

# OREGON DEPARTMENT OF STATE LANDS



## Rangeland News – September 2011



With this newsletter, we hope to keep you informed of activities on state rangelands, and how your grazing fees are put to use. Our goal is to provide regular updates for all our lessees, and share important information with you.

For additional information or if you have questions, feel free to call me or Randy Wiest, our rangeland manager. Contact information is on the back of this newsletter.

*Lanny Quackenbush  
Eastern Region Manager  
Department of State Lands*

### Changes in forage lease fees

The Oregon average weighted calf price (based on USDA price data for the average statewide sales price of calves in Oregon for the preceding one-year period) is no longer being calculated by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. As a result, the Department must revise the formula for determining grazing fees, and revise related Oregon Administrative Rules.

At the September 27 Land Board meeting in Bend, staff will ask the board to initiate rulemaking, and propose using 90 percent of the national weighted calf price, which is still available from NASS. This 90 percent is consistent with the price differential between Oregon and national prices for the past 10 years. Most recently, the Oregon price was 94 percent of the national price.



The change would become effective before the 2012 billing cycle if the Land Board approves the

rule change at their December meeting. The Department will conduct a public rulemaking process to seek input on the change.

Grazing revenues are generated based on a "crop share" approach to determine the compensation for forage leases. Revenues from forage leases are based on a price per Animal Unit Month (AUM) as determined by the Department's grazing fee formula:  $G \times CC \times S \times P$ .

G = animal gain per month which is fixed at 35 pounds

CC = marketable calf crop which is fixed at 80%

S = state share which is set at 25% in 2012

P = as proposed: average weighted calf price will be based on 90% of the USDA national price data indicating the average sale price of calves for the preceding one-year period (October through September)

### Rangeland fees benefit schools

More than 630,000 acres of rangeland is under the jurisdiction of the State Land Board and Department of State Lands. Revenue from leasing rangeland is deposited into the state's Common School Fund, a trust fund established at statehood for Oregon public schools. In fiscal year 2010, more than a half million dollars were generated by grazing and agricultural activities on state land.



All 197 K-12 public school districts receive distributions twice a year from the Common School Fund. In 2010, \$50.45 million was distributed statewide. Malheur, Harney and Lake Counties received a total of \$634,087, or the equivalent of about 7.5 full-time teachers.

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### Knowing your noxious weeds

The Department of State Lands has a wide variety of rangelands used for livestock grazing purposes and recreation. These uses have historically introduced noxious weeds from adjacent land ownerships, increasing the risk of spread from established noxious weed infestations.

Understanding where and how these uses occur, the mechanism of distribution for each weed species, and annual livestock distribution patterns are important to beginning a noxious weed control project.



The primary noxious weed species on DSL lands is Medusahead Rye. This plant is typically found in heavy clay to clay-loam soils, although it has been found on rocky-sandy soils. It generally occupies the best soils.

Perennial Pepperweed is of equal importance and is typically found in lake-bed regions where frequent inundation occurs. It has been found in dry uplands but that is not the norm.



Whitetop typically is found adjacent to roads and trails, and is associated with recreational activity.



Other noxious weeds are considered incidental occurrences and are treated in conjunction with other weed eradication efforts. Treatment can be very costly due to remoteness and the heavy thatch layer created.

### Noxious weed control on state rangelands

Biennium	Acres
2001-03	750
2003-05	1,100
2005-07	850
2007-09	1,357
2009-11	440
2009-11	490
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,947</b>

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### Early Detection and Rapid Response

The Nature Conservancy's EDRR program aims to reduce the number of newly established plant and animal invasions, and encourage early actions for new invaders. The Department of State Lands' goal is to build a network of landowners, volunteer groups, public agencies and other organizations to identify, report and respond to new populations of invasive species.

The foundation of any successful EDRR program is the volunteers – dedicated people who look for new invaders while working in and enjoying the outdoors. Volunteers help protect natural areas from the impacts of invasive species by detecting new populations early before they get out of hand. Lake County is starting up its own EDRR program in which landowners, agency representatives such as Forest Service personnel, and volunteers will look for invasive species while working or visiting specific areas with invasive species in mind.

