

**Oregon Board of Forestry  
Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee Meeting  
March 10, 2008**

Oregon Department of Forestry  
2600 State Street  
Salem, OR

**Meeting Summary**

On March 10, 2008 the Federal Forestland Advisory Committee (FFAC) held a meeting at the Department of Forestry, Salem, Oregon. The primary objectives of the meeting were to:

- Explore issues and legislative efforts relating to process for coordinating policy decisions and identify potential approaches and solutions; and
- Review subgroup efforts and continue working on potential solutions and policy recommendations.

The following summary was prepared by Department staff, revised by the facilitation team, and is subject to review and clarification by the FFAC members at the April 4, 2008 meeting. The summary contains the following sections:

- Opening Remarks, Review of Meeting Objectives and Agenda
- Report on Meeting with the Board of Forestry
- Briefing on Process to Coordinate Policy Decisions
- Briefing on Legislative Concepts
- Discussion of the Process for Coordinating Policy Decisions
- Public Comment
- Report from Synthesis Subgroup
- Status Report: Timber Harvest/Infrastructure Subgroup
- Status Report: Natural Processes Subgroup
- Policy Recommendations on Older Forests
- Review Draft Meeting Summary
- Summary and Next Steps
- Flip Chart Notes
- Attendees
- Written Material Submitted

### **Opening Remarks, Review of Meeting Objectives and Agenda**

Steve Hobbs, Chair of the FFAC, welcomed the Committee members, invited speakers and others attending the meeting, reviewed the meeting objectives and proposed agenda. Also, at its March 5, 2008 meeting, the Board of Forestry approved the FFAC recommendation that Steve Hobbs continue as the Board's representative.

### **Report on the March 5, 2008 Meeting with the Board of Forestry**

Ralph Bloemers and Allyn Ford addressed the Board at its March 5 meeting to describe their roles on the Committee and the progress to date. Both indicated the committee was working well together, making progress, and also entering the difficult task of synthesizing the large volume of information they have been absorbing in order to make recommendations. Mr. Bloemers provided a copy of his remarks [written material].

Committee members indicated it was important to keep the Board and the Governor's office informed so that recommendations made could be implemented effectively. It was also suggested that the Synthesis Subgroup work to ensure recommendations were coordinated with similar efforts being undertaken by various agencies and the Board, especially those addressing the county timber payments issue and other recommendations requiring funding allocations and work plan adjustments by agencies.

### **Briefing on the Process to Coordinate Policy Decisions**

Ted Lorensen, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and Commissioner Ben Boswell, Wallowa County, were invited to address the FFAC regarding ways to help coordinate policy decisions. Commissioner Boswell was unable to attend the meeting.

**Ted Lorensen, Private Forests Division Chief**, highlighted the importance of a broad coordination policy to address forestry issues for the nation. He described the rationale for a National Policy for Sustainable Forests, the problems the policy would address, the factors contributing to the problem, and federal timber harvest trends [presentation included in written material]. He also informed the committee that a Task Force of the National Association of State Foresters and the Society of American Foresters was formed in April 2006 to create a renewed national commitment and social contract to understand, enhance, and protect the health, productivity and sustainability of the nation's forests [written material].

Mr. Lorensen indicated that the forestland base is not being sustained due to loss of productivity, land conversion, and fragmentation. Currently, the raw real estate value can far exceed the value of trees in the short term. Industrial ownerships have shifted to new owner types such as non-profits, financial investors, and contractors. Nationally, more than 50 million acres of forestland are projected to be converted to development uses over the next 50 years. The number of family forests is increasing, but the holding sizes are decreasing. Forest health conditions are declining, while costs and loss related to fire and insect/disease are increasing. Invasive species are also impacting biodiversity, productive capacity, and costs.

Mr. Lorensen noted the decline in research (both silviculture and biodiversity), forest sector capacity, and infrastructure. He reported that over 330 paper and wood mills have closed since 1997 resulting in a loss of more than 158,000 wood manufacturing jobs.

