

# Oregon Forest Resources Institute Workforce Summit

May 13, 2026, 12p.m. - 5p.m.

May 14, 2026, 8:30 a.m. - 2p.m.

Riverhouse Lodge Convention Center

3075 N. Business 97, Bend

**Purpose:** To bring together leaders from across the forest sector to develop a shared understanding of Oregon's workforce landscape, consider key challenges and opportunities in education and career pathways and identify recommendations and next steps to advance workforce development.

**Outcome:** Clear workforce priorities, next steps and a stronger sense of shared ownership for moving Oregon's forest sector workforce system forward.

## May 13: Setting the foundation

**Conclusion of WFCMA Mapping the Course conference and networking lunch** (provided)

**1:00 p.m. Welcome to the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) Workforce Summit**

*Why we're here, goals for the summit and overview of the agenda.*

**1:20 Workforce needs**

*Build a shared understanding of the scale and nature of the forest sector workforce challenge. Panelists will describe some of the economic, ecological and workforce realities influencing the sector, including where the jobs are, how the types of positions employers are seeking to fill are changing and the key issues that need to be tackled.*

- Julie Woodward, Oregon Forest Resources Institute
- Amanda Sullivan-Astor, Associated of Oregon Loggers
- Heidi Huber-Stearns, University of Oregon

**2:20 From classroom to forest**

*Show how different educational pathways, for college-bound and non-college-bound students, can both lead to successful careers in the forest sector.*

- Dave Kunert, Vice President of Hampton
- Justin Rowley, Hampton Lumber
- Lace Anna Rowe, Umpqua Community College

**2:45 Break**

**3:15 Forest sector workforce development: K-12 education**

*Build a shared understanding of how young people currently discover and explore pathways that lead into forest careers.*

- Rikki Heath, Oregon Forest Resources Institute
- Reynold Gardner, Oregon Department of Education
- Simon Babcock, Philomath High School

- 4:00**            **Forest sector workforce development: Post-secondary education**  
*Clarify how community colleges, universities and training providers currently connect their students with the education and skills they need to succeed in forest sector jobs.*
- *George Virtue, Weyerhaeuser*
  - *Jason Pinkerton, Mt. Hood Community College*
  - *Dean Tom DeLuca, Oregon State University, College of Forestry*

**4:45**            **Reflections of the day and preview of day two agenda**

**5:00**            **Adjourn** (dinner on your own)

## **May 14: From insight to action**

**7:00 a.m.**       **Breakfast** (provided)

**8:00**            **Welcome back and day two framing**  
*What we heard on day one and where we're headed today.*

**8:15**            **Youth crews, internship and apprenticeships**  
*Explore on-the-job training models as a bridge between education and employment and identify what it would take to better connect these pathways to long-term careers in both the public and private sectors.*

- *Mike Norman, Higher Education Coordinating Commission*
- *Patrick Orr, Heart of Oregon*
- *Courtney Griesel, Sierra Pacific Industries*

**9:00**            **Workforce development successes**  
*Examples of programs and approaches that are successfully connecting young people to forest sector careers.*

- *Brook Rich, High Desert Regional Education Service District*
- *Blake Manley, Western Forestry & Conservation Association*

**9:30**            **Break**

**10:00**          **Identifying gaps and potential solutions by subsector**  
*Subsector-specific breakout sessions to identify top gaps and their underlying challenges when it comes to workforce development within each subsector, and brainstorm possible solutions:*

- *forest operations and support*
- *forest products and manufacturing*
- *forest management*

**11:30**          **Lunch** (provided)

- 12:30 p.m.**      **Discuss potential solutions and next steps**  
*Share and synthesize ideas to identify priorities, actions and near-term next steps.*
- 1:15**            **Story of success**  
*Inspiration and reflection on building pathways into the forest sector workforce.*
- 1:45**            **Closing reflections and next steps**  
*Summit takeaways and how this work will move forward.*
- 2:00**            **Adjourn**