

Oregon Board of Forestry's Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee

What is it? A broad-based group of Oregonians appointed by the Oregon Board of Forestry to develop a draft document that articulates the state's vision for how federal forestlands should be managed to contribute to the sustainability of Oregon's overall forest land base.

Why is this being done? Some 58 percent of Oregon's forests are federally owned – about 25 percent of Oregon's total land base. Forests are extremely important to Oregon's economy, social fabric, and environmental health. They provide much-needed family-wage jobs in rural communities, critical fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities for our citizens and visitors, and financial support for our roads and schools. Management of federal forests - the result of federal-level policy and budget decisions - has led to increased wildfire risk and severity, decreasing economic contributions to local communities, reduced recreational opportunities and increased forest health problems.

Forests are dynamic ecosystems that do not respect arbitrary ownership boundaries. The results of forest management practices on one ownership directly impact adjacent ownerships. In Oregon, forests are managed for a variety of ecological, economic, and social benefits. The diversity of this forested mosaic is important to ensure a legacy of healthy, productive forests for future generations. We cannot chart a sustainable, productive future for all of Oregon's forests without considering federal forestlands.

In 2004, Governor Ted Kulongoski called on the Board to “create a unified vision of how federal forestlands should contribute” to sustainability, and to make that vision action-oriented and comprehensive – following through to the last step: implementation. In 2005, the Oregon Legislature, through Senate Bill 1072, also gave the Board greater direction to be involved in federal forest policy, planning, and management. And working more closely on federal forest land management is consistent with the Board's strategic plan – the *Forestry Program for Oregon* – which promotes sustainable policy development for all of Oregon's forests.

How will the process work? The committee will develop a vision and set of key goals that need to be achieved on federal lands. The committee will also identify issues that it feels will hinder/prevent the vision from being realized, developing recommendations for how these issues can be overcome. The committee will seek public input and will collaborate directly with the Board to develop a guidance document, which will include specific policy steps necessary to achieve the vision that has been crafted.

Once adopted by the Board, the guidance document will be submitted to the Governor. It is intended to then be used to articulate Oregon's interests at the national policy level and to guide the state's participation in local processes for planning the future of federal lands.

What is the timeline for the project? The committee will work throughout 2007 and 2008 to develop and finalize the guidance document. Plans then call for the Board to adopt it in January 2009 and send to the Governor for his review and approval.

For more information: Visit our website at www.oregon.gov/ODF/BOARD/FFAC.shtml or contact Kevin Birch, Oregon Department of Forestry, 503-945-7405.