

## KVAL 13 - Eugene, Oregon

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# Scientists try to watch Oregon forests breathe

by Tom Adams KVAL News

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BLUE RIVER, Ore. - No other scientific debate attracts more attention these days than global warming and what's causing climate change.

Forest scientists near Blue River, Ore., think part of the answer is blowing in the wind.

"We're very focused on this one little basin," says Barbara Bond, forestry professor at Oregon state University and one of the leaders of the Airshed Project.



They're tracking tributaries of air that careen down the slopes, like this creek in the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest.

An array of sensors and gizmos is giving OSU ecologists a bird's-eye view of the forest eco-system.



They look like radio towers planted smack in the middle of the lush, green forest, but it's not broadcasting. Researchers are listening and watching for rivers of air.

Much like a doctor who can tell a lot about your health through a blood sample, the scientists here on the project are doing basically the same thing -- except the patient in this case is 16,000 acres of forestland.



Why should we care? Professor Bond says to understand climate change locally, they must understand these air flows.

"We know that it will happen," Bond says. "How's it going to affect water resources?"

How is it going to affect the level of productivity of the trees?"

Watching the forest breathe is not easy. Along with the gear on the tower, you've got rows of wires and cords in the creek bed and high in the air.

"When we collect data from this, it gives us a temperature field across this entire plain," explains Bond.

Color coded data shows the temperatures rising in the day and cooling at night.



Sometimes the air flow is not always downhill.

Bond says by taking the pulse of the forest, they hope to unlock more secrets of global warming and get healthier trees in the process.

The next phase of the Airshed Project is about to be launched, but it has to do with water.

In two weeks, a new shed will be finished at the base of the tower, housing equipment for new water flow and temperature experiments at the Andrews forest.