

Tillamook Forest Center Set to Open in April 2006

First of its Kind Facility Showcases Past, Present and Future Forest; Provides Hands-On Learning Experience to Visitors

Construction crews are in the home stretch on completing the Tillamook Forest Center, a new visitor and educational facility on the Wilson River Highway (Oregon 6) in the heart of the former "Tillamook Burn," which is today's Tillamook State Forest. A 40-foot tall replica of a fire lookout tower has already become a local landmark, as has a dramatic 250-foot-long pedestrian suspension bridge, which leads from the building across the Wilson River to the nearby Jones Creek Campground.

The bridge and lookout tower frame the 13,500-square-foot Center, which will be filled with exhibits that invite visitors to learn about the Tillamook State Forest. The Center, located 50 miles west of Portland, also features a classroom facility, a theater, restrooms and a forest archive. Outdoors, interpretive trails lead from the building through the woods to breathtaking river and forest views. Rustic benches dot these trails—hand hewn from trees removed to make way for the building.

The Center will open to the public in 2006, with a grand opening celebration scheduled for Oregon Arbor Week, April 1-8.

Center visitors will be able to explore the past, present and future of the Tillamook State Forest through artifacts, personal stories, photos, film, exhibits, games, hands-on models, computer simulations, interpreter-led programs and other innovative media. Outdoors, the forest will come alive through salmon watching viewpoints, the bridge and lookout tower, and a network of interpretive trails that encourage visitors to consider the forest through the eyes of Native Americans, homesteaders, early loggers, firefighters, tree planters and forest managers. The Center is situated alongside a picturesque narrow gorge of the Wilson River on a forested site planted entirely by school children, an hour's drive west of downtown Portland.

Today's Tillamook State Forest, still recovering from a series of devastating wildfires in the 1930s and 1940s, is regarded as one of the largest forest planting efforts ever undertaken. Following the fires, thousands of Oregonians, many of them schoolchildren and volunteers, helped plant more than 72 million Douglas-fir seedlings across the blackened landscape.

Photo by Chris Freund



Center construction is nearly complete and exhibit installation begins soon. The view above shows the front entry and fire pond area.

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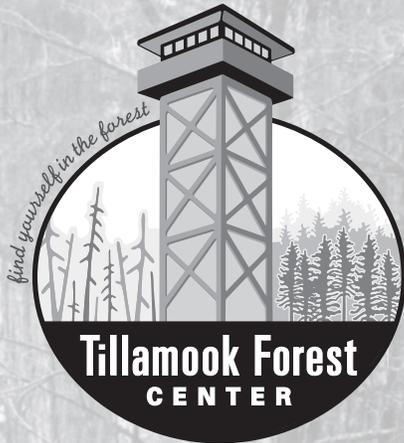
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Logo Connects Past, Present and Future



We've been preparing for launch of the Tillamook Forest Center in many different ways, including establishing a visual identity for the facility and its programs. The new logo depicts the story of the "burn and return" of the Tillamook State Forest by showing burned trees on the left portion of the graphic and a lush forest on the right.

The lookout tower represents one of the many special attractions visitors can experience at the Tillamook Forest Center, evoking a sense of place and history, while offering an adventure—and great view—all of its own.

The phrase "Find Yourself In The Forest" is our invitation to you to come experience for yourself the remarkable story of the Tillamook State Forest.

Center Set to Open Continued from Front

"The Tillamook Forest Center will be a place where visitors can connect with the Tillamook State Forest and appreciate its rich history and ecology, and the tremendous sense of hope about its future," said Doug Decker, Project Leader for the Oregon Department of Forestry. "The Center and its programs will highlight what a unique and interesting place this is."

Interpretation and education programs have been underway in the Tillamook State Forest since 1996, reaching out to visitors with information about the forest. Annually, more than 5,000 school children participate in field trips, led by professional educators. These and other programs will migrate to the Center when it opens next year.

Sustainable design and construction have been hallmarks of the project since planning began in 1997. Major building systems including heating and ventilation, plumbing, and structural systems have been designed and built with sustainability in mind.

A careful look at the wood and glass structure

Photo by Chris Friend



Looking across the suspension bridge toward the north doors. Note lookout tower on left.

will show reflections of the past with the roofline and other details reminiscent of homesteads and forest camps. In 2000, the Master Plan received the Award of Excellence for Landscape Planning and Analysis from the Oregon Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), the highest professional achievement award



made by this group. The biennial award recognizes projects that improve the relationship of people to their environment.

No state tax dollars were involved in the creation of the Tillamook Forest Center. The total cost of the project is \$10.7 million, funded in part by a partnership facilitated by the non-profit Tillamook Forest Heritage Trust. More than 350 donors—including

foundations, individuals, business and organizations—have contributed to the project. Admission to the Center will be free.



Models of a varied thrush (top right) and a coho salmon (left) are just two of the hundreds of models, artifacts and exhibit components at the Tillamook Forest Center that illustrate the life of the Tillamook State Forest.

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Photo by Chris Friend



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The Tillamook Forest Center, located on the Wilson River Highway (Oregon 6) in the Tillamook State Forest, is owned and managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry. Built in a landscape devastated by a series of forest fires in the 1930s and 40s, the Center is designed to provide visitors with their own personal knowledge of forests in general, the Tillamook State Forest in particular, and about how our lives are connected with forests. Admission to the Tillamook Forest Center is free. During summer months (May-September) it will be open seven days a week from 10 am to 6 pm. During the winter off-season (October-April), the Center will be open from 10 am to 4 pm Wednesday-Sunday (closed Monday & Tuesday). For more information visit www.tillamookforest.org.

This replica fire lookout tower stands as a sentinel above the Center entry area. The lookout cabin—perched 40 feet above the ground—is an exhibit space of its own filled with the tools of the fire lookout trade, and providing views across the river and into the surrounding forest canopy.



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