

**Oregon Board of Forestry
Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee Meeting
May 15, 2007**

The Riverhouse
3075 North Highway 97
Bend, OR 97701

Meeting Summary*

Opening Remarks, and Reviewing Meeting Agenda and Objectives

Steve Hobbs, Chair of the Advisory Committee and the Board of Forestry, welcomed the Committee members and others in attendance, and reviewed the proposed agenda and meeting objectives which included:

- Exploring landscape resiliency on federal forestlands and related management challenges, and, if possible, developing potential solutions and recommendations
- Public comment
- Reviewing the Most Pressing Problem Document, the Key Issues, revised Goal Statement Document, and prioritizing the Key Issues for consideration by the Committee
- Reviewing and approving the April Meeting Summary
- Discussing the FFAC process – keeping everyone engaged and reviewing documents
- Planning for the next Committee meeting and the joint meeting with the Board of Forestry

Steve Hobbs noted that there was time after each panelist's presentation for the Committee to ask clarifying questions, with more time set aside after the public comment period for the Committee and panelists to discuss the issues raised and potential solutions.

Committee Member Announcements and Requests

- Zane Smith announced that he would be retiring soon and was cutting back on his public commitments, including his appointment on the Committee. This was his last meeting.
- Russ Hoefflich asked to discuss the implications of a Measure 37 bill in the Legislature, particularly as that relates to timber industry support of the Forest Practices Act.
- Wade Mosby announced that the Collins Companies were, in partnership with others, purchasing the Boardman Tree Farm with the intent of building a \$35 million sawmill to process approximately 100 million board feet annually of Pacific Albus (hybrid poplar).

* Note: the recording device used to capture the discussion stopped working in the middle of the meeting.

Presentations on Landscape Resiliency on Federal Forestlands*

Tom Sensenig, USDA Forest Service, Rogue - Siskiyou and Umpqua National Forests, gave a presentation on aspects of general forest ecology. In particular, he focused on dry forest environments, research on fire in old growth stands, and possible solutions to issues occurring in dry forest ecosystems. Tom offered the following potential solutions -

- Prioritize to the temporal scale
- Aggressive young stand management (funding)
- Old-Growth Management Task Force
- Large scale prescribed burning effort
- Continuity of resource practitioners
- Education –awareness of issues
- FFAC’s role in informing the public and framing issues

Following Tom’s presentation, the Committee raised or briefly explored the following topics:

- Spotted owl habitat and actions to help the species
- Creating old growth volume and structure and the implications for wildlife
- Research on old growth stands and fire history in those stands
- Increased forest density, fire suppression activities over the past 100 years, and the impacts to the forests
- Forest roads and the trade-offs between access roads built for management purposes and roads/fire trails built during wildfire suppression
- Role of prescribed fire, mechanical thinning, and related funding issues
- Commercial component of young stand management
- Fire Regime Condition Classification and other ways to measure conditions
- Efficacy of stand alone treatment
- Funding availability

Jim Agee, University of Washington, gave a presentation on “Fire and Oregon’s Dry Forest Landscapes – What Should We Do?” He focused on fire regimes, the accumulation of fuels, and treatment models at the stand and landscape levels. He also identified a number of barriers to implementation.

Roger Lord, Mason, Bruce & Girard, Inc, gave a presentation on “Biomass Energy – An Opportunity to Address Forest Health in Oregon.” He discussed forest health, including the increase in forest density, shifts in species composition and wildfire, and biomass accumulation. He also focused on thinning, removing and using biomass and the potential consequences of and barriers to implementation.

Following Roger’s presentation, the Committee raised or briefly explored the following topics:

- Change in species composition
- Economic viability for attracting investment

* Note: All written materials 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.

- The amount of electricity produced
- The size class of merchantable timber removed
- The filters on roadless and wilderness areas that were used for the calculations
- Calculations for megawatt hours
- Land management policy implications
- Whether or not the calculations were one-time or renewable
- The Arizona White Mountain Stewardship Agreement and how and why that was successful

John Lowe, former USDA Forest Service Regional Forester, discussed federal forest policy and the changes over time in federal land management. John stated that in his opinion, the problem statement for forest health was a good one, and suggested something be added about climate change and site conditions. John related his own personal experiences and observations of the effects of climate change.

John mentioned the following factors contributing to the problems, including:

- Biological issues and failure to identify problems early on
- Conflicting objectives
- Public land management policy as defined by agency statutes and the courts
- Unstable project outcomes from forest products creates an unwillingness to invest in equipment and technologies
- Lack of public support and the residual fall-out from the “wilderness-timber wars”
- Because of the different politics on the eastside and westside of Washington and Oregon what works elsewhere may not work for those two states
- Lack of an effective agency decision-making process
- Lack of funding contributes to decreased personnel on the ground for adequate fire suppression and reduces institutional knowledge
- Lack of recognition of the recreation and wildlife work funded by timber sales
- Increased budget resources allocated to fire suppression (40 percent projected for 2008)
- People living at wildland-urban interface expect protection which leads to more people and decreases the initial attack capability on wildland fires
- Roadless areas and issues related to fire suppression in those areas .