Mr. Lorensen commented on the importance of a national policy act related to forestry issues on par with the Farm Bill. He indicated that such an act could have the following benefits:

- Conservation and management of forest resources could be based upon the use of the forests by the present generation not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs;
- Economic, social and environmental values could be mutually supportable;
- Federal authorities, policies and programs could be improved to ensure support of sustainable forests; and
- Integrated policies and programs could reflect contemporary issues and needs.

Discussion with FFAC members highlighted the importance of addressing forest conversion, especially in light of factors such as Measures 37 and 49. Focused national policy could address the issues of forestland conversion, parcelization, checkerboard ownership, and development at the wildland fringe that poses forest management and wildfire management challenges. It was also suggested that the trend to monetize ecosystem services could be incorporated into national policy in order to focus on the longer term values and ecosystem benefits provided by healthy forests. It was also suggested that it would be helpful if state agencies could deliver a set of policy change suggestions. Potential recommendations could include:

- An emphasis on the need for a broader national sustainable forestry policy (message could be coordinated with NSF partners);
- The need for continued funding of the USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA) in order to provide necessary data for better policy making and to continue to build the data set necessary to track and measure sustainable forestry practices;
- Recommendations on land use program changes such as a coordinated transfer of development rights (TDR) program; and
- Recommendations on how to improve the complicated interplay of issues at the international, federal, State and local levels.

### **Briefing on Legislative Concepts**

Two guest speakers, Susan Jane Brown from Representative Peter DeFazio's office and Josh Kardon from Senator Ron Wyden's office, were invited to address the FFAC regarding legislative efforts underway in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress.

**Susan Jane Brown, Natural Resources Counsel for U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio** provided a brief overview of legislation to be proposed by Representative DeFazio for the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. She provided a description of the process used to involve stakeholders in the development of the legislation. She also provided the status report that the office was currently synthesizing comments collected on the last draft and a response to comments document is expected by the end of March, but additional comments, especially by the FFAC, are welcomed.

She indicated that the draft legislation starts from the premise that the status quo is not working and a different approach to forest issues is needed today. The Norwest Forest Plan (NWFP) did not solve many of the issues it attempted to address and some of the most significant shortcomings were the failure to provide a sustainable supply of timber to local communities and a failure to create sufficient protection for old growth forests.

The draft bill covers a geographic area broader than the NWFP (all of Oregon, Washington and northern California within the range of the northern spotted owl). It replaces land allocations with a new management regime focused on thinning and the management of plantations on the west side, fire suppression on the east side, and a generally more holistic approach. Logging of old growth is “off the table” in the legislation and support for contracting provisions, such as stewardship and best value contracting, are included. The proposal is written to sunset in 30 years in order to create certainty in the near term but flexibility for adaptation to new conditions and realities in the future.

**Josh Kardon, Chief of Staff for Senator Ron Wyden** commented that Senator Wyden was supportive of Representative DeFazio’s work and is also developing draft legislation for introduction in 2008. It is expected that the legislation will have a funding component and objectives for thinning overstocked second-growth forests since thinning provides forest jobs critical for industry infrastructure and forest health.

Mr. Kardon commented that the threats of litigation and appeals have created a degree of paralysis in the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, and Senator Wyden supports the establishment of a category of management actions that are non-controversial. Mr. Kardon added that Senator Wyden is willing to look for ways to improve the process and will move to permanently protect old growth forests, but he will not “put a lock on the Courthouse doors.” Improving the citizenry’s trust in land managers and encouraging collaboration are high priorities. He also indicated that draft legislation was likely to be available within the next few weeks.

Committee questions and brief discussion with both speakers highlighted the importance of funding provisions to turn recommendations into implementable actions and to support the forest infrastructure. It was also suggested that clarity regarding old growth issues was important while simultaneously ensuring the preservation of scientific credibility and building of public trust. It was also suggested that the legislation should support holistic and adaptive management. Addressing the way the fire fighting budget has consumed over 40% of the management budget in place of more proactive investments in thinning and infrastructure was suggested as one tangible example that may be outside the scope of the legislation being proposed but was important to address.

