

June 4, 2020

To: Javier Goirigolzarri & Doug Robertson, Communities for Health Forests
From: John Horvick, DHM Research
Re: Management of federal forests in Oregon (#00950)

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

From May 28—June 3, 2020, DHM Research conducted an survey of Oregonians. The purpose of the survey was to assess Oregonians' opinions about how to manage federal forests in Oregon and prevent severe fires.

Research Methodology: The online survey consisted of 605 Oregonians. This is a sufficient sample size to assess Oregonians' opinions generally and to review findings by multiple subgroups.

Respondents were contacted from a list registered voters in Oregon. Telephone respondents were contacted by a live interviewer and text-to-online respondents received a text invitation directing them to an online survey. In gathering responses, a variety of quality control measures were employed, including questionnaire pre-testing and validation.

In gathering responses, a variety of quality control measures were employed, including questionnaire pre-testing and validation. Quotas were set by age, gender, political affiliation, and area of the state to ensure a representative sample.

Statement of Limitations: Any sampling of opinions or attitudes is subject to a margin of error. The margin of error is a standard statistical calculation that represents differences between the sample and total population at a confidence interval, or probability, calculated to be 95%. This means that there is a 95% probability that the sample taken for this study would fall within the stated margin of error if compared with the results achieved from surveying the entire population. The margin of error for this survey is $\pm 4.0\%$.

DHM Research Background: DHM Research has been providing opinion research and consultation throughout the Pacific Northwest and other regions of the United States for over 40 years. The firm is nonpartisan and independent and specializes in research projects to support public policy making.

Communities for Heathy Forests 2020 Survey

May 28-June 3, 2020
Oregon registered voters
N=600, ±4.0% margin of error
17 minutes

DHM Research
Project #00950

*Note where appropriate respondents will be allowed to volunteer “don’t know” responses.

Hello, my name is _____ from [name of fielding house]. I have some questions about your community (specify if possible).

As needed:

- We are not trying to sell you anything.
- The survey should only take a few minutes and I think you will find the questions interesting.
- Your answers are strictly confidential.

Introduction: We’d like to ask you a few questions to get your opinion about management of federal forests here in Oregon. Federal forests comprise about half of all forestlands in Oregon and are managed by the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Nearly the same amount of forests are privately owned and are managed much differently than federal forests. This survey is focused only on the management of federal forests.

Forest Fire Awareness

The first questions are about the number and size of forest fires in Oregon. I will ask about these separately.

In the last 25 years, do you believe...

1. That the number of fires on Oregon’s federal forests has increased, stayed about the same, or decreased?

Response category	n=605
Increased	66%
Stayed about the same	23%
Decreased	4%
[Don’t read] Don’t know	8%

2. That the size of fires on Oregon’s federal forests has increased, stayed about the same, or decreased.

Response category	n=605
Increased	66%
Stayed about the same	21%
Decreased	5%
[Don’t read] Don’t know	8%

3. We are interested in what Oregonians believe happens after severe fires on federal forestlands. Which of the following do you think happens? Your best guess is okay. **(Rotate a to c, c to a)**

Response category	n=605
a. Burned areas are replanted within one year	19%
b. Burned areas are replanted within five years	43%
c. Most of burned areas are left alone, and not replanted	26%
[Don't read] Don't know	12%

The following are statements that different people make about federal forests in Oregon. For each, please indicate if you think the statement is completely true, mostly true, mostly false, or completely false.

(Randomize)

Response category	Completely true	Mostly true	Mostly false	Completely false	Don't know
4. Federal forests in Oregon are at a high risk for severe fire because of overly dense vegetation, more frequent drought, and insect- and disease-killed trees.	28%	49%	14%	2%	7%
5. More than 80% of federal forests in Oregon are at risk of severe wildfire.	25%	45%	17%	3%	10%

Smoke

The next questions are about smoke from forest fires.

