

2.0 Problem Statements/Potential Solutions

2.1 Natural Processes

Problem Statement: Natural processes have been disrupted in Oregon forests. Problems are most extreme in the dry forest types where unprecedented landscape scale forest health problems are resulting in the loss of key ecological components. Hydrologic regimes have been altered and conditions may not protect beneficial uses like water quantity and quality. Climate change is and will continue to tax the resiliency of federal forestlands and identifying the impacts is challenging. An integrated approach to forest restoration and fuels management that considers historic conditions, natural hydrology and adequate streamflows, fish and wildlife conservation, natural fire intervals, and silvicultural techniques is necessary to achieve long term management goals.

Problem Description: Natural processes on Oregon's federal forests have been modified by a number of factors. For example, decades of fire suppression and silvicultural practices on some federal forestlands have modified fire regimes and behavior producing changes in vegetative conditions – including changes in species composition, increased stand density, and a reduction in the large tree component – ultimately reducing forest resiliency and impacting aquatic habitat. Growth has dramatically exceeded removals on federal lands during the past decade causing a build up of fiber across the landscape. The results have been high tree mortality and fuels build-ups due to insects, disease and invasive species, and large un-natural wildfires resulting in impacts to wildlife habitat, water quality, private timber investments, structures in the wildland-urban interface, and public impacts from smoke. Without an increase in active management these conditions are expected to continue.

(Comment from Ralph - Growth has not necessarily exceeded the total removals through thinning/logging and decay. There is a natural flux on the forest. There are far more smaller diameter trees than larger diameter trees on the forest than existed historically. (Eastside Science Panel Report). As for active management, there needs to be a decrease in the existing road network and more active management to do so. On the other hands, there needs to be less fire suppression, old growth logging and road building.)

Water quantity and quality are inseparable issues. Adequate streamflows and natural hydrology help maintain high water quality in Oregon's rivers and streams. Water quality and quantity issues are linked to changes in land uses, increasing intensities of land management, growing demand for water, and uncertainty about the role climate change will play in long term supply. In the Pacific

Northwest, watershed health also is directly related to healthy populations of migratory salmon. Many measures of ecosystem performance, water quality, and watershed health have been linked to salmonid populations.

Climate change may be affecting forest and hydrological conditions in Oregon. If trends continue, changes from dry temperate forests to grasslands, moist forests to dry woodlands, and high-severity fires may eliminate entire forest types. This type of change would increase risks of species extinction, and reduce economic and social values derived from the forest. Management decisions will determine if federal forests will serve as net carbon sinks or carbon sources.

Potential Solutions

	Potential Solution	Add/Delete	Changes – issues to FFAC for Discussion
	<p>2.11 Issue/ impediment – 2.11a - Lack of understanding about large scale dynamic ecosystems and their management.</p> <p>2.11b - Currently many legal, economic, and administrative frameworks limit the ability to manage large scale dynamic ecosystems to provide for certainty at the expense of managing for dynamic ecosystems.</p>		
1	<p>Collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority landscapes that encourages ecological, economic and social sustainability through place-based proactive management and improved agency capacity.</p>	<p>Modified -</p>	<p>Modified – added additional clarification and removed references to specific plans (land management plans and regulatory agency implementation plans).</p> <p>Rationale: Encourage collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourages ecological, economic, and social sustainability; ○ Leverages resources – local, national, private ○ Reduces wildfire management costs various tools (i.e., reducing risk of uncharacteristic fire; reestablishing natural fire regimes). Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to identify and prioritize treatment opportunities across the landscape and across ownership boundaries with outcome based performance measures. ○ Minimize static strategies ○ Consider collaborate efforts, e.g., a statewide task force to evaluate where work is needed. Collaboration can consider the who, what, when, where of needed work; identify forest types, areas; and recommend map-based assessment and constraints. <p>Comments: Demonstrates ecological restoration strategies that achieve ecological health; affect wildfire activity & management costs; and use of forest restoration byproducts to offset treatment</p>

