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Oregon—Rural Business & Cooperative Service

Regional Collaboration

Oregon Forest Landowners Benefit From Single, Value- Added Effort

Outline Of Need:

For many, it's tough waiting a couple of weeks for the next paycheck, but owners of working forestlands hold off for decades before seeing an income. Still, the costs and labor to care for the land, manage plantations, maintain roads, and pay taxes roll in each year. Oregon Woodland Cooperative (OWC), a group of about 60 forest landowners in regions across the state, however, is looking past the trees to identify, harvest and market the forest's array of saleable, sustainable forest products that produce revenues year after year.

How Rural Development Helped:

USDA Rural Development provided OWC with funding to develop strategies and resources to generate frequent and multiple income streams from their forest lands through the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program. VAPG provides agricultural operators, foresters, co-ops, producer groups and others with 50-percent matching grants for planning or working capital to advance value-added ventures. OWC applied for and was awarded a planning grant to prepare a business plan, fund consultant services, and conduct professional surveys of OWC member lands. These in-field assessments identified a number of marketable, non-lumber products.

"We knew a lot about board feet, but not much about truffles," said OWC Board Member Tom Nygren, "so education for our members was a big part of the project early on."

OWC later acquired a working capital VAPG to evaluate the



OWC member Ron Larson trims white pine boughs with other OWC members, who work together each winter to harvest ornamental greens popular for wreaths and decorations during the holidays. "These are materials that would have been chipped or burned as slash," explained Tom Nygren.

quality and processing needs of their potential new products and develop strategies to sell online and through retail markets. niche

The Results:

VAPG assistance has helped these forest landowners access new income opportunities through the harvest and sale of high quality, sustainable, local products, which often command premium prices. According to Nygren, firewood bundled in small quantities and marketed in urban retail outlets bring in more than three times the bulk rate per cord. Other wood items include kindling, salvaged material for carving, and small diameter timber for poles.

In addition, OWC members have discovered many other marketable products on their forestland, including floral greens, edible plants and fungi, medicinal forest products and essential oils. With the help of VAPG, cooperative members are finding that whether a chef is looking for locally sourced truffles and mushrooms or a retailer wants to feature naturally scented soaps, specialty markets are out there!

Fast Facts

Program: Value Added Producer Grant

Investment: \$383,085—three separate grants

Partner: Oregon Woodland Cooperative

Impact:

- 60 forest landowners
- Southern, Central and Northwest Oregon

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