

Forestland Classification Steering Committee

Introduction

What

The Forestland Classification Steering Committee has been directed to review the forestland classification system used to categorize Oregon's forest and rangelands for the purpose of wildfire protection, and then recommend needed revisions and improvements. The Oregon Department of Forestry and its partner agencies have other systems of classifying forestlands, such as by tree-stand type. But the system currently under review by the Forestland Classification Steering Committee pertains solely to the coordination of fire protection for forest and rangeland, and adjacent rural communities.

Formed by the State Forester in late 2006, the 29-member committee is made up of a broad cross-section of individuals and representatives of organizations that share an interest in protecting the forest resource and the expanding wildland-urban interface. ("Wildland-urban interface" refers to the area where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped land.)

Why

Oregon's landscape has undergone dramatic changes in the more than 40 years since the forestland classification system was established. Increasingly, blazes in wildlands with no fire protection are spreading onto protected forestlands. At the same time, homes in the wildland-urban interface have complicated firefighting and increased wildfire risk in some forested areas. In addition, there are inconsistencies around the state in how the current classification system has been applied. It is the steering committee's job to identify aspects of the system that require updating to accommodate the changed situation on the ground and work to assure consistent application.

How

The committee will seek ideas and suggestions from interested and involved agencies, landowners and the public as it deliberates. The Oregon Department of Forestry will provide historical and technical information, and the Board of Forestry will consult on policy steps needed to implement system improvements recommended by the committee.

When

The steering committee has been tasked with completing a set of recommendations by Jan. 1, 2008. The deadline will enable the Oregon Board of Forestry to consider proposed legislative concepts needed to implement the recommendations in time for the 2009 Oregon legislative session.

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