

**Oregon Board of Forestry  
Staff Report**

**Agenda Item No.: 6**

**Title of Issue: Wildfire Risk Management**

**a. Smoke Management Work Plan**

**Date of Presentation: September 7, 2005**

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**Summary**

- The purpose of this agenda item is to present the final report of the Smoke Management Review Committee and the revised Smoke Management Work Plan in support of the Board's Priority Issue # 7, Wildfire Risk Management, and to seek Board approval of the work plan (Attachment 1).
- Through the presentation and review of these documents, the Board of Forestry will be asked to provide direction to staff to proceed with implementation of the work plan, including convening the statutory Smoke Management Advisory Committee and other work groups. These groups, together with staff, will prepare legislative concepts, proposed administrative rules and other guidance documents that will comprise the revised Smoke Management Plan (SMP).

**Context**

- Wildfire Risk Management was approved by the Board of Forestry as Priority Issue #7, comprised of three projects; Smoke Management, National Fire Plan Implementation, and Treatment of Vacant Lots Under SB 360.
- The Smoke Management Plan is required by statute for the purpose of maintaining air quality while carrying out land management objectives involving the burning of forest residues. The SMP requires periodic review and revision of the plan.
- The Smoke Management Review Committee, convened by the State Forester, has recently completed an exhaustive review of the Smoke Management Plan and provided several recommendations for statute, rule, and program changes to continue the improvement and function of the Oregon Smoke Management Plan.

**Background**

The Oregon Smoke Management Plan was developed as a voluntary program in 1969 and adopted as a regulatory program by the State Forester and the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) in 1972. The plan's overall purpose is to keep the smoke from forestland prescribed burning from being carried to specific designated areas and other areas sensitive to smoke. The State Forester administers the plan, in cooperation with landowners, land management agencies, and air quality agencies. The plan currently applies to state, federal, and private forestland in Oregon.

The Smoke Management Review Committee, a broad-based group, was established in 2002 to provide recommendations to the State Forester about the adequacy and currency of the plan. While the plan has been very effective to date, and is regarded as a model for other states to emulate, anticipated changes in federal law and the growing population of Oregon (particularly in wildland-urban interface areas) suggests that changes will be necessary to keep pace with expectations.

### **Analysis**

The review committee has done a very thorough job of investigating the issues involved and have completed a comprehensive report (see Attachment 2, to be distributed to the Board separately) with almost 40 specific recommendations for modifications to the Smoke Management Plan or associated procedures. On initial analysis, program staff support most of the recommendations and are working on preparing a more detailed internal implementation plan to guide the process for ultimately revising the SMP. A few of the recommendations will require further close examination due to their politically sensitive nature, or because of perceived circumstances that may not bear out.

Implementation mechanisms can be broadly categorized as elements requiring legislative action, rule revision, policy or guidance modification and ongoing work. The Smoke Management Work Plan broadly describes these elements in terms of actions and products and sets a timeframe for completing each.

Ultimately, those elements that go forward into statute, rule or directive will come together to form the revised Smoke Management Plan, which will be submitted to the State Forester, the Board and the EQC for approval. Department of Environmental Quality staff will then submit a revised State Implementation Plan to the Environmental Protection Agency for review in compliance with the federal Clean Air Act.

### **Recommendation**

- Staff recommends that the Board approve the attached Smoke Management Work Plan and direct the staff to get on with the process of implementing it.

### **Next Steps**

Staff will:

- Complete its evaluation of the Smoke Management Review Committee's Report, and designate the appropriate methods to achieve implementation, whether legislative concepts, rules, directives, ongoing staff or field work, or develop an explanation why certain recommendations, if any, cannot be practically implemented.
- Convene various committees and work groups or make staff assignments to begin the development of the various implementation mechanisms.
- Seek stakeholder input as to viability of implementation proposals.

- Return to the Board at its March 2006 meeting with legislative concepts and funding proposals for consideration to be forwarded into the legislative process.
- Work with DEQ staff to ensure acceptance of the key elements of Smoke Management Plan revisions.
- Return to the Board in June 2006 to review proposals and initiate rulemaking process for Smoke Management Plan revisions.

**Guide to Attached Documents**

- Attachment 1: Wildfire Risk Management; Smoke Management Work Plan
- Attachment 2: Smoke Management Review Committee Report (will be sent to Board of Forestry (more than 100 pages) prior to their September 7, 2005 meeting)