Oregon has experienced a number of severe forest fires over the last 25 years that have caused smoky conditions in local communities. **(Rotate Q6-Q7)**

6. How concerned, if at all, do you think an average person should be about smoke from severe forest fires: very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

Response category	n=605
Very concerned	38%
Somewhat concerned	43%
Not too concerned	15%
Not at all concerned	3%
[Don't read] Don't know	1%

7. How concerned, if at all, do you think someone who is in poor health should be about smoke from severe forest fires: very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

Response category	n=605
Very concerned	66%
Somewhat concerned	28%
Not too concerned	5%
Not at all concerned	1%
[Don't read] Don't know	<1%

8. Which statement about smoke from severe forest fires is closest to your opinion. **(Rotate)**

Response category	n=605
a. Medical experts now know that smoke from forest fires is more hazardous to our health than we previously thought. It can create air quality conditions that put young children, older adults, and people with underlying medical conditions at high risk for health complications.	64%
b. Humans have always lived with smoke from forest fires and are they generally safe to live with. People who may be more vulnerable can easily protect themselves by staying indoors as much as possible and wearing a mask if they need to be outside.	29%
c. (Don't read) Neither	4%
d. (Don't read) Don't know	3%

Policies

The following are possible policies for managing federal forests in Oregon. Indicate if you support or oppose each. **(Wait and ask strongly/somewhat) (Randomize)**

Response category	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Don't know
9. Using prescribed burns when forest and weather conditions are appropriate.	56%	31%	4%	3%	7%
10. Selective logging of small- and medium-sized trees to widen their spacing and clearing underbrush.	54%	29%	8%	4%	6%
11. Faster response to put out small forest fires before they grow into severe fires.	77%	16%	4%	2%	2%
12. Allow forest fires to burn naturally until they extinguish themselves unless they threaten private property or lives.	15%	24%	16%	40%	5%

Next, I'd like to ask you about prescribed burns. Prescribed burns are planned fires set by trained professionals. Their purpose is to reduce the amount of dead and dying trees and plants that cause severe, uncontrolled forest fires.

13. Knowing this, do you support or oppose using prescribed burns when forest and weather conditions are appropriate.

Response category	n=605
Support	88%
Oppose	7%
[Don't read] Don't know	5%

After fires on federal forests, the federal government is required to publicly report the total acres burned. In addition to this, would you support or oppose requiring the federal government to reporting the following information after forest fires on federal land. **(Wait and ask strongly/somewhat) (Randomize)**

Response category	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Don't know
14. The total amount spent putting out a fire.	64%	25%	4%	3%	4%
15. The total estimated value of timber lost due to a forest fire.	53%	24%	10%	7%	6%

Revenue from timber harvested on federal forests is shared with local governments and schools.

16. Would you support or oppose requiring the federal government to report how much revenue local governments and schools may lose because of timber damaged by forest fire? **(Wait and ask strongly/somewhat) (Randomize)**

Response category	n=605
Strongly support	62%
Somewhat support	23%
Somewhat oppose	7%
Strongly oppose	5%
[Don't read] Don't know	4%

17. Federal land managers, professional foresters, and elected officials on all levels have repeatedly called for increasing the pace and scale of restoration projects on our federal forest lands. To allow federal agencies to move forward more quickly with these projects would you support or oppose modifying the current rules and regulations to reduce the time required to complete restoration projects. **(Wait and ask strongly/somewhat) (Randomize)**

Response category	n=605
Strongly support	50%
Somewhat support	29%
Somewhat oppose	5%
Strongly oppose	4%
[Don't read] Don't know	12%

Forest Management Statements

The next set of questions ask about competing ideas that some people have about how to manage federal forests after severe fires. First...

(Rotate sections)

Some people believe that after severe fires federal forests should be actively managed by removing some of the dead trees and planting new seedlings and native plants. Please indicate if you think the following are very good, good, poor, or very poor reasons to actively manage federal forests. **(Randomize)**

