

2007 Board of Forestry Issue Scan Overview

The 2007 Issue Scan Process

Outreach and response: The Department solicited input for the 2007 issue scan through stakeholder lists, news releases, the Web and personal contacts with organizations and individuals.

Input also came from Department staff and representatives of other agencies, and from advisory groups including the Committee for Family Forestlands and the Forest Resource Trust Advisory Committee. Comments were collected electronically and through postal mail for a two-month period ending on July 31, 2007.

The Department received 167 suggestions from approximately 90 individuals or organizations. The comments expressed a cross section of viewpoints on a broad range of subjects.

A noteworthy difference from the first Board issue scan, in 2005, was that a substantial number of comments addressed a single subject, pesticide use, with many of these making the same or very similar points, in particular calling for increased monitoring or voicing concerns about environmental or human health. In all, approximately 45 comments related to pesticide use.

Staff analysis: Staff divided the comments into 15 general subject areas (attachment 2). Staff also reviewed each suggestion in relation to the Board's current work plans and recommended including it in one of the four following categories. The number of comments is in parentheses.

1. New topics not currently addressed in any of the Board's work plans.
 - 1A. Topics that could become the substance of a new Board work plan. (0)
 - 1B. Input that contains new topics or perspectives that could be incorporated into existing work plans. (14)
 - 1C. New topics that require additional staff work, after which they might become the subject of Board actions. (12)
2. Topics addressed in current work plans. (65)
3. Comments, often of a general nature, that don't relate to a specific work plan, but that may provide useful guidance to the work group or to the Board. (18)
4. Topics or comments that appear to be beyond the scope of the board's work.
 - 4A. Matters that are more appropriately addressed by another jurisdiction. (1)
 - 4B. Matters for staff to address, possibly leading to Board action. (57)

Work group: The issue scan work group (attachment 2), appointed by the Board, reviewed all of the received input. The group met on September 25 and October 19, 2007, to review and discuss the input and the staff analysis, and to formulate its recommendations for the Board.

Work group general recommendations

The group acknowledged that the issues facing the Board are complex and inter-related, that societal value conflict underlies many of them, and that progress on many issues should be expected to require long-term, monitored effort.

Work group members concurred with the staff recommendation that none of the input warranted the creation of new work plans, and concluded that the Board needs foremost to evaluate and prioritize the tasks and issues already before it.

With some modification and clarification, the group also accepted the staff's proposed assignment of the issue scan comments into the four analysis categories.

The group also recommended that the Board:

- Given expected membership changes and the passage of about three years since beginning its current decision process, consider a planning workshop in early 2008 to evaluate process, work plans and progress. Discussion topics could include re-focusing work plans with a more realistic one-year horizon for producing specific, discrete products; dividing some work plans into smaller pieces; and creating a "queue" of future tasks.
- Ensure that links between the *Forestry Program for Oregon* (FPFO) and each work plan are clear.
- To better clarify the relationship between the FPFO and work plans, in the next version of the FPFO, rename "strategies" as "goals" and "key actions" as "objectives." Work plans could then provide the "actions."

Standout issues

The work group agreed that the following topics emerged from the issue scan and the group's discussions as the most prominent, although there was not consensus among the group on courses of action for each. This list is not intended to encompass all issues needing Board attention, but rather to identify the key issues arising from review of the 2007 issue scan input.

The list also attempts to categorize the issues in a way that may help the Board organize its work and set priorities. In addition, it reflects a recognition that the issues are inter-related, and that each may have ecological, economic and / or social implications. Work group members' comments are included in italics.

I. TRENDS WITH POTENTIAL TO SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT FORESTS

1. **Rapid forestland ownership change / conversion / reduced forestland base and productivity.** A “complex” of issues and cause-and-effect relationships, with implications for the ongoing sustainability of Oregon’s forestland base. This emerged clearly from the work group’s review as the top priority. Elements include:
 - The need to capture value for landowners for providing ecosystem services, an issue raised by the Forest Resource Trust Advisory Committee, in the 2007 Family Forestlands Symposium and in other forums.
 - Loss of family forestland to forest use, and steps – including those identified by the Family Forestlands Symposium – to address this (Please see attachment 3 for a staff overview comparison of symposium recommendations with current work plans).
 - Fragmentation of large blocks of forestland, and diminishing potential for management that produces a full range of environmental, economic and social benefits.
 - The delivery of fire protection, forestry assistance and other services in the wildland-urban interface
 - *This is a basic issue that affects a whole range of issues including environmental and economic sustainability.*
 - *A high priority, but it should not be a separate work plan. Rather, it should be integrated into existing work plans as appropriate.*
 - *Number 1.*
 - *The State needs an integrated approach to this challenge, which might include enhancing markets for ecosystem services, acquisition of land, or facilitating public and private conservation or recreation easements.*
2. **Climate change:** A topic that should reflect collaboration with other entities, and that should be integrated, in a clear and easily visible way, into some or all of the existing work plans. In this process, the Board needs to focus on matters over which it has control, and on the cause-and-effect relationships among climate change and other issues before the Board (attachment 4 provides staff analysis on the ways in which current work plans address climate change).
 - *We should be alert to opportunities such as obtaining carbon credits and supporting afforestation. This also relates to “reduced forestland base and productivity” [issue listed above].*
 - *A high priority, but it should not be a separate work plan. Rather, it should be integrated into existing work plans as appropriate.*
 - *While the BOF may not need a separate work plan on this issue, ODF does need to have specific benchmarks and timelines for developing the strategies that address climate change. Perhaps a working group within ODF and a yearly report on progress would be a way to start. Connections with other agencies as part of an integrated response are also desirable. Oregon's forests could and should be recognized as world leaders in sequestration, but we need to work quickly and aggressively.*
3. **Invasive species:** Although the issue was identified in the 2005 scan as a topic for a new work plan, that plan is still in draft form. Work group members noted that this demonstrates the need for focus and priorities in a dynamic environment that presents many – and often-changing – challenges.
 - *This is a problem and will increase with more travel and commerce, and probably with climate change.*

II. CAPACITY / PROCESS

4. **Board workload and process.** The group agreed with issue scan commenters who felt that the Board should not take on new work plans, but should focus and prioritize the work already before it.
 - *The Board and staff have a lot on their plate and should concentrate on current issues unless something of real high priority comes along.*
 - *One area that may require a new work plan is climate change. While overall workload is an issue, prioritization might offer some relief.*

III. PROGRAMMATIC CHOICES / ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS

5. **Outreach / education for urban residents.** The work group acknowledged the need for this, but emphasized the need to accomplish it through partnership and coordination with other entities.
 - *Staff should support OFRI with technical information that they have available but let OFRI, OSU Extension and others carry the ball.*
 - *Outreach and education for urban residents is important, but the close work between ODF and OFRI is problematic. Conservation groups have no representation on OFRI. Not only must one be a timber owner or timber employee to have a vote on OFRI, but law actually bans the single public member from being significantly affiliated with groups "known to support or promote environmental issues." While ODF should cooperate with OFRI in some circumstances, they should not rely on OFRI as the key partner in forestry education. We need educational institutions that reflect the breadth of Oregonians' interests and views. OFRI does not reflect that breadth.*
6. **Traditional urban forestry services.** Group members had differing views on the appropriate level of emphasis on these services within the Department, and on how the state should respond to continuing reductions in the federal dollars that currently fund it. The group identified this as an issue separate from questions about the Department's role in developed and developing areas, and about its role in outreach and education.
 - *Funding for technical support to urban areas should come from those areas or be budgeted by the Legislature. We can't thin our ranks any further; we're not doing what we are supposed to do now.*
 - *Parks and street trees in urban areas have enormous economic value. Portland Parks estimated the replacement value of the city's street trees at \$5 billion, and the reduction in stormwater due to forest canopy in cities saves millions. Mature trees can also add significantly to property values. In some cases at the edge of urban areas, traditional stewardship-forester work intersects and complements urban forestry. True, more funding is needed, but the BOF should actively seek that funding.*
7. **Pesticides.** The group concurred with the staff recommendation for a third-party review of literature related to potential non-target effects of forest pesticides used in Oregon. It was suggested that the Board could order such a review as a future consent agenda item. This study could follow the methods of systematic evidence review, and could become part of work done in response to Governor Kulongoski's direction that state agencies collaborate on this issue during the 2007-09 interim.

- *There will continue to be pressure on the use of pesticides and we need good answers to the issues raised. We have good answers to the monitoring question and we should prepare a response to those who made submissions as well as others.*
- *Should not be a Board work plan. More appropriately handled in other venues.*
- *A symptom of public concern over health in general.*
- *The pesticide issue is obviously one of great concern to many citizens, and the BOF/ODF should actively cooperate with others in providing a science-based response to the concerns.*

The group took an informal poll to rank the relative importance of the “standout issues.” The following table summarizes the results.

Issue	High	Medium	Low
Board workload	5		1
Invasive species	2	4	1
Climate change	4	3	
Ownership change etc.	7		
Pesticides		4	3
Traditional urban forestry	1	4	2
Urban outreach	2	4	1

Note: Votes were not received from all work group members; one participant did not vote on the Board workload issue.

Other issues

In addition to the “standout issues” listed above, the work group acknowledged the need to continue to address a range of ongoing issues that are either already identified within current Board work plans, or that could be brought into the work plans. These include:

- Cost and capacity issues and the recommendations of the Forestland Classification Committee, as new elements within the Wildfire Risk Management work plan, which in its current form is essentially complete.
- Improvements to the decision-making framework within the State Forests Management plan.
- Federal lands issues.

Process critique: At its October 19 meeting the work group discussed strengths and areas of improvement within the issue scan process. This discussion affirmed the importance of a periodic issue scan, and identified the following elements.

Strengths	Improvements
The work group represented a good cross section of interests.	The process would have gone more smoothly if cross-reference sheets – listing submitted issues by topic, category, submitter, etc. – had been circulated before the first meeting.
All members’ thoughts and comments were heard and valued.	It would have been useful in staff analysis to tie issue submissions to FPFO strategies or actions as well as to work plans.
Work group members were diligent in reviewing the submitted comments and staff analyses in detail, and this helped make for useful, informed discussion.	A more specific description of the work group’s role is needed.
The content and quality of the input received affirms that there is value in a periodic issue scan.	Research into how other public agencies process and analyze large amounts of input could identify best practices and increase process efficiency.