### **Discussion of Process for Coordinating Policy Decisions**

Ted Lorensen joined the FFAC for its discussion of potential recommendations. Mr. Lorensen commented that current policies were predicated on the mistaken assumption that forests were capable of attaining equilibrium through protection. He suggested that current forest management in the northwest needs to be placed in a global context and a coherent vision for the nation’s forests is needed. The cost of fire suppression is not sustainable, the threat of invasive

species is looming, and unintended consequences are growing. Mr. Lorensen also reminded the group that if there is an alternative to collaboration it will be very difficult to ensure implementation of an agreement.

Committee members suggested that reference to sustainability should include both ecological and societal components. One societal component suggested was the restoration of the social contract with timber dependent rural communities. Furthermore, Congress needs to create policy principles and overarching direction because federal and private forestlands cannot succeed without each other. Additionally the threat of global climate change can create opportunities for creative policy recommendations that realize the ecosystem value provided by forests, the energy co-production possibilities inherent in thinning, the carbon sequestration forest functions, and the possibility of shifting from forest fire suppression to intelligent fuel management.

Additional comments from committee members included the following:

- The agencies and counties should be actively involved in collaborative efforts to help ensure more informed agreements and continue to build trust.
- A continued focus on ensuring scientific credibility can help break through barriers of distrust.
- It is important to emphasize predictability both in terms of timber supply and policy direction.
- Recommendations for transportation investments (a more accurate term than transportation subsidies) should be included.
- It is important to make transportation investments strategically into core areas to ensure efficient and effective delivery of forest products. Support of the rail infrastructure is important to this end.
- Clear direction about desired future conditions is important.

### **Public Comment**

**Sue Kapillas, Communities for Healthy Forests** described polling results showing Oregonian's support of active federal forest management. She indicated that overstocked, unhealthy conditions on federal lands are affecting mortality of younger trees. She suggested significant thinning including larger diameter trees to reduce fire danger fuels and increase volume growth by releasing trees as free to grow [written material].

**Wayne Giesy, Hull-Oakes [retired] and Dick Posekany, Frank Lumber Co.** commented that the FFAC's recommendations should contain sustainable harvest volumes for all timber age classes through maturity. They recommended preservation of older timber habitat for some endangered species, and federal forest habitat for songbirds, insects and other vertebrate species. They warned about unintended consequences of legislation, such as increased cutting in anticipation of endangered species legislation. They also indicated that forestlands will always have value to society and the west contains larger tracts of federal forests not contributing to the tax base but providing societal benefits, a fact that should be reflected in committee recommendations [written material].

**Gary Springer, representing the Committee for Family Forestlands** noted that family forestland owners see increasing risks associated with invasive species and wildfire crossing

ownerships. Central, eastern and southern Oregon landowners are losing timber markets due to the loss of federal harvests [written material].

**Tom Partin, American Forest Resource Council** offered a number of principles and recommendations to address forest health and industry infrastructure [written material]:

- Federal forest management must be sustainable over the long-term
- Thinning should occur across all age classes
- Focus should be on desired future conditions
- Stewardship contracting that can self-generate revenues should be supported
- Large-scale projects (in excess of 10,000 acres) should be encouraged
- Agency costs should be reduced
- Agency funding for management, not just fire fighting, should be increased
- The issue of litigation and appeals should be addressed

### **Report from the Synthesis Subgroup**

Steve Hobbs reported on the February 27, meeting of the Synthesis Subgroup. The subgroup will synthesize and integrate the FFAC work and materials to produce a FFAC report for review and comment by committee members and then submission to the Board of Forestry for discussion at their June meeting. The subgroup will work on the outline, tone, content, context, organization, and scale (e.g., federal, state, local) of the report. Also, the group will address budget/funding issues discussed at the April 4 meeting and will work to synthesize the work of other subgroups and develop a coherent list of actionable items. The subgroup will also reexamine information and develop new or alternative proposals for FFAC consideration.

The group explored reorganizing and combining “problems” into Biophysical Issues and Overarching Issues. The subgroup also discussed partitioning assessments/analyses and recommendations [written material].

