

INDEX

November 21, 2008

<u>Item #</u>	<u>Page #</u>
1. Forest Vitality – Issue 3, Obj. 2 – Federal Forestlands – Panel Discussion	3
2. General Discussion	4
3. Public Comments	5
4. Wrap-up	6

Items listed in order heard

Attachments below are available on the web @ <http://oregon.gov/ODF/Board>

1. Field Tour Itinerary
2. Field Tour Handout, Rick Brown, Defenders of Wildlife

The Board participated in a field tour of the John Day, Oregon area (Attachment 1). During the field tour, Rick Brown, Defenders of Wildlife distributed a handout titled "Thinning, Fire and Forest Restoration" (Attachment 2). Following the field tour, the Board returned to the Malheur National Forest Office for a public meeting.

1. FOREST VITALITY – ISSUE 3, OBJ. 2 – FEDERAL FORESTLANDS

Steve Grasty, Harney County Judge and Federal Forestland Advisory Committee (FFAC) member opened with a brief background of the FFAC work to develop the common principles for the State to speak with one voice. He noted that the Title II Regional Advisory Committee for the Blue Mountains was an example of successful collaboration.

Panel Discussion

Diane Vosick, **The Nature Conservancy** stated her position at The Nature Conservancy was dedicated to work on the Federal Forests. Identifying major issues on Federal lands, she noted that current financial resources were inadequate to achieve forest health goals. Treatments should be strategically placed, and the Federal Forest Plans must be completed. Resources, such as time and funds, must be available for collaborative processes. There must be a common purpose, and the groups must include the appropriate participants with authority. The implementing agency must listen to the social values and dedicate the time necessary for collaboration. An effective collaborative process must be open, transparent, rational and inclusive. Ms. Vosick supported the FFAC recommendations for collaboration, funding and involving the Oregon Departments of Forestry, Fish and Wildlife and Environmental Quality.

Tim Lilabo, **Oregon Wild** described his past experience on the National Forests in eastern Oregon. He commented that changes have occurred due to science, which should inform the future path of the National Forests. Work should be done to reduce stocking levels on the drier east-side forests to reduce wildfires. Opportunities existed for forest restoration work which would create jobs, retain infrastructure and retain old-growth. Although collaborative processes were slow, they were a way to move forward, establish common ground and trust. Mr. Lilabo described conditions of concern on the Malheur Forest, identifying old-growth, road-less and wilderness areas, restoration, stocking levels, and watershed degradation. Supporting the FFAC recommendations, he added that fine-scale environmental analyses should also be done, and that the policy for sustainable Forests should include wilderness, wildlife, old-growth and the reintroduction of fire. He closed noting that harvest goals should come from restoration goals.

Boyd Britton, **Grant County Commissioner** stated that funding the FFAC recommendations through the State's budget would be difficult. However, lost infrastructure, including a skilled labor force and social services, could not be revived. On the National Forests, larger treatment areas were needed, and investment must be made in fuel reduction. On the Thorn Salvage Fire, \$13 million were spent on 14,000 acres in 13 days. On the Egly Salvage Fire, 600 MMBF burned, and only 30 MMBF

was salvaged. He urged the Board to help move things forward by contacting the Governor and members of the State Legislative Assembly.

John Shelk, Ochoco Lumber/Malheur Lumber stated that Ochoco Lumber has owned forestland in eastern Oregon for 85 years. In 1982, Ochoco Lumber built a mill in John Day. At that time, Forest Service management was entirely timber oriented. That ended dramatically in the 1990s, with the appeal and litigation of timber sales. For the past 15 years, with minimal management, fuels have built up on the National Forests. Collaboration, although cumbersome, was realistic, politically do-able, and required a high level of performance. Hopefully, the collaborative process could be streamlined to allow industry to consult with the Forest Service, in conjunction with conservation groups, to make projects more viable. He added that the dry east-side forests were at risk from climate change. Warmer winters were increasing insect damage and tree mortality. Hotter and drier summers resulted in higher fire risk; fuel reduction work must be accelerated. Eastern Oregon society depended upon the timber industry; a greater output from the National Forests was necessary.

2. GENERAL DISCUSSION

The panel members rejoined the Board to answer questions and provide clarity.

- Can collaboration be moved to a larger scale and will it grow?
 - Process incrementally too slow.
 - Coming out of bottleneck; process is new. As agreements re-build trust, outcomes may become larger.
 - More preference should be given to knowledgeable, experienced Federal, State and private land managers.
 - Success narrows points of contention. With sideboards in place, it can grow.
 - Current laws do not work; collaboration is the “only game in town”. Problem: one person can stop the process.

- Can the FFAC recommended scale of 100,000 acres be accomplished?
 - Not in the beginning, although a 150,000 acre project was proposed in Harney County.

- What is the measure of success for land management?
 - Monitoring must begin – measureable outcomes are needed for adjustments.
 - There must be agreement that scale should increase.
 - There is not currently a criterion for success, although it is critical.

