

Agenda Item No:	C
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SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Board of Forestry with an update on implementation of its Dynamic Forest Ecosystems Work Plan.

Following a Request for Proposal process, the Department of Forestry has entered into an agreement with the Institute for Natural Resources at Oregon State University to conduct an *Ecosystems Dynamics Policy Study*. Once completed, the study will substantially accomplish Objective 1 of the Dynamic Forest Ecosystem Work Plan. Study products will be made available throughout the latter half of 2008 and in 2009.

CONTEXT

The goal of the Board's Dynamic Forest Ecosystem Work Plan is to promote the science, information acquisition, and analysis systems that are essential for developing sound natural resource policies that sustain and enhance the health of Oregon's forest ecosystems, watersheds, and airsheds within a context of natural disturbance and active management (based on *Forestry Program for Oregon Strategy F.*) Objective 1 of the Work Plan calls for promoting dialogue and greater understanding among scientists, decision makers, and stakeholders about dynamic forest ecosystem processes and their interactions with forest policies.

Consistent with the Work Plan, the Department of Forestry issued a Request for Proposal in May 2007 to solicit proposals from parties interested in producing case study papers describing the relationship and experiences between the administration of natural resource laws, policies, or regulations to the current management of ecosystems and the scientific understanding of ecosystem dynamics, with particular focus on Pacific Northwest forest ecosystems. Two proposals were submitted. An evaluation team reviewed and provided recommendations on the two proposals. The team members included:

- Barbara Craig, Board of Forestry
- Ted Lorenson, Oregon Department of Forestry
- Dr. Andrew Yost, Oregon Department of Forestry

- Dr. Hal Salwasser, Oregon State University, College of Forestry (Dr. Salwasser did not provide an evaluation of the OSU proposal.)
- Mike Cloughesy, Oregon Forest Resources Institute
- Gary Springer, Committee for Family Forestlands/Starker Forests
- Brent Davies, EcoTrust

The OSU Institute for Natural Resources (INR) proposal was selected for further development and funding. In November, the Department of Forestry entered into an interagency agreement with INR to complete the study. The agreement became effective on December 1, 2007 and will be completed by December 31, 2009, unless extended or otherwise modified.

The project will examine experiences with various approaches to integrating ecosystem dynamics into forest management in order to identify successes, drawbacks, and unintended consequences. The ultimate objective is to use the results of the project to frame forest management policies that embody current and future understanding of forest ecosystem dynamics.

The project work to be completed by INR will include:

A Synthesis Report: A synthesis report on lessons learned about ecosystem dynamics and their effects on current management will be developed. The report will contain all relevant and available case studies of actual experiences with forest managers trying to apply new scientific understanding to forest management, including studies from the literature and the experience of the investigators. To the degree possible, the synthesis report will use systematic evidence review-type rankings for reports on experimental forest treatments.

A Seminar Series: A seminar series of four presentations, addressing four selected theme areas will be developed and conducted. These theme areas encompass almost all of the forest policy topics listed. Specifically, *fire and fuels* incorporates snags and down wood, terrestrial wildlife habitat, reforestation, air quality, insects and diseases, silviculture and ecosystem processes; *aquatics and flooding* incorporates riparian areas, water quality, aquatic habitat, roads and ecosystem processes; *climate change and adaptation* incorporates insects and diseases, invasive species, and short- and long-term risk assessment; and the "*protection*" concept incorporates late successional forests, threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant and animal species, and ecosystem processes. The themes correlate with the key laws and policies now governing forest management.

A Summit Policy Workshop: A summit policy workshop will be developed and conducted that brings together core Department of Forestry managers, Oregon University System scientists, other state and federal agency cooperators, and stakeholders to synthesize needed policy changes based on key themes from seminar work sessions, known areas of disconnect from ecosystem dynamics, and findings from the literature. This final workshop will be an invited event with the central goal of developing a new menu of policy choices guided by the four theme areas, fleshing them out with current knowledge, and identifying key areas of uncertainty, further information and research needed, and preferred analysis systems. A final report will be produced after the

workshop, tying together all three stages of the proposed work, and capturing the framework developed at the summit workshop.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has expressed interest in this project and has been invited to participate as an informal partner in developing and reviewing project products.

Cost for the project will be \$69,802. The Department is negotiating with the Oregon Forest Resources Institute to provide a majority of the funding support for the study. Any remaining portion will be funded through the Department's Forest Resources Planning Program forest assessment project budget.

NEXT STEPS

By mid-summer 2008, a draft synthesis report will be completed and available for review. Planning will also be underway to conduct the four seminars during the 2008-2009 academic year.

The Board will be kept informed on study progress through periodic updates.

ATTACHMENT

- (1) Institute for Natural Resources Research Project Scope of Work