			<p>costs while benefiting rural economies and improving forest health.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Identify and implement avoidance and alternative dispute resolution strategies to minimize and/or remove issues that may lead to conflict and litigation.</p>	<p>Modified</p>	<p>Added clarification and independent assessment</p> <p>Rationale Federal forest should consider “avoidance and alternative dispute resolution strategies agencies to minimize conflict.</p> <p>Avoidance strategies could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider “Options Forestry” that expands the range of management options and actions and learning opportunities. (For example: The Siuslaw National Forest’s Five Rivers Project provided multiple strategies, proposed by different constituent groups to address controversial EIS). ○ Include an upfront assessment of scientific uncertainties, and a selection of management options designed to reach the same goal ○ Structure monitoring in a rigorous statistical design to test the effectiveness of each option in meeting project goals. ○ Encourage collaborative opportunities (such as the Lakeview Oregon Solutions Project). <p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . State of Law, Court Decisions, Can we Learn Something. Respond differently. Highest standards for NEPA compliance RH – expressed concern • Many issues are known and have been identified; litigation summaries are available • Why people litigate is frequently different than what has been litigated • The region has the highest standards for NEPA requirements due to litigation • If goal is to reduce litigation, one must understand what is happening in the landscape • Courts want ground-based data; tools exist to determine old growth habitat needs for dependent species if data can be pooled

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning a study is time consuming • Enabling conditions must be in place to minimize litigation in the first place – all opinions must be considered fairly, in an open process • Identifying and promoting best practices can help avoid litigation • Collect information for the purpose of understanding how to create best practices, and what information can be supplied to address those concerns • Identify long term responsibility
3		Combined with 2	Issue: Skeptical about the ability of the concept to function under very controversial situations. TV - Worry that people will begin to accept the misconception that NEPA decisions should be based on compromise instead of environmental analysis.
4	Expand and fund research to guide future management strategies. Engage private and public partners to expand knowledge on long-term restorative benefits, hydrologic dynamics and cause & effect relationships among physical and biological parameters.	Modified	<p>Rationale: There is a need for re-investing in creating and acting on learning opportunities. There is a need for expanded research (pilot projects) to: 1) address scientific uncertainties; 2) the benefits of controversial dual-purposes management practices; 3) identify potential law exemption exclusions that may provide localized long-term restorative benefits; and 4) test key hypotheses with guaranteed long term funding.</p> <p>Federal land management agencies should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Become strong partners in the Watershed Research Cooperative paired watershed studies (intended to establish cause and affect relationships among physical and biological parameters). ○ With federal and state regulatory agencies, cooperate in assessing current water quality standards to ensure that they reflect knowledge of dynamic ecosystem processes and ensure landscape resiliency including response to disturbance.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Integrate innovative forest management approaches that look beyond land uses and ownerships by participating in innovative collaborative processes, developing IMAP methodologies, and integrating OWEB watershed assessment protocols that support the <i>Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds</i>. <p>These processes should recognize opportunities for enhanced water management, through water storage, and an overall net reduction of the negative hydrologic impacts of roads.</p>
5		Modified & added to no. 4	
6		Combined with #5	

