

Agenda Item No.:	05
Work Plan:	Forest Resources Division
Topic:	Ceremonial Events and Recognitions
Presentation Title:	2024 Forest Practices Operator of the Year Awards
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**SUMMARY**

The Board of Forestry recognizes Operators of the Year. This year’s award recipients are BTO Forestry Solutions, Inc., D & H Logging Co. and R.D. Reeves Construction, Inc..

**BACKGROUND**

The Oregon Forest Practices Act aims to provide for the overall maintenance of air quality, water resources, soil productivity, and fish and wildlife. These forest resources are important to all Oregonians. The Operator of the Year program recognizes operators who voluntarily protect these resources in a conscientious and diligent way. To recognize operators who meet or exceed Forest Practice Act requirements, typically the Board names one Operator of the Year per Region and one or more Merit Award recipients; ODF districts may also issue Letters of Commendation. Program goals are to:

1. Recognize operators who consistently meet or exceed the Oregon Forest Practices Act and voluntarily raise industry standards; and,
2. Improve public understanding of the Forest Practices Act, its administration, and its effectiveness in protecting natural resources.

**PROCESS**

Anyone may nominate candidates for the Operator of the Year. Agency staff screen the nominees for minimum requirements. The Regional Forest Practices Committees review the nominations for their region. Each committee chooses a recipient based on innovative techniques, cooperative spirit, consistent performance, and measures taken to protect forest resources. To make the selection, Regional Forest Practices Committee members tour the sites, review nominations, and watch videos that capture the operator’s work.

## **The 2024 Operators of the Year are:**

### **For the Eastern Oregon Region –**

**BTO Forestry Solutions, Inc.** of Enterprise, Oregon earned the award for their efforts as a consistently conscientious logging company since 1966, and for tackling challenging harvest operations. Mike Wiedeman, owner of BTO Forestry Solutions, earned Operator of the Year for tackling a timber harvest on steep slopes leading down to a fish-bearing stream in canyonlands of Wallowa County. Methodical planning and experience allowed BTO Forestry Solutions to develop a harvest plan and layout to achieve the goals of the landowner while protecting resources in a unit with challenging terrain. BTO Forestry protected stream buffers, water quality, steep slopes and the safety of the crew while working in the Wallowa County canyonlands with skyline spans of over 5,000 feet. Because of a lack of anchor stumps, Mike had to buy extra dozers to serve as anchors for these long span-cables. Mike also modified his yarder to ensure enough suspension, so logs did not create ruts as they were hauled upslope. BTO Forestry has successfully faced these types of challenges and completed their operations while protecting the resources and their crew consistently for many years.

### **Southwest Oregon Region–**

**D & H Logging Co.** of Coos Bay, Oregon earned the award for its diligent planning and harvesting practices. The company has a record of long-term, conscientious logging practices that meet or exceed the Oregon Forest Practices Act (FPA). Their thoughtful planning and innovative techniques allowed them to protect medium and small fish-bearing streams, small nonperennial streams, and restricted equipment zones along tributary streams, successfully harvest the unit with no damage to the streams or their buffers. D&H Logging made extra efforts to protect the stream buffers and new protection zones by changing yarding patterns and spans of over 3,000ft. Their efforts left healthy, intact buffers with minimal soil disturbance. The owner and crew maintained excellent communication and coordination with the landowner and ODF throughout the harvest. They thoroughly trained their crews in the new Forest Practice Act rules that went into effect this year, which helped them meet the new resource protection standards and still operate safely.

### **Northwest Oregon Region –**

**R.D. Reeves Construction, Inc.** of Rainer, Oregon earned the award for their efforts as a consistently conscientious logging company. This company began in 1969 and has not had a citation in the fifty-five years they have been in business. The company goes above & beyond in their preoperational planning efforts. Protection of resources is a high priority for the company. They take preventive actions to protect water quality, for example, by installing silt fences and hay bales if there's even a slight chance sediment might reach a stream or wetland. The company is innovative in their use of new tools and technologies for harvesting. The nominated operation had protected resources including streams, a Riparian Management Area's (RMA) through the middle of the unit, wetlands, roads, steep slopes requiring HLHL protections with downstream homes adjacent to the harvest unit. The company's attention to detail is demonstrated when they finish an operation. Thorough cleanup and maintenance are completed prior to leaving the site, assuring there are no issues in the future after they have gone.

## **PUBLICITY**

The department recognizes the operators through news releases, social media posts, and at annual statewide industry events, including the Associated Oregon Loggers Convention, the Oregon Logging Conference, and the Oregon Small Woodland Association Conference.

All nominees met or exceeded Forest Practices laws and improved Oregon's forests in multiple ways, from enhancing fish and wildlife habitat to forest management planning for private landowners to improving fire safety and forest health, and safeguarding water quality and soil.

Merit Award and Letter of Commendation recipients will be recognized at local functions.

The Merit Award recipients for 2024 are:

- Arrowhead Logging, LLC of Prineville, OR – Eastern Oregon Region Merit Award
- Green Diamond Resource Company in Klamath Falls, OR - Eastern Oregon Region Merit Award
- Brothers Excavation & Construction, LLC of Central Point, OR-SW Oregon Region Merit Award
- Card Logging Company, Inc. of Eugene, OR – NW Oregon Region Merit Award
- Chilton Logging, Inc. of Woodland, WA – NW Oregon Region Merit Award
- Haley Construction Company of Lebanon, OR – NW Oregon Region Merit Award
- Mt St Helens Reforestation, Inc. of Chehalis, WA – NW Oregon Region Merit Award
- Weyerhaeuser NR Company, Springfield Area Logging crew of Eugene, OR – NW Oregon Region Merit Award

The Letter of Commendation recipient for 2024 is:

- Gerald Smallwood Logging, Inc. of Waldport, OR – Western Oregon District/NW Regional Forest Practices Committee Letter of Commendation

All of the videos for the merit award winners can be found at: [Oregon Department of Forestry - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/@OregonDepartmentofForestry) (<https://www.youtube.com/@OregonDepartmentofForestry>)

Staff will give a brief presentation, including videos, and operator recognition.

- BTO Forestry Solutions, Inc.:  
[Eastern Oregon Operator of the Year for 2024, Winner - BTO Forestry Solutions, Inc.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcE22ZAA8I8&t=83s)  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcE22ZAA8I8&t=83s>)
- D & H Logging Co.:  
[Southwest Oregon Operator of the Year for 2024, Winner - D&H Logging](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1eTDEcXQiY)  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1eTDEcXQiY>)
- R.D. Reeves Construction, Inc.:  
[Northwest Oregon Operator of the Year for 2024, Winner - R.D. Reeves Construction, Inc.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU5BwxBZiEo&t=2s)  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU5BwxBZiEo&t=2s>)

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Department recommends the Board of Forestry present the recipients with plaques uniquely recognizing each operator for excellent forestry work.