Volunteers are the eyes and ears of an EDRR program, but for it to fully work, there needs to be a community of committed land managers, private landowners and invasive species specialists. This community of experts works by forwarding reports to the appropriate person or organization, verifying the species identity, planning a strategic response, and when possible, providing technical help to landowners. We envision that together, volunteers and community responders will form an Oregon Invasive Species Early Detection Network.

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### Converting state leaseholds into agriculture production

In addition to 630,000 acres of rangelands, the department leases about 5,500 acres of land for agriculture production. Thirteen leaseholds cover such crops as wheat, alfalfa hay, potatoes, onions and poplar trees.



The department currently is partnering with a lessee west of Burns to convert approximately 250 acres into a center-pivot irrigation system. Hopefully water will be flowing and crops planted by the end of 2011. On this project the state is paying for all underground improvements (wells, power, mainline, etc.) while the lessee is putting in all above-ground improvements. If you have any questions or are interested in converting a portion of your state leasehold, call Randy Wiest: 541-388-6456.

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### Do you have suggestions for range improvement projects?

Since 2001, the Department has been allocating 12.5 percent of grazing receipts to a variety of range improvement projects. To date, nearly half the funds spent since 2001 have been for the treatment of noxious weeds. More than \$574,000 has been allocated to projects such as fencing, wells and waterlines, stock ponds/reservoirs, stock tanks, seeding, brush control, cattle guards, juniper clearing and noxious weed treatments.



Since 2002, over 5,000 acres of noxious weeds have been treated primarily for Medusahead and Perennial Pepperweed. However, without a

dedicated noxious weed fund it is uncertain if this can continue into the future. Let's do what we can to cooperatively reduce the spread of invasive species, and identify and report new weed populations early.

If you're interested in partnering with DSL, a range improvement application form is available on the DSL website: [www.oregonstatelands.us](http://www.oregonstatelands.us), or by calling the Eastern Region Office in Bend: 541-388-6112.

**Firewood cutting:** In an effort to find a suitable use for increasing populations of juniper, the Department now has many areas open for firewood cutting. Contact the Bend office for a wood cutting permit. Most state lands are open for woodcutting with a permit.

**New this year: wood lot permits,** which are intended for the large operator who wants a larger volume of trees. Fees are assessed on a dollar-per-acre basis, and vary with each use and area. The fee is intended to be nominal which will allow an applicant to remove a larger volume of trees or secure an area for their own use. If interested, please call the Bend office, or talk with Randy Wiest directly: 541-388-6456.

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### Range inventories

Beginning in 2002, the Department of State Lands has been systematically inventorying 525,000 acres



of blocked rangeland leaseholds at a rate of approximately 30,000 acres per year during June and July. This allows the Department to inventory during the peak growing season,

providing the most accurate vegetative data per leasehold.

To date, DSL has inventoried approximately 321,402 acres of state-owned rangeland.

Data collected is used to provide a baseline data set while also updating information in each Leasehold Management Plan. Typical data collected includes plant identification, vegetation composition, basal/canopy cover, annual production in AUMs, rangeland trend/health, wildlife habitat assessments, soil assessment, ecological site/condition mapping, and leasehold improvement condition.

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**State Land Board meeting in Bend**

The State Land Board will hold a special meeting on Sept. 27 at the Bend City Hall. This is the second regional meeting in Oregon this year (the first one was in Coos Bay/North Bend in July). The regional meetings provide an opportunity for local residents to interact with the Land Board in their own communities.

The focus of the Bend meeting is a review of the Central Oregon Area Management Plan, which provides a "roadmap" to development of state lands in the Central Oregon region. More information on the meeting and the plan is available on the DSL website: [www.oregonstatelands.us](http://www.oregonstatelands.us).



Department of State Lands  
Eastern Region  
1645 NE Forbes Rd.  
Suite 112  
Bend, OR 97701

Lanny Quackenbush, Manager  
541-388-6355  
Randy Wiest, Rangeland Manager  
541-388-6456  
Sheena Miltenberger, Rangeland  
Specialist; 541-388-6072  
Rhonda Ray, Office Manager  
541-388-6112