

Section II

The Guiding Principles

1. The plan will be a comprehensive, integrated forest management plan taking into account a wide range of forest values.

When we say that the plan will be comprehensive, we mean that it will include consideration of the following commodity and amenity resources and issues.

- Air quality
- Botany (threatened and endangered plants)
- Cultural and historic resources
- Fish and wildlife
- Fire management
- Forest health considerations
- Gas, oil, mineral, and geothermal resources
- Grazing resources
- Legal issues
- Recreation and scenic resources
- Social and economic issues
- Timber resource
- Water quality and supply
- Wetland resource

For each of these resources and issues, the plan includes:

- ↳ Resource description: the resource's current condition; and laws, policies, and programs that affect the resource. (Section III)
- ↳ The management goals for development and/or protection of each resource. (Section IV)
- ↳ The strategies that will be used to accomplish the management goals. (Section V)

An integrated plan provides for development and protection of forest resources across the landscape. Single use focus is avoided. Compatible uses are emphasized.

- 2. The plan will be developed within the context of State Forest Lands in the Klamath-Lake District as managed forest lands. The remaining 53 smaller parcels of Common School Lands, which are distributed across 12 Eastern Oregon counties (“scattered tracts”), will be managed to maintain their “asset value.”**

Klamath-Lake District State Forest Lands

Board of Forestry Policy states, “The Department will intensively manage State Forest Lands (Board of Forestry and Common School Lands) in an exemplary fashion for the sustained production of timber in a cost effective and environmentally sound manner.” The Department will also “... emphasize the long-term compatibility of growing and harvesting timber with other forest uses.”

The mandate above gives us a primary use (timber production), while emphasizing compatibility with other uses. It is different from the multiple use mandate that applies to the federal lands managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Multiple use tends to equalize all uses.

Scattered Tracts

These tracts are difficult to manage efficiently. The Department of Forestry and the Division of State Lands have made it their policy to pursue an aggressive exchange program to dispose of most of these lands, in order to block up land in districts that have active management programs for state forest lands. The Department of Forestry believes this strategy will best meet Constitutional obligations. In the meantime, it has been decided that these lands will not be actively managed. These lands will be monitored, but management action will be taken only if something threatens to diminish asset values significantly. Example of potential threats are forest health problems, fire, and unauthorized public use. Lands determined to be unsuitable for forest management may be returned to the Division of State Lands for their management.

- 3. The plan will recognize that the forest is intended to be an important contributor to timber supply for present and future generations.**

State Forest lands are managed under a “sustained yield” constraint. In other words, harvest level will be set to prevent significant long-term declines in future harvests.

The Eastern Region State Forest Lands will remain an important contributor to the local timber supply for the next century, even though they make up a small percentage of the region’s forest land base. The relative importance of these lands has increased because of the declining harvest levels on federal forest lands.

4. The primary standard of management of all resources on the Eastern Region State Forests is maximization of income for the Common School Fund and production of income for local governments over the long-term, consistent with cost-effective and ecologically sound forest resource management.

The Forestry Program for Oregon describes the Board of Forestry's guidance to the State Forester for managing Common School Forest Lands and Board of Forestry Lands:

“The Department of Forestry will intensively manage State forest lands in an exemplary fashion for the sustained production of timber in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner. Such intensive management is designed to generate revenue for the beneficiaries of the land, including county government, local taxing districts and the Common School Fund. In carrying out this program, the Department will employ the Board of Forestