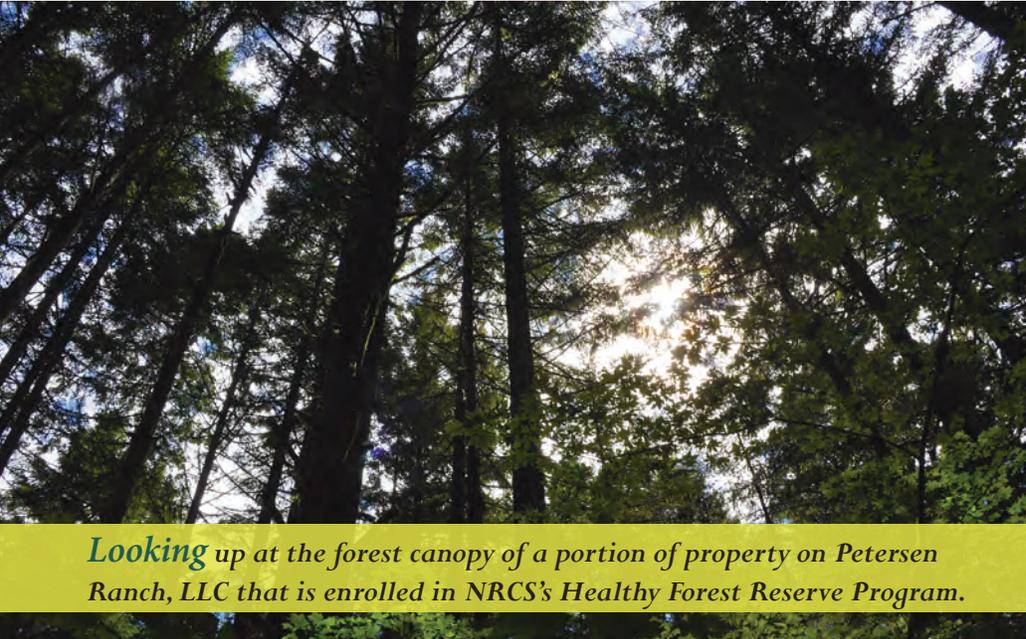


# O · R · E · G · O · N Conservation SHOWCASE



*Looking up at the forest canopy of a portion of property on Petersen Ranch, LLC that is enrolled in NRCS's Healthy Forest Reserve Program.*

## Lane County Landowner Subscribes to NRCS's Healthy Forest Reserve Program

*Camp Creek, Ore. —*

“My mother’s side of the family has been in this area since the late 1880’s; my dad’s side purchased the ranch in the 1940’s — so this is a long-term relationship with the land,” said Andy Petersen, owner of Petersen Ranch, LLC. “We realize we are simply stewards of the land. It is ours for this period of time; we want to take as good of care of it as we can to pass it on in better condition than when we found it. I think the HFRP program is a good way for us to do that.”

Andy is a participant in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Healthy Forest

Reserve Program (HFRP). HFRP is a voluntary easement program designed for the purpose of restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems. In Oregon, the program focuses on the recovery of the threatened northern spotted owl.

“This program fits our goals,” said Andy. “We are able to harvest. There are some specific guidelines to help establish spotted owl habitat, but we can still make a living off the land, which is important. We can’t afford not to, but we are able to with this program.”

Petersen Ranch, LLC, located in the Camp Creek area just east of Eugene, Ore., has approximately 83 acres of forest land enrolled in the program as a permanent easement with the NRCS.

“I think this is going to be a beautiful piece of ground for my kids’ grandkids, or whoever else’s grandkids to manage down the road, and it’s going to be done in a way that is responsible. This program ensures that. This is a plan that works for a lot of people,” said Andy.

Every property is different and management practices vary depending on a number of factors to include the type of plant species,

age of forest, geographic location, slope and soil type.

“What we are going to do in this area of the property for restoration management is go in and cut down some of the smaller trees to give more room for the bigger ones to thrive,” said Tom Burnham, NRCS Lane County District Conservationist. “These are big enough trees for harvest, but we are also going to produce snags and downed wood by topping select trees and girdling some others at the base.”

“Snags and downed wood provide good roosting and nesting habitat for the owls,” said Tom. “Anytime you have a snag you’ll get holes from woodpeckers and such that create a better habitat for the small mammals that owls like to eat. All of this is important for establishing good sustainable habitat for the spotted owl.”

HRFP was reauthorized by Congress under the 2008 Farm Bill and Oregon was one of just several states that received some of the limited funding to support the program.

“Between 2009 and 2010 we received more than double the number of applicants than we had funding for,” said Meta Loftsgaarden, NRCS Oregon Partnership Liaison. “It was more than we anticipated, and I think really speaks to the fact that private forest managers in Oregon have a great deal of dedication to voluntarily enhancing wildlife habitat on working forests.”

There are five landowners currently enrolled in HFRP totaling over 700 acres of private property in Oregon. There are another 13 applicants, but the availability of



*A snag on the Petersen Ranch, LLC HFRP site. Forest snags are standing, or partly or completely dead trees that are often missing a top or most of the smaller branches.*

funds to finance them has not yet been determined. NRCS is not accepting new applications for this program.

“This is a long, long-term obligation – this is forever,” said Andy. “We had to look at that scenario and not just today’s in our decision to do this. But I think it is right for us and our forest management objectives, and I am thankful for the opportunity.”

NRCS

*helping people help the land*

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—Andy Petersen

*Andy Petersen and his daughter, Hailey, along with Lane County NRCS District Conservationist, Tom Burnham, walk through a creek within the Petersen’s HFRP easement site located east of Eugene, Ore.*

