

Environmental & Natural Resources Law Section Hourly Rate Survey Results

In March 2008, the Oregon State Bar conducted a survey on behalf of the Environmental & Natural Resources Law Section on hourly rates for Oregon lawyers. The survey aimed to provide detailed information on hourly rates charged by attorneys in specific areas of practice. *To see more detailed results from the survey, please see attached printouts. All results in this report pertain to members of the Environmental & Natural Resources Law Section and might not represent all Oregon lawyers.*

Methodology and Response Rate

All members of the Environmental & Natural Resources Law Section with an email address on file with the bar were invited (via email) to participate. Of the 609 possible respondents, we received 59 responses, for a 10% response rate. Respondents were asked four questions: geographic area, firm size, years of experience, and hourly rates for specific practice areas.

Demographics

Survey respondents came from all regions of Oregon. The best-represented regions were downtown Portland (48% of total) and the Lower Willamette Valley (22 % of total). The least-represented were Central Oregon and the Oregon Coast, each with only 2% of the total.

The majority, 53%, work in law firms with 10 attorneys or less.

The average number of years spent in a practice area is 17-19, with the largest group falling in that range (14% of the total).

Discussion of Survey Responses

Percent of time devoted to an Area of Practice (AoP)

Respondents were asked to specify how much of their work is devoted to a specific AoP. Only 4% reported that they devote their entire practice to a specific area and not even one-third (29%) spend 60% or more of their time on a single area of practice.

Experience in a specific AoP

When examining the amount of time spent in a specific AoP, it appears that most respondents have not worked in this field for long. In fact, 78% have been in a given AoP for 20 years or less.

The range of data goes from 0 years of experience up to 41+ years of experience. Of these ranges, the three largest represented groups were less than 5 years of experience (25% of total), 5-10 years of experience (18% of total) and 16-20 years of experience (18 % of total).

Representation of AoPs

Three different AoPs were listed. Respondents were asked which areas they practice in, and could choose more than one option. The most-represented group was Real Property (40% of responses). The least-represented group was Hazardous Materials Litigation (27% of responses).

Hourly Rates Aggregate

Because individual respondents sometimes provided rates for more than one AoP, the total number of responses for hourly rates was 53. Respondents reported hourly rates in intervals of \$25. Intervals began at \$50 an hour and progressed up to \$450+ per hour.

No respondents reported an hourly rate of less than \$100 per hour. One in five (21%) reported between \$100 and \$200 per hour. Another 38% reported rates between \$200 and \$299. Slightly more than one in four (28%) reported rates between \$300 and \$399. And 13% reported hourly rates of more than \$400.

The average and median hourly rate for Environmental & Natural Resources Law lawyers is approximately \$275.

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What region (county) is your office in?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Downtown Portland	47.5%	28
Tri-County area (Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas)	15.3%	9
Oregon Coast (Columbia, Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln, Coos, Curry)	1.7%	1
Upper Willamette Valley (Yamhill, Polk, Marion)	3.4%	2
Lower Willamette Valley (Benton, Linn, Lane)	22.0%	13
Southern Oregon (Douglas, Josephine, Jackson, Klamath)	5.1%	3
Central Oregon (Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson)	1.7%	1
Eastern Oregon (all other Oregon counties)	3.4%	2
<i>answered question</i>		59
<i>skipped question</i>		0

What size is your firm?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Sole practitioner	20.7%	12
2-5 Attorneys	24.1%	14
6-10 Attorneys	8.6%	5
11-15 Attorneys	5.2%	3
16-20 Attorneys	1.7%	1
21-25 Attorneys	1.7%	1
26-30 Attorneys	5.2%	3
31-35 Attorneys	0.0%	0
36-40 Attorneys	0.0%	0
41-45 Attorneys	0.0%	0
46-50 Attorneys	0.0%	0
51-75 Attorneys	6.9%	4
76-100 Attorneys	0.0%	0
101+ Attorneys	25.9%	15
<i>answered question</i>		58
<i>skipped question</i>		1

How long have you been practicing law?

Answer Options	Response	Response
0-2 Years	10.5%	6
3-5 Years	8.8%	5
5-7 Years	5.3%	3
8-10 Years	7.0%	4
11-13 Years	8.8%	5
14-16 Years	8.8%	5
17-19 Years	14.0%	8
20-22 Years	7.0%	4
23-25 Years	12.3%	7
26-28 Years	1.8%	1
29-31 Years	1.8%	1
32-34 Years	8.8%	5
35-37 Years	0.0%	0
38-40 Years	3.5%	2
41-44 Years	0.0%	0
45+ Years	1.8%	1
<i>answered question</i>		57
<i>skipped question</i>		2

Percent of practice devoted to this type of case						
Answer Options	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Totals
Hazardous Materials Litigation	6	2	5	1	1	15
Land Use	8	4	2	3	1	18
Real Property	12	7	3			22
TOTALS:	26	13	10	4	2	55
% of Total:	47.27%	23.64%	18.18%	7.27%	3.64%	

Number of years handling this type of case										
Answer Options	<5	5-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41+	Totals
Hazardous Materials Litigation	4	2	4	3	2					15
Land Use	5	4	2	4		2		1		18
Real Property	5	4	3	3	4	2	1			22
TOTALS:	14	10	9	10	6	4	1	1	0	55
% of Total:	25.45%	18.18%	16.36%	18.18%	10.91%	7.27%	1.82%	1.82%	0.00%	

AVERAGE

Hourly rate charged for this type of case																			
Answer Options	\$50-\$74	\$75-\$99	\$100-\$124	\$125-\$149	\$150-\$174	\$175-\$199	\$200-\$224	\$225-\$249	\$250-\$274	\$275-\$299	\$300-\$324	\$325-\$349	\$350-\$374	\$375-\$399	\$400-\$424	\$425-\$449	\$450+	Totals	
Hazardous Materials Litigation							1	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	1		1	14	
Land Use				1	1	3	1	2	1	2	2	2						2	17
Real Property				1	2	3	2	4	1	2	1	2	1		1		2	22	
TOTALS:	0	0	0	2	3	6	4	7	3	6	6	6	2	1	2	0	5	53	
% of Total:	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.77%	5.66%	11.32%	7.55%	13.21%	5.66%	11.32%	11.32%	11.32%	3.77%	1.89%	3.77%	0.00%	9.43%		

AVERAGE