

Agenda Item No.:	7
Title and # of Issue:	Forest Vitality – Issue 3 Objective 2 – Federal Forestlands Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee - Update
Date of Presented to Board:	March 5, 2008
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SUMMARY

The Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee (FFAC) was created in 2006 to assist the Board of Forestry in completing the Governor’s charge to “create a unified vision of how federal lands should contribute” to sustainability of Oregon’s forests. The purpose of this agenda item is to provide an opportunity for the Board and the FFAC to discuss the work of the committee. Coordination between the FFAC and Board is critical to achieving the project’s goals.

CONTEXT

In October 2004, the Governor directed the Board to “create a unified vision of how federal lands should contribute” to sustainability, and to “make that vision action-oriented and comprehensive – following through to the last step, including implementation.” For this process the Governor has told the Board to “be bold, be open, and keep your eye on the big picture.”

In 2005, the Oregon Legislature, through Senate Bill 1072, gave the Board greater direction to be involved in federal forest policy, planning, and management. Working more closely on federal forest land management is also consistent with the Board’s strategic plan – the *Forestry Program for Oregon* – which promotes sustainable policy development for all of Oregon’s forests. Based on SB 1072 and the Governor’s direction, Objective 2 of the Board’s Forest Vitality Work Plan established a process for developing Oregon’s vision and guiding principles for federal forestlands.

This issue was discussed in depth with the Board at the April 2006 and July 2006 meetings. The Board directed staff to develop a process including the formation of an advisory committee – made up of a broad-based group of Oregonians – to assist the Board in crafting a “guidance document” that articulates the state’s vision for how federal forestlands should be managed. The FFAC has been formed to assist the Board and will collaborate directly with the Board to develop this document. In addition to the Department of Forestry, other state and federal natural resource agencies are providing staff support to the FFAC. The guidance document will be adopted by the Board and submitted to the Governor for his review and approval.

The guidance document is intended to 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 forest lands. It will include a vision for how federal forestlands can better contribute and support Oregonians' economic, social, and environmental values, a set of goals that will support review of federal forestland management related to the state's vision, and recommendations for policy changes on key issues related to achieving the vision.

Coordination and exchange of views between the FFAC and the Board are critical to the success of this project. The FFAC is working through a consensus-based process. The strongest recommendations in the guidance document will be those that have the full consensus of both the FFAC members and the Board. Discussions at the March 5, 2008 Board meeting will help strengthen the coordination and understanding of each group.

The Board and FFAC held a joint workshop on June 5, 2007 and finalized a draft vision and set of goals for the guidance document. At the workshop, the Board and FFAC also discussed a range of key issues that the guidance document will address. At subsequent meetings, the FFAC built on those discussions to identify a list of five key issues titled "Most Pressing Problems" in the attached document (Attachment 1). In short, those issues are:

1. Natural processes have been disrupted in Oregon forests. Problems are most extreme in the dry forest types where unprecedented landscape scale forest health problems are resulting in the loss of key ecological components.
2. Reduced timber harvest from federal forestlands has resulted in diminished forest industry infrastructure.
3. The desired amount of older forests on federal forestlands needs to be established and protected as a component of sustainable forest management.
4. Federal, state, local, and tribal governments lack an effective process to coordinate policy decisions and achieve landscape scale objectives.
5. Funding is not adequate or appropriately allocated to achieve land management objectives on federal lands.

RECOMMENDATION

At the March 5, 2008 Board meeting, members of the FFAC will discuss their current work on developing policy recommendations for addressing the first two key issues (Most Pressing Problems) with the Board. Draft versions of the policy recommendations will be made available at the Board meeting. Staff requests that the Board of Forestry use the March 5 meeting to discuss its reactions to the recommendations with some of the FFAC members and provide input that can be taken back to the full committee.

NEXT STEPS

The FFAC will continue to meet and discuss policy recommendations for the key issues in March and April and produce an initial draft guidance document for review by the Board in June. The Board and FFAC will hold a joint workshop on June 3, 2008 from 1 to 4 p.m. to discuss the draft guidance document, and develop a list of issues that need to be resolved. Staff and the FFAC will continue to refine the guidance document to meet the milestones set out below.

Project process map and milestones

2006

- November: Advisory Committee Kickoff Meeting

2007

- February: Charter finalized by Advisory Committee; brief report to the Board
- March: Draft vision developed by Advisory Committee
- May: Draft list of key issues created by the Advisory Committee
- June: Board holds work session with Advisory Committee on vision and selected issues and, if necessary, to address any obstacles to moving forward
- June to December: Exploration of approximately 10 key issues in depth, information development and gathering, presentations by technical experts, preparation of draft policy options and recommendations (one meeting, one issue per month)

2008

- January through March (one meeting per month): Continue exploration of key issues
- April: Draft policy recommendations on issues completed and submitted to the Board
- June: Board work session on policy recommendations
- July: Advisory Committee revisions to policy recommendations based on Board review
- August: Draft State Guidance Document prepared
- September: Draft State Guidance Document sent out for public review and comment
- November: Board and Advisory Committee review public comments and finalize Guidance Document

2009

- January: Board adopts State Guidance Document and sends to Governor for approval

ATTACHMENT

- (1) Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee Most Pressing Problems Summary