



# Forestry Professionals as Stakeholders in Forest Issues, Policy and Management

A Position of the Oregon Society of American Foresters

***The Oregon Society of American Foresters (OSAF) strongly encourages policy and decision makers, and the interested public to recognize the valuable perspective that trained and experienced forestry professionals can provide to better understand and address forest resource issues and related policy and management concerns.***

***To be most objective and effective, this input should be provided by professionals independent of their employers' or clients' focus and interests. With its diverse membership, service-to-society mission, current science and requisite adherence to a detailed code of professional ethics, OSAF is ideally positioned to assist policy and decision makers in dealing with important issues on public and private forest lands throughout Oregon.***

**Issue** Public agencies and other decision-making groups often seek input and advice from stakeholders as they evaluate forest resource issues and develop related policies and management plans. The participants often include some forestry professionals whose role is to represent widely recognized stakeholder groups such as forest landowners and forest industry.

However, it is much less common that individuals are called upon to provide a professional forestry perspective *independent of their employer or client interests*. This independence is important because when they specifically represent their employers or clients, forestry professionals in both the public and private sector may be unable or unwilling to offer their full and candid views about forest issues.

The result is missed opportunities to tap highly relevant expertise and experience, as well as a limited voice for a key group that must deal directly with policies and plans shaped by other stakeholders and decision makers without the unique, independent insights of the professional forestry community.

**Background** The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is the national organization representing the forestry profession in the United States. Gifford Pinchot and six other pioneer foresters founded the SAF in 1900, and today it has over 9,000 members who have met substantial required standards of education, experience, and ethical conduct.

The Oregon Chapter of the Society of American Foresters (OSAF) has over 700 members and includes field foresters, researchers, administrators, and educators who work for federal, state, or local governments; for universities; for small and large landowners; and for small businesses and large corporations. The focus and expertise of OSAF members range from general forestry

to an array of specializations including ecology, hydrology, fire science, wildlife biology, soil science, social science, and recreation planning. OSAF members have integral professional responsibilities that directly or indirectly affect the management of the 29.5 million acres of public and private forests throughout Oregon.

The OSAF stands able and willing to represent the professional forestry perspective when stakeholder and other input are sought on important forestry issues in Oregon. Although OSAF members come from “all walks of forestry,” we pledge that our professional views and other input will be consistent with the SAF mission to:

- advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry;
- enhance the competency of its members; establish professional excellence;
- use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.

Please contact OSAF for a professional perspective at: [www.forestry.org](http://www.forestry.org) or 503-224-8046

*This position statement was adopted by the Oregon SAF Executive Committee on November 19, 2021. The statement will expire on November 19, 2026, unless after thorough review it is renewed by the Committee.*