John then identified possible solutions to address these problems:

- Clarify policy and specify priorities
- Educate the public
- Build coalitions and use public opinion to create the political will
- Fund creative approaches to ensure a dependable flow of products
- Streamline decision-making processes
- Develop technical knowledge.

John also identified some of the barriers to implementing these solutions, including:

- Lack of clear policy
- Ineffective scientific articulation of facts – scientists need to be given clear objectives so that their responses to scientific questions can also be clear and valid
- Public opinion – a new model is needed for gaining public opinion to get to the political will

- The process needs streamlining
- Education of today's youth may not relate to the issues at hand
- Loss of historical perspective and how to bring that forward into the current processes
- How to get people to look at the long term issues, rather than the short term
- Lack of focus on the larger scale – oftentimes smaller projects can be worked through, but it's much more difficult to do anything different on a large scale.

Following John's presentation, the Committee raised or briefly touched on the following topics:

- Public opinion
- Independent scientific review
- Increasing trend of assigning personal liability for decisions made on the fireline.

Public Comment

Comments were requested on the following questions:

1. What is the most important factor(s) contributing to disruption of natural processes and loss of landscape resiliency on federal forestlands in Oregon for the FFAC to address and why?
2. What solution(s) do you recommend the FFAC consider to address the factor(s) you mentioned and why?
3. What information, in addition to the information provided by the presenters, should the FFAC consider about disruption of natural processes and loss of landscape resiliency on federal forestlands in Oregon?

Steve Hobbs noted that the Committee received comments in an e-mail message from **Karen Black** who was unable to attend the meeting, and a copy of those comments was provided to Committee members and would be included as part of the record.

Sue Kupillas, Communities for Healthy Forests, stated there were two areas of concern that should be priorities for the Committee: (1) the conversion of rural communities from resource use to recreation focused communities which transfers the impact of consumption to counties that do not have environmental protection; and (2) the severe consequences to communities as federal forestlands have been removed from active management. She shared polling results that indicate that 77 percent of Oregonians support restoration of forests after catastrophic events by removing dead trees and replanting. In responding to questions regarding the specifics of this polling information, she noted that this included substantial support – 75 percent – in the Portland metropolitan area.

Garth Fuller, The Nature Conservancy, commented that in his view the factors contributing to loss of landscape resiliency include uncoordinated, disconnected management on public lands on a scale that does not address the real needs of these fire-dependent ecosystems, and demonstrates the lack of strategic integrated actions that could move these landscapes toward their desired conditions. Potential solutions include having FFAC endorse a collaborative process with community input based on the best available science to identify legislation, management tools, and incentives for action on public lands. He also recommended that these types of collaborative efforts receive priority funding.

Craig Patterson, citizen, stated that the industrial model of forestry management has maximized short-term profits beyond expectations, while producing unintended consequences that may last for generations. These unintended consequences and their costs often do not surface until restoration is considered, when funds are limited. He believes the industrial model is not sustainable at the triple bottom line – economic, social, and environmental. A whole systems approach with whole cost accounting would include those costs at the front end of the equation.

Tom Partin, American Forest Resource Council, provided written comments. He gave examples of the wood products infrastructure that used to be in Bend and Prineville, and no longer exists because of the curtailment of timber sales from federal forests. He wants these communities made whole again and a future for the industry. He provided examples of recent forest fire damage surrounding the Bend area, due to the excess biomass, and the need for aggressive fire management. He compared federal agency budget fire suppression estimates in 1991 (16 percent), 2000 (21 percent), and 2007 (45 percent). He believes the greatest threats to federal forestlands are fire and the lack of active management to reduce fuel loading. His priorities are for the Committee to recommend:

- separate budgets for fire and land management to avoid using land management funds for fire
- a 20-year plan to address Condition Class 2 and Class 3 lands
- the use of Healthy Forest Restoration Act projects for all fuels reduction because these projects can be expedited
- broadening the focus to wildland firefighting from the narrow focus on fighting fire in the wildland-urban interface areas

He also encouraged the Committee to expedite this process.

Rex Storm, Associated Oregon Loggers, provided written comments. He stated that the federal agencies are failing to responsibly manage federal forests and rangelands in five aspects:

- Planning and allocating land management for a full range of multiple uses, resulting in 80 percent reserves on the Westside and a de-facto excess of reserves on the eastside due to the inability to manage when only trees under 21 inches in diameter may be harvested
- Maintaining healthy forest and range ecosystems, resulting in threats to neighboring properties
- Reducing over-crowded stands makes those stands prone to loss from pest, disease, wildfire, weather, etc.
- Planning and administering sufficient road access to accomplish other forest management goals, resulting in an inability to cost-effectively manage for the array of multiple uses
- Planning and promoting responsible recreation use.