#### Biophysical Issues

- Natural processes
- Reduced timber harvest / infrastructure
- Older forests

#### Overarching Issues

- Coordinated Policy
- Funding
- Legal framework
- Trust – changing social values

Committee discussion included the following suggestions:

#### *Tone*

- Keep at the 30,000 foot level
- Model the report after the tone set in the Montana report and the level of detail (succinct)

*Organizational Divisions*

- Make distinction between special circumstances in eastern and western ecoregions
- Do not distinguish between BLM and USFS
- Add a timeline with short-term vs. long-term actions
- Focus on federal lands not private (provide context regarding issues on private lands but focus the report on federal forestland issues)
- Separate recommendations for the State and the Delegation (identify target audience for recommendations)
- Suggested organization: synthesis layers – timeline – actionable items

*Language*

- Refer to timber infrastructure as restoration infrastructure
- Switch to pro-active management rather than reactive management
- Clearly articulate a desired future condition as a goal/vision all are working towards
  - Status-quo is unacceptable
  - Moving to desired future condition will take acceptance of a higher level of risk as a society
  - Active management will be needed but it will also need to be adaptive

*Other Issues*

- Categorical exclusions: add more detail and make recommendations for broader landscape scale assessments
- Address issue of timber salvage and post-fire activities
- Prioritize need for funding both in the short term (e.g., subsidies) and long term (e.g., carbon tax credits)
- Social value of timberlands – in order to incentivize provision of these social values need to determine if the approach will be regulatory or providing subsidies/incentives (address issue that trees grow more slowly than the value of money in the short term)
- Need to articulate broad value of ecosystem services (timber, riparian protection, clean water, species habitat, carbon sink, etc.)
- Make issues actionable beyond just research

**Status Report: Timber Harvest/Infrastructure Subgroup**

**Russ Hoeflich** provided a status report of the recent work of the Timber Harvest/Infrastructure Subgroup. Working from its Potential Solutions report draft version 4.1, Mr. Hoeflich described the solutions and action items [written material]. The subgroup will continue to refine its work and attempt to address the following questions/issues discussed by the FFAC:

- What is the appropriate scale?
- Should the Oregon Conservation Strategy/State Wildlife Action Plan be the basis of a statewide plan or prioritization tool?
- Should there be a recommendation for a new program within a state agency responsible for developing collaborative efforts and working with NEPA implementation issues?
- Address desire to take a larger watershed approach with the issue of BLM checkerboard ownership patterns

- Ensure that infrastructure issues (including transportation infrastructure) are adequately addressed (with assistance from Ted Lorensen, Allyn Ford, and Kevin Birch)
- Refine solution 3 – bullet 3 (with assistance from Kevin Birch)
- Include incentives for biomass (e.g., green ton credit)

### **Status Report: Natural Processes Subgroup**

**Tim Vredenburg** provided a status report on the Natural Processes Subgroup’s work, which was condensed and refined from the last iteration. Working from draft version 7, Mr. Vredenburg described issues in three categories: overarching landscape issues; operational management and stewardship issues; and, operational/stewardship issues [written material].

Concerns were raised over the action item to reduce the overall road network [Operational/Stewardship Issues]. The elements of a comprehensive transportation plan were discussed. Rewording the action was suggested to reflect a holistic approach. The subgroup will refine version 7 and submit it to the Synthesis Subgroup through staff.

### **Policy Recommendations on Older Forests**

**Dan Edge** provided a status report on the Older Forests Subgroup’s work, working from draft version 2.1. He reported that there is a need to provide flexible guidance and to develop a process for determining what should be the goal amount of older forest. The FFAC continued to discuss “definition” issue and the conversation centered on the following questions:

1. How should older forests be defined?
  - General characteristics and parameters
    - Minimum age
    - Size – culmination of mean annual increment
  - Process criteria – structure and function rather than stand condition
  - Reference existing management definitions and other efforts to create definitions
  - Is it possible to create reasonable sideboards?
2. Who should define older forests?
  - FFAC
  - Experts
  - Regional Groups – collaborative processes
  - Congress
3. How much older forest should there be?
  - How much should be added?
  - Close to the historic range of variability?
  - Should species criteria be used?
  - Need to address issue of certainty: older forest protection and supply of timber volume
  - How should boundaries be addressed?

