

Executive Director

Kelly Lau

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Fern Ridge Demonstration Area, Santiam State Forest

In a giant community science experiment, the Oregon Department of Forestry has created a living lab on forest recovery post wildfire.

In the Fern Ridge area of the Santiam State Forest near Shellburg Falls, visitors can stand in one spot and view the results of three very different approaches to forest management.

- Modified clear cut. Removed the overstory and replanted. As can be seen in the photo, some live and dead trees are left standing for animal habitat. This is the area where our volunteers worked.
- Underplanted area. There is a less severe fire scar in this section. Foresters are leaving the overstory and underplanting seedlings at a lower density than in the modified clear cut.
- No management. Trees that are still there will produce cones and drop them and regeneration will happen naturally.

This area is still closed to the public, but when reopens it will be a wonderful opportunity for visitors to see the progress year-after-year. And we hope some of the participants in the State Forests Trust of Oregon tree planting events will visit their results.



State Forests Wildfire Restoration Fund -- Initial Spending

After the Labor Day 2020 fires that impacted almost half of the Santiam State Forest, the State Forests Trust of Oregon established a fund to assist with restoration of recreation areas and to offer learning opportunities about wildfire. Many generous donors have contributed well over \$20,000 to the fund.

These dollars are now being put to very good use. The Trust worked with ODF to pay for professionals to plant seedlings across 46 acres in the Fern Ridge area adjacent to Shellburg Falls. This was chosen as a prime recreation area and also as an ideal opportunity to illustrate forest recovery to the public via the demonstration project (see sidebar).

We also had the opportunity to host seventy high school juniors and seniors from Salem’s Career Technical Education Center for two fun, educational and productive tree planting days in the same area. It was inspirational to see the engagement from the students who were from the business and home construction programs. Oregon Department of Forestry captured the event beautifully [here](#).

One of the wonderful things about working with the Trust is hearing from donors who feel a strong affinity to state forests because of personal ties to family and friends who helped recover forests after the Tillamook Burn. We are hopeful that the engagement with the students and the Fern Ridge Demonstration area experience will have a similar impact on a new generation.

Some of our donors generously contributed their time to a third planting day despite inclement weather.

We had no idea we would need hardhats to protect us from the hail!



There is more work to do in restoring recreation areas and building wildfire education programs. If you would like to contribute, please visit [this page](#) on our website.

Social Media

We are continuing to build our presence on social media based on the great work of our Reed College intern, MJ Quintana-Rodriguez. Please take a moment to look at our new Facebook and Instagram pages. There you will find weekly content from us and learn more about who we are as an organization. So please hit the follow button and enjoy! Links are on the left side of the page.