Rex's recommended solutions were included in his written comments. He also emphasized the current federal agency workforce crisis, i.e. the loss of employees through retirements, attrition, and downsizing, when these agencies have increasing responsibilities to manage these forests.

Tim Lilebo, Oregon Wild, commented on the factors that have contributed to overall forest decline which include: logging of fire-resistant species; fire suppression; grazing that removes grasses that would carry low-intensity surface fires; roads that disrupt hydrologic processes, forest ecology, and watersheds; and urbanization. For management solutions, he recommended management practices that emulate nature as much as possible, given climate change,

urbanization, and social aspects. He also recommended activity in the lower level ponderosa pine forests, getting fire back into the ecosystem, protecting old growth, and grow back those fire-resistant trees, no matter the size. Funding is a major issue, to re-invest to create economic activity and a workforce for rural communities. Additional study and information is needed on mixed-conifer stands. He recommended up-front collaboration notwithstanding the potential barriers (e.g. time and effort required).

Gary Johnson, Collins Companies, stated that within the past 10-15 years the Forest Service went from a proud agency to one with morale problems. They used to be able to get their cut out to supply sawmills and provide employment in communities, and now that is very difficult. He believes the biggest problem for our forest health is lack of management on the ground, which is the result of too many laws, rules, and regulations that constrain the agency from getting things accomplished. For example, the 21-inch rule was designed to create or save old growth but instead prevents effective management of an entire stand where basal area – density – has to be reduced in order for those older trees to survive. He provided an example of dead and dying, overstocked, yellow-belly pine tree stands near LaPine.

Asante Riverwind, Sierra Club, stated that we are causing this forest crisis and a worldwide global crisis that is unsustainable, with numerous species in decline. He believes this is happening due to economic drivers to take more, creating unsustainable human consumption of natural resources. He stated that we need long-term vision from everybody to look at alternative products, and to expand the debate – that biomass and thinning have been elevated far above other more ecologically effective restoration measures to improve the forest health and resistance to fires.

Mike Lovely, retired USDA Forest Service, recommended getting politics out of the forest, not managing for quarterly reports or performance goals, increasing salvage logging and timber sales, cutting affected timber to protect resources. He stated that the Smokey the Bear campaign was a failure that resulted in over protection and too much under-story. He also wants Oregon to be in the forefront.

Discussion of Issues Raised by Briefing and Potential Solutions

Committee members and panelists discussed the issues that had been raised during the earlier presentations on landscape resiliency, and potential solutions to some of those issues. Those items discussed are included as part of the Committees “Action Item List” developed during the meeting. In particular, the planning team was directed to synthesize the discussion and prepare a write-up (including proposed recommendations) for the June meeting.

Key Issues and Top-Ten Goals

Committee members discussed the current draft of the Most Pressing Problems and the Key Issues Document. Staff was directed to redraft the problem statement with an explanatory paragraph for each issue, to combine and delete multiple problem statements based on the Committee’s discussion, and create a separate a problem statement for the old-growth issue. Items from this discussion will be incorporated into a new version of these documents for the Committee to review at the meeting on June 4 - 5, 2007.

FFAC Process

This agenda item was postponed until the next Committee meeting.

Review Draft April Meeting Summary

This agenda item was postponed until the next Committee meeting.

Planning for Next Meeting and Wrap-up

Committee members and planning team staff discussed meeting times and logistics for the next Committee meeting and the joint meeting with the Board of Forestry in June. The Committee will meet on Monday, June 4, in the afternoon, from 1:00 – 5:00 pm. The Committee will meet again on Tuesday, June 5, in the morning, from 8:00 - 10:00 a.m., then recess and reconvene for lunch with the Board of Forestry at noon, with a subsequent joint meeting with the Board from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Action Items:

See the separate Action Item list.

Steve Hobbs adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Attending:

Committee Members: Ralph Bloemers, Allyn Ford, Chuck Graham, Steve Grasty, Russ Hoeflich, Steve Hobbs, Bill Kluting, R. Wade Mosby, Zane Smith, Jr., Ken Williamson, and Tim Vredenburg.

Staff: Kevin Birch, Cathy Clem, David Morman, ODF; Marianne Fitzgerald, DEQ; Lisa Freedman, USFS; Mike Haske, BLM; Robert Fisher, FCS.

Public: Sue Kupillas, Communities for Healthy Forests; Ted Scholor, LaPine Independent Group; Dan Gillete, Sylvan Power; Chuck Brushwood, Crag Law Center; Garth Fuller, The Nature Conservancy; Craig Patterson; Tom Partin, American Forest Resource Council; Greer Kelly, Interfir Pacific; John Jackson; Dave Drake; Wayne Giesy, Hull-Oakes Lumber Company; Rex Storm, Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.; Ted Fisher; Les Stinson; Boyd Wickman, PNW Research Station; Tim Lillebo, Oregon Wild; Glenn Whitman; Gary L. Johnson, Collins Companies; Asante Riverwind, Sierra Club; Mike Lovely; and Jack Barringer.