4. Should harvest and silvicultural activities be excluded?
  - Can active management in med-seral stands accelerate older forests
  - Should management be for the benefit of older forest characteristics?
  - How should threat of catastrophic loss be addressed?

The Subgroup will refine the draft and work to address these questions while focusing on providing guidance and principles. Staff will assist with reformatting.

### **Draft Meeting Summary Review**

Minor edits were submitted to Mr. Fisher for incorporation and posting on the committee website.

### **Summary and Next Steps**

**Steve Hobbs** reported the Synthesis Subgroup will meet in Bend on March 25, and April 5, in Burns. The Subgroup will re-evaluate its partitioning problems and recommendations. Final iterations were requested from the other Subgroups by March 20.

#### **April 4, meeting – topics:**

- Federal agencies budget and funding briefing [inc. trends & processes]
- Review work products from Synthesis Subgroup
- Last full meeting of the FFAC before the Board of Forestry joint meeting

**June 3, Joint FFAC/Board meeting** should be interactive. The intent will be to settle on recommendations through a larger group discussion. The Board must have a product to consider; a list of issues to be solved at the meeting will be prepared.

### **Action Items & Flip Chart Notes**

1. Information sharing and coordination with Governor's Task Force on county payments.
  2. Handling potential FFAC recommendations that might require investments (budget changes) by state agencies.
  3. Distribute color version of the hazard (condition class) map from Ted's presentation to FFAC. (Done)
  4. Distribute electronic copies of subgroup documents to FFAC.
  5. Comments on Natural Processes document to Tim and Timber Harvest/Infrastructure to Wade by March 14.
  6. Subgroup work product to Kevin for Synthesis Group by March 20.
- How to define older forests?
  - Should FFAC define or suggest group/process?
  - How much older forests and should FFAC define?
  - Harvesting/silvicultural of older growth forests prohibit or prescribe?

**Attendees**

**Committee Members:** Chair Steve Hobbs, Ralph Bloemers, Allyn Ford, Chuck Graham, Russ Hoeflich, Bill Kluting, Annabelle Jaramillo, Daniel Edge, Ken Williamson, and Tim Vredenburg

**Staff:** Rod Kraemer, ODF&W; Lisa Freedman, USFS; Mike Haske, BLM; Bob Progulske, Fish & Wildlife Service; Kevin Birch, Jeri Chase, Mary Schmelz, and Gayle Birch, ODF

**Facilitation Team:** Robert Fisher and Rob Williams

**Presenters:** Ted Lorensen, ODF; Susan Jane Brown, U.S. Rep. DeFazio's Office; Josh Kardon, Senator Ron Wyden's Office

**Public:** Gary Springer, Starker Forests; Chris Jarmer, OFIC; Dick Posekany, Frank Lumber; Wayne Giesy, Hull-Oakes Lumber; Doug Heiken, Oregon Wild; Rex Storm, AOL; Turner Odell, OR Consensus Program; Sue Kupillas, Communities for Healthy Forests; Rocky McVay, AOC; John Audley, TNC; Tom Partin, AFRC; Chris Cadwell, BLM; Bill Ferber, OWRD; Keith Baldwin and Chad Allen, ODF

**Written Material:** *Note - All written material and presentations provided to the Committee and referred to in this meeting summary are available on the Committee's website at:*

[www.oregon.gov/ODF/BOARD/FFAC.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/BOARD/FFAC.shtml)

- *A National Policy for Sustainable Forests* – PowerPoint Presentation
- *A National Policy for Sustainable Forests* – Sustainable Forests Task Force Summary
- Sue Kupillas, written comments & Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall Survey Report
- Dick Posekany and Wayne Giesy, written comments
- Gary Springer, written comments
- Tom Partin, written comments
- Synthesis Subgroup Meeting Notes, February 27, 2008
- Potential Solutions - Timber Harvest / Infrastructure Issue
- Potential Solutions – Natural Processes
- Potential Solutions – Older Forests