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Progress summary on Forest Vitality Work Plan implementation

Objective 1: Develop forest policies that ensure the sustainability of Oregon's forest resources while improving the forest sector's long-term contribution to national, state, and local economies.

Objective 1 will be an ongoing effort but significant progress was made over the past 18 months. The State of Oregon now has a high-level framework for an Oregon Forest Cluster Economic Development Strategy with three broad priorities:

- Federal forests restoration
- Forest cluster vitality
- Forest workforce

The Department of Forestry, Economic and Community Development Department, Oregon State University College of Forestry/Forest Research Laboratory, and Oregon Forest Resources Institute are closely coordinating to implement the Strategy. Below is a summary of the process to date.

November 2007 – Joint Resolution on forest cluster economic development signed by the Chairs of the Board of Forestry, Oregon Forest Resources Institute Board, Economic and Community Development Commission, and the Dean of the OSU College of Forestry – Memorandum of Agreement on a cooperative forest cluster economic development strategy project signed by the State Forester, Directors of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute and the Economic and Community Development Department, and the Dean of the College of Forestry.

January through July 2008 -- Representatives of the four agencies held meetings open to the public to collect information and solicit input for a draft Oregon Forest Cluster Economic Development Strategy.

June and July 2008 – Draft strategy refined following one-on-one with key forest cluster leaders.

September 2008 – Key industry leaders discuss the draft Strategy with Governor Kulongoski and state natural resource agency directors.

November 2008 -- Strategy further refined with three priorities:

- Federal forests restoration
- Forest cluster vitality
- Forest workforce

For each priority, details are provided on recommendations, immediate actions needed, why these actions are important, needed private sector actions, role for state government,

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agency assignments, milestones, additional resources needed, deliverables, and measures of success.

December 2008 – Draft Strategy presented to the forestry community and feedback sought through an Oregon Forest Resources Institute forum – Draft Strategy presented by industry leaders at the statewide Oregon Leadership Forum – Forest cluster grant proposal originating from the Strategy is approved by the Oregon Innovation Council and included in the Governor’s 2009-11 Recommended Budget.

January 2008 -- Representatives of the four agencies continue to coordinate on work planning for Strategy implementation and to assist the forest cluster in responding to immediate challenge and opportunities.

Objective 2: Create a unified vision of how federal forestlands should contribute to the environmental, economic, and social sustainability of all Oregon forest resources.

Objective 2 of the Work Plan has been substantially completed. In January of 2009 the Board of Forestry adopted a guidance document prepared by its Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee (FFAC) titled *Achieving Oregon’s Vision for Federal Forestlands*. Below is a summary of the process that was used to create the guidance document.

Oct 2004 – Governor’s charge – Create a unified vision of how federal lands should contribute to sustainability – make that vision action-oriented and comprehensive – following through to the last step, including implementation.

July 2005 – The Board directed staff to form the FFAC to assist the Board

- Broad based group of opinion leaders representing all different points of view
- Went to the Oregon Congressional delegation for participant suggestions
- Representation: state boards and commissions, local government, industry, conservation, labor, tribes – balanced interests, background and knowledge, geography, and selected at least one person recommended by each of the members of the Congressional Delegation
- Staff from federal forest management agencies at the table advising

Nov 2006 – Oct 2008 -- FFAC worked collaboratively through a facilitated process.

- Gathered scientific and public input on the strengths and weaknesses of federal land management approaches
- Developed draft guidance document that included
 - Vision and Goals – support review of federal plans and projects
 - Recommendations for policy changes and new initiatives related to achieving the vision
- Met regularly with Board to ensure involvement and solicit feedback
- Multiple progress reports

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- Two half-day joint workshops with the FFAC and the Board – June 2007 on Vision and Goals, June 2008 on Recommendations
- August 2008 – Draft report sent out for public review and comments
- September 2008 – Discussed Board changes to the report recommendations
- October 2008 – FFAC discussed public input and reached consensus on report recommendations
- November 2008 – Provided public comments and Board approved changes from September Board meeting and October FFAC meeting– Field tour and meeting in John Day to vet the recommendations with a local collaborative group working on the issues.
- December 2008 – Professional editing
- January 2009 – Board adoption of the FFAC report

Objective 3: Keeping working forests working.

Department of Forestry work on this objective crosses all programs and geographic areas, and continues to rise as important priority work. Since approval of the Work Plan in 2005, the Department has taken the following actions:

October 2006 -- The agency chartered an internal work team (the Residential Emphasis Forest Charter Group) made up of agency leaders from all programs and geographic areas to develop additional tools, policy and actions to address the growing trend of forestland conversion.

December of 2006 -- The Department of Forestry brought together Stewardship Foresters and supervisors from across the state to gather information about how the loss of forestland is affecting local communities, to seek solutions for responding to the challenge, and to identify the areas of greatest need.

Partially in response to what the group learned, the group worked closely with the Private Forests Program to prepare a Policy Option Package for additional on-the-ground resources for reaching out to private landowners with the tools and knowledge about sustainable forest management of smaller parcels, and to more fully staff the agency's land use coordination function. Due to funding limitations, this package was not supported in the 2007 Legislature.

September 2007 -- The Board of Forestry hosted a one-day field tour in rural Clackamas County to engage stakeholders in learning about forest fragmentation due to development, and to discuss possible solutions. The tour, and a significant outreach effort that followed, help raise awareness about the problem.