	Potential Solution	Add/Delete	Changes – issues to FFAC for Discussion
	<p>2.18 Issues that are impediments to needed action. Funding, incentives and structural support are not available to prepare and execute a strategic effort to address the transportation system in federal forests. The legacy road networks, culverts, stream crossings and associated development are aging and in need of attention. Local and State government is not being leveraged, nor is there mandated funding to address critical issues in an efficient and timely manner.</p>		
7	<p>Separate mandated funding should be found to survey and upgrade the existing forest road network. Congressionally directed restoration efforts should direct strategic assessment of the road system to improve fish passage and stream crossings, road location and density issues in the overall watershed. Incentives, structural adjustments and receipts from goods are needed for road maintenance and abandonment. Federal agencies in Oregon must work cooperatively with key Oregon agencies (OWEB, ODFW, ODF, DEQ, other) to support the continued implementation of basin and watershed-scale assessments. Efforts should be directed to meet the goals of the “Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.” Funding is needed to decommission roads that pose a threat to watershed values and overall hydrologic health in the face of increasing climate variability. The congressionally directed restoration effort should provide funding, on parity with other priority issues, to hire best value, capable and local crews to undertake restoration.</p>	Modify	<p>There is a need for: 1) a key road system that is permanent and all weather to serve all needs (strategically placed fire protection system, anticipated managements that employs standard definitions for key terms to describe the road system. (system, non-system, administrative, temporary (as to use), etc.) and 2) funding to meet the challenge of the legacy road system, 3) a more variable climate and 4) an overall decrease in the density of the system and its impact on the ecosystem.</p> <p>Collaboration with State, County and Tribal governments is essential because roads cross jurisdictional boundaries and these governments have systems and crews in place to undertake this work. Restoration efforts must include separate funding and a mandate for an assessment of conditions and planning for a permanent road system that decreases the fragmentation in the transport system, addresses legacy roads and is a forward looking management plan.</p>
8	<p>Congressional action is needed to budget for the development of key road system that reduces density, is permanent and all weather. Non-timber projects such as fire suppression, recreation and others, which depend on a key road system, must have an explicit budget component to support maintenance of system. Fees charged on road use must be directed locally for maintenance, and Federal Agencies should be directed to prefer to work with state, local and tribal governments to address the legacy road system.</p>	Modify	<p>Reducing the costs associated with building new roads might provide a way to reduce costs of maintenance and increase funding for decommissioning and network reduction. The goal should be identifying ways to reduce costs of the roads system by limiting its growth all together.</p>
9		Combined with 7 & 8	

9a		Combined with 7 & 8	
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	Potential Solution	Add/Delete	Changes – issues to FFAC for Discussion
	<p>2.19 Issue/ impediment – Certain federal forestlands (including juniper woodlands) in Oregon are over-stocked and are experiencing changes in species composition contributing to the threat of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncharacteristic wildfire • Forest insect pest and disease outbreaks • Losing key ecological components • Impact on the hydrologic cycle and watershed functions <p>Large areas of overstocked juniper woodlands also need treatment to limit the spread of juniper and restore healthy range conditions. During outbreaks, widespread tree mortality alters the forest ecosystem and makes it more susceptible to large scale wildfires.</p>		
10		Delete	
11	Identify and clearly define the interface of public/private land ownerships to develop and implement strategic actions through “good” neighbor policies and incentives.	Modify	<p>Rationale: Public land management should identify, implement and model policies that encourage (i.e., “Good Neighbor”) private land-owners to apply state fire safety policies, especially in rural residential areas.</p>
12	Assess and enhance management strategies that prohibit or reduce the introduction of non-native plants, insects and disease.	Modify	<p>Rationale: Clearly understanding that some management practices can lead to the unintended consequences. For example, the creation of a new road (temporary or not) may contribute to the spread of non-native plants, disease, and insects. Planning should recognize the risks.</p>
13		Delete	
14		Delete	
15		Combined with 2.11 (2).	Consider recommending statewide task force to consider the who, what, when, where of the needed work. Identify forest types, areas, map-based assessment and sideboards.
16	Develop programmatic assessments through a wide range of alternatives performed at the regional and landscape scale and provide action- oriented projects to increase the effectiveness of the recommendations and reduce overall planning costs. Fund long-term (10-20 year) community-based solutions (e.g. Oregon Solutions	Modify	<p>Rationale: Oregon Solutions is an excellent tool for getting competing interests working with one another. The total volume of thinning/biomass removal must be a component, not in addition, to the total sustainable volume targets in the NW Forest plan and</p>

	<p>Projects in Lakeview) to prioritize treatments and to attract investments at the local level to address variety of landscape conditions.</p>		<p>ICBEMP/Eastside Screens. Prioritize projects that pay for the maintenance of key roads and the decommissioning of legacy roads.</p> <p>Prioritize treatments based on: 1- collaborative process with support from all interest groups, 2- long-term map-based plans that a) properly manage road networks, b) protect key ecological features (endangered species, old-growth forests, aquatics, 3) meet outcome based landscape resiliency and 4) provide long-term stable, sustainable supply of harvestable timber and biomass from public lands.</p> <p>1) Develop a list of scientifically controversial issues regarding the effectiveness of thinning treatments, 2) compare and contrast the advantages of road network reduction, range management modification to determine maximum gains in landscape resiliency per dollar invested, 3) examine past programmatic work to increase success of high-value projects.</p>
17		<p>Combined with 16.</p>	