3 Benton County shall maintain residential dwelling siting and defensible space standards to reduce the risk of wildfire and negative impacts to fish and wildlife habitat.
- 4.1.4 Benton County shall promote the management of resource lands to ensure a sustained yield of forest products.
- 4.1.5 Benton County shall ensure that conflicts between residential development and forest lands are minimized by requiring setbacks for residences adjacent to resource lands.

## 4.1 General Policies

### Defined Terms

- defensible space
- exception
- resource lands

See Appendix for definitions



Hull-Oakes Lumber Mill

### Cross-References

Additional policies related to this goal:

- Goal 2 Land Use Planning
- Goal 5 Natural Resources
- Goal 7 Natural Hazards
- Goal 9 Economic Development
- Goal 15 Willamette River Greenway



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## Findings and References

**4.1.a** Oregon is the nation's leading lumber producer. In 1994, Oregon's forest industries produced 5.7 billion board feet of lumber, or approximately 15% of the nation's production. More than three-fourths of Oregon's timber supply now comes from private forest lands, employing a large share of the 63,300 people who work in the wood products industry.

Warren, D.D. Production, Prices, Employment, and Trade in Northwest Forest Industries, 1st quarter 1996. PNW-RB-215. Portland, OR: U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. 1996.

**4.1.b** Wood growing productivity in the Coast Range of Oregon is some of the highest of any native forests in the world. A typical Douglas-fir site may produce 15-20 cubic meters per hectare per year, which ranks it about twice as productive as Canada and Scandinavia, and three times more productive than most of Russia, which are major coniferous timber regions in the world. Growth rates over time also exceed those of pine forests in the southeastern states, often touted as a high forest production area. Only the Redwood region of northern California exceeds growth potentials of our best sites in the Coast Range.

Rick Fletcher, OSU College of Forestry, personal communication, July 2005

**4.1.c** Between 1982 and 1992, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly, Soil Conservation Service) estimated that 65,000 acres of forest land in the United States shifted from forest use to urban use.

Natural Resource Conservation Service, 1992  
Natural Resources Inventory, January 1995

**4.1.d** Residential development within forest zones has increased the risk of wildfire and in some cases negatively impacted fish and wildlife habitat. A 1993 Oregon

Department of Forestry study on wildfires found that residential development on forest land significantly increases the risk of wildfire and significantly increases the cost of wildfire control.

"Wildlife Prevention and Control in Areas of Residential Forest Land Development: An Analysis of Fire Data" Oregon Dept. of Forestry Technical Bulletin, March, 1993

**4.1.e** The Benton County Sustainability Policy encourages County residents to use, develop, and protect our resources at a rate and in a manner that enables people to meet their current needs and also preserve resources for future generations.

Benton County Sustainability Policy, 2002

**4.1.f** Rural residential activities adjacent to forest lands can result in conflicts between the residential uses and forest activities. An example would be the increased threat of wildfire when homes are constructed in close proximity to forest lands.

### References

Benton County. Administrative Services Department. *Benton County Sustainability Policy*. Administrative Policy No. 02-01. 2002

Benton County. Community Development Department. *Background Reports for the Benton County Comprehensive Plan*. December 1979.

Benton County. Community Development Department. *Benton County Comprehensive Plan Value Statement*. Steering Committee, Benton County Plan Update. December 6, 2004.

Benton County. Community Development Department. *Benton County Comprehensive Plan*. Last printed October 8, 1992.