November 2007 -- The Residential Emphasis Forest Charter Group hosted a one-day work session with city and county planners from the Portland metropolitan area to raise awareness, to listen to their perspectives on the topic, and to seek collaboration on solutions.

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December 2007 -- The Charter Group produced a white paper and action plan that called for increased emphasis and awareness about the loss of forestland due to fragmentation. It identified specific actions to be taken by each Department of Forestry program to address the topic.

June 2008 -- The Department of Forestry began working with Fidelity National Timber Resources Inc. to consider state acquisition of the former Gilchrist tract of forestland in Central Oregon that is under threat of development. Negotiations relating to that parcel continued through 2008 and into 2009. In that context, the agency authored 2009 House Bill 2216, which updates the Board's existing forest acquisition authority, with an eye toward using acquisition authority to conserve working forests.

Objective 4: Promote incentives for sound sustainable forest health restoration practices, including the development of market-based solutions to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires and insect and disease outbreaks.

The Oregon Forest Biomass Work Group, under the leadership of the Department of Forestry and the Department of Energy, has played a central role in making progress on this element of the Forest Vitality Work Plan. The following is a summary of the progress to date.

June 2006 -- The Oregon Forest Resources Institute publishes the report: *Biomass Energy and Biofuels from Oregon's Forests*.

December 2006 -- The Oregon Forest Biomass Work Group produces a report and recommendations. Key recommendations are supported by Oregon Renewable Energy Working Group and the Board of Forestry. Recommendations linked to the Federal Forests Advisory Committee process.

June 2007 -- Governor's renewable energy legislative agenda largely approved by the Oregon Legislature. Implementation begins.

Fall, 2008 -- Refocusing begins for the Oregon Forest Biomass Work Group. Efforts key on community economic development opportunities in areas working to get biomass energy development underway. Significant focus placed on biomass thermal and community outreach and education. Synthesis of key research needs and supply issues is planned. Work Group is anticipating legislative issues that may surface in 2009 Session. The Department of Forestry's Northeast Oregon and Klamath-Lake Districts play a key role in facilitating local biomass energy development.

December 2008 -- First three-year report by the State Forester required 2005 Senate Bill 1072 on the environmental effects of forest biomass removal. Forest Biomass Work Group participants continue ongoing participation in multiple venues--getting the word out on woody biomass opportunities and issues. The Governor's recommended budget proposes elimination of the Biomass Specialist position created by the 2007 Legislature.

Objective 5: Promote the development of forestry carbon-offset markets as an incentive for managing forests, utilizing wood products and maintaining the forestland base.

Board Products – Completed Work

- Retooling the Forest Resource Trust’s Stand Establishment Program as an exemplary forest carbon offset program.
 - Forest Resource Trust Advisory Committee reconvened in 2005
 - Developed administrative rule amendments for simplifying the Stand Establishment Program (final rules adopted by Board in January 2007)
 - Developed Legislative Concept for expanding the scope of the Forest Resource Trust Program; establishing a cost-share program delivery mechanism; facilitating markets for ecosystem service (Passed as HB 2293-A by 2007 Legislature)
 - Developed new and amended administrative rules for implementing HB 2293 (Final rules adopted by the Board in January 2009)

Research and Information Gathering – Department Activity

- Development of a Carbon Accounting System
 - Research in the modeling and reporting of forest carbon offsets arising from forest fuel treatments implemented at the landscape scale to reduce wildfire severity and extent as part of Phase II WESTCARB work (Lake County Terrestrial Sequestration Pilot). (Results expected in June 2009).
 - Developing a carbon accounting system for measuring, monitoring, and reporting carbon offsets arising from the forestation of non-forest lands suitable for forests. (Planned).
- Tracking and Monitoring of Carbon Offset Markets
 - Presentations to landowner groups, professional societies, forester trainings and conferences on the status and development of forest carbon offset markets.
 - Staffed and provided subject matter expertise to the Oregon Forest Carbon Stakeholders Workgroup – an ad hoc diverse group of forest landowners and forestry interests convened by the Oregon Governor’s Office to develop recommendations on eligible forestry practices and protocols for carbon reporting for inclusion as an offset component of the Western Climate Initiative.
- Peer Reviewed Publications by Staff
 - 1) Ruddell, Stephen, R. Sampson, Matt Smith, R. Giffen, **James Cathcart**, John Hagan, Daniel Sosland, John Godbee, John Heissenbuttel, Stephen Lovett, John Helms, William Price and Robert Simpson. 2007. The role of sustainably managed forests in climate change mitigation. *Journal of Forestry* 105(6): 314-319.

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- 2) **Cathcart, James F.**, Jeffrey D. Kline, Matt Delaney and Mark Tilton. 2007. Carbon storage and Oregon's land-use planning program. *Journal of Forestry* 105(4):167-172.
- 3) **Cathcart, Jim** and Matt Delaney. 2006. Carbon accounting. Determining carbon offsets from forest projects. Pp. 157-174 *in* Forests, Carbon and Climate Change. A Synthesis of Science Findings. Portland, Oregon: Oregon Forest Resources Institute. 182 p.

Reports to the Board

- Phase I baseline and carbon sequestration opportunity reports prepared through the West Coast Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnership (WESTCARB) (June 2008).
- Status report on the activities of the Oregon Forest Carbon Stakeholders Workgroup.