- What can be done when primary people do not participate in the process?
 - Document agreements, schedule additional meetings, have more science reviews, and create group rules for additional [outside] input.
 - 100% consensus was not a realistic goal, build in more time for the process. Public land managers must support and defend the group’s work, rather than appeasing the minority group.

- What was the biggest need to move the collaborative processes?
 - More projects; professional assistance; funding.
 - An on-the-ground liaison or team.
 - Endangered Species Act de-listing

- How has the cooperation been with the Forest Service, and what is the role for the Forest Service?
 - The Forest Service has been engaged and cooperative, but recognition of the process must move down through the ranks.

- What can communities, which are in dire straits, with infrastructure ready to topple and unhealthy National Forest land, tap into for assistance in collaborative processes?
 - *Oregon Solutions* could provide the needed assistance, and were eager for projects.
 - Collaboration worked because of county government buying into the process; a broad level of support is necessary for an effective process.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

State Senator Ted Ferrioli provided his perspective on collaborative processes. He stated that the monumental failure of the Federal legal and management system led to the seeking of alternatives. The collaboration process had actually created a better form of failure; it was not producing the resources that communities needed for sustainability. People do not compromise closely held values. The Forest Service defends its prerogative as managers of the Federal land base. In collaborative processes, it deputizes that authority to dissenters. A process that dis-empowers those that will not compromise is critical for improvement. It was incumbent upon Forest Service land managers to allow collaboration processes to work, and to vigorously defend the product.

He noted the Thorn and Egly Complex Fire Salvage projects were not products of collaboration; they were products of threatened litigation. The projects were negotiated settlements that grew out of forced pre-litigation settlement meetings. The Dad's Creek projects were proceeding, because, at the request of the Forest Supervisor, objections were dropped. The contention was that the timber sales were not viable; the volume per acre was insufficient to be sustainable. The sales were not viable by just two 17" dbh trees per acre.

The Board and Department of Forestry ground truth the conditions on the State's forests. That information must be disseminated to the public. The forests in Oregon were burning and dying in record numbers. Oregonian's have a tremendous investment in watersheds, wildlife habitat, and recreation management. Federal forestlands have been entrusted to the management of the Federal government; the forests on Oregon soil belong to Oregonians. The cultural and scenic resources are at risk and are unsustainable.

Mortality surveys and fire incidents and severity reports indicate that catastrophic wildfire would occur on the Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur National Forests within the next 30 years. Oregonians will be robbed of their legacy – functioning watersheds and wildlife habitat. The narrow focus efforts to “save” the environment may actually be risking the values held by Oregonians, by not performing the necessary active management.

He urged the Board to define the problem, and set the clock through a risk analysis. The Board has the highest credibility of any organizations that manage State resources.

State Representative Chuck Burley, representing the American Forest Resource Council commented that collaborative processes were cumbersome and time consuming, but evolving. More often than not, they did not work; litigation usually occurred. Project scale dictated the participants and the final output. He noted that collaborative processes did not comply with the National Environmental Protection Act or the Endangered Species Act; the legal requirements must still be met. Collaboration processes were an additional set of “hoops.”

Tad Houpt, Grant County Public Forest Commission stated that time was critical to the communities that were losing infrastructure. Collaborative processes must have goals and timelines; consensus must be achieved. The end result should be good stewardship; obstructionists derail the process.

Rex Storm, Associated Oregon Loggers noted that problems in the forest sector were worsening. Congress and the State legislature were likely to be less supportive. Collaboration, alone, was not the panacea; it detracted from the greater obstacles on National forests. Focus should be on the obstacles: 21” diameter limits; road restrictions, frivolous appeals and litigation by groups; consultation hurdles; the Blue Mountain Forest Plan. There should be a re-building of the Forest Service’s operational and practical expertise to produce and create cost effective economical projects.

Wayne Giesy, Hull-Oakes Lumber Co. stated that the Board must represent the people and jobs in rural Oregon.

Dan Bishop, DR Johnson Lumber Co./Prairie Wood Products noted there were three mills in the valley; one was closed. The closed mill could restart when the Forest Service began selling trees. The harvest of larger diameter, 17-25” trees, was needed in the sales.

4. WRAP-UP

Steve Grasty, Harney County Judge and Federal Forestland Advisory Committee (FFAC) member recommended the Board approve and move the recommendations of the FFAC forward. The Forest Service must provide a predictable supply of timber for the health of the forests and affected communities.

There being no further business before the Board, Cal Mukumoto adjourned the public business meeting at 3:10 p.m.

At 3:20 p.m., the Board entered Executive Session, pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(i) for the purpose of discussing the State Forester's performance review. The Executive Session concluded at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marvin Brown, State Forester and
Secretary to the Board

GB

Approved by the Board at its January 7, 2009 meeting.