Response category	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Don't know
18. In the last 5 years over 1.5 million acres of federal forestlands have burned in Oregon. The damage caused by this level of intense fires can take up to 100 years or more to restore naturally. That is too long, and environmentally sound practices can be used to restore our lost forests more quickly.	52%	31%	7%	4%	6%
19. Replanting after severe fires protects water quality in rivers and streams by reducing soil erosion. This helps to ensure clean water for fish and wildlife and for drinking.	61%	30%	3%	1%	4%
20. Replanting can quickly restore our federal forests so the public can get back to enjoying them sooner.	47%	35%	10%	4%	4%
21. Trees killed by forest fires decay rapidly and within 2 to 3 years have little to no economic value. Harvesting these trees promptly after forest fires can generate revenue to help fund local government services and schools.	44%	30%	11%	7%	8%
22. Without the prompt removal of some dead trees following catastrophic fires, our forests are at greater risk of harm from more severe future fires.	37%	30%	18%	5%	9%

Response category	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Don't know
23. Our federal land managers and our state universities have the scientific knowledge and environmentally sound practices available to restore forests after severe fires more effectively than just leaving them alone.	45%	40%	8%	2%	6%
24. Because of lack of active management practices, fires on federal forests have become so large and severe they cause great damage to the land and wildlife habitat. When federal forests do burn we should do everything we can to restore them to their historic conditions.	51%	33%	9%	2%	5%

Now on the other side...

Some people believe that federal forests after severe fires should be left alone and allowed to grow back naturally. Please indicate if you think the following are very good, good, poor, or very poor reasons to leave federal forests alone after severe fires. **(Randomize)**

Response category	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Don't know
25. Severe forest fires have always occurred and part of a healthy forest system. The best thing to do after a fire on federal forests is to allow nature to take its course without human interference.	15%	22%	29%	24%	9%
26. Dead and decaying trees provide habitats for fish and wildlife. Removing these destroys the natural habitats that healthy forests depend upon.	27%	31%	18%	14%	9%
27. Removing dead and decaying trees disturbs the ground and causes soil erosion. This always leads to dirty rivers and streams and poor water quality for fish, wildlife, and drinking.	19%	24%	23%	24%	11%
28. Removing dead trees requires lots of heavy equipment and construction of access roads. More damage is done with this activity than just letting forests recover naturally after fires.	21%	26%	24%	20%	9%

Response category	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Don't know
29. Efforts to actively manage forests after severe fires creates conditions that encourage the spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants, causing long-term damage.	16%	24%	24%	21%	15%
30. Harvesting dead trees after forest fires is just not necessary. Arguments about the benefits are just a ploy by the timber industry so they continue to profit off of public lands.	14%	21%	25%	28%	12%

These last few questions are for statistical purposes and to ensure we talk to a representative group of Oregonians.

31. Do you describe your gender as:

Response category	n=605
Male	48%
Female	49%
Non-binary or gender non-conforming	3 responses
[Don't read] Refused/missing	2%

Observed gender [If Q31=3, non-binary THEN interviewer code by observation] Observe and record as separate A/B variable for Male or Female. Include as part of overall Male/Female quotas.

Response category	n=605
Male	50%
Female	50%

32. Age **[Don't ask, record from sample]**

Response category	n=605
18–29	18%
30–44	26%
45–64	31%
65+	25%

33. Area of state **[Don't ask, record from sample]**

Response category	n=605
Tri-County area	43%
Willamette Valley	27%
Rest of State	31%

34. Political party **[Don't ask, record from sample]**

Response category	n=605
Democrat	35%
Republican	25%
Independent	6%
Other party	34%

35. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Response category	n=605
Less than high school	2%
High school diploma / GED	30%
Some college / 2-year degree	34%
College degree / 4-year degree	15%
Graduate / professional school	13%
[Don't read] Refused / Missing	6%

36. Which category best describes your 2018 gross household income before taxes? Remember to include everyone living in your household. Your best estimate will do.

Response category	n=605
Less than \$25,000	12%
\$25,000 to less than \$50,000	19%
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	24%
\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	11%
\$100,000 to less than \$150,000	12%
\$150,000 or more	7%
[Don't read] Refused/Missing	15%

37. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity? **[Allow for multiple responses]**

Response category	n=605
African	3 responses
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%
Black/African American	2%
Hispanic/Latino/a/x	5%
Middle Eastern/North African	4 responses
Native American/American Indian	3%
Slavic	5 responses
White or Caucasian	79%
Other	2%
[Don't read] Refused/Missing	8%