

Summary of Board of Forestry Self-Evaluation Discussion June 6, 2007

The following comments are excerpted from the Board's discussion of the 16 Best Practices Criteria and the associated four summary questions.

DISCUSSION OF CRITERIA (Only those criteria on which Board members made comments are listed below).

Criterion 1: State Forester's performance expectations are current.

Chair Hobbs noted that although the Board has reviewed the State Forester's position description, the review process will be improved in the future as the Board begins to use the Best Practices Criteria.

Criterion 2: The State Forester's performance has been evaluated in the last year.

The Board agreed that the criterion had not technically been met; the process was not completed in a timely fashion.

Criterion 6: The Board is appropriately involved in policy-making activities.

Bill Hutchison and Larry Giustina noted that although this criterion has been met, improvements can be made in this area.

Criterion 10: The Board is appropriately accounting for resources.

Mr. Giustina pointed out that Board members can ask for any information that they feel they need in order to meet this criterion. State Forester Marvin Brown noted that more strategic discussion about the Department's budget could occur, and mentioned the importance of clarity regarding priorities and resource limitations.

Criterion 13: The Board coordinates with others where responsibilities and interests overlap.

Board members agreed that the criterion was being met, but expressed a need for improvement.

Criterion 16: The Board values transparency, public input and communication with stakeholders, standing advisory committees, ad hoc committees and other groups.

Barbara Craig observed that the providing and receiving of input seemed process-heavy, but that this was improving. Chair Hobbs offered an idea that a Board member could attend advisory committee meetings.

DISCUSSION OF SUMMARY QUESTIONS

1. How are we doing?

Jennifer Phillippi said the answer depends on the issue. Solid progress has been made on Private Forests-related rulemaking, for example, in contrast to discussions regarding State Forests management. However, she said, the Board now seemed to be moving forward in a positive way on State Forests issues. She also observed that at times she has been unsure of the Board's decision space.

Bill Hutchison said the Board had come a long way since beginning to use the current decision system in December of 2004, and was making good use of time and setting realistic priorities.

2. How do we compare to others and/or to our target?

Mr. Hutchison described Department staff as committed to helping the Board be effective, and noted improvements in staff reports and agendas. He also cited commitment of constituents to making the process work.

3. What factors are affecting our results?

Board members identified litigation and budget limitations as two such factors. Larry Giustina mentioned that gathering good information is important in monitoring long-term decisions, such as those on forest practices rules, but noted that this requires adequate resources.

4. What needs to be done to improve future performance?

Barbara Craig said the Board should request assistance or direction from the Governor when needed.

Several Board members cited high-quality staff work and ready access to staff at all levels, and said the Board should ensure that it makes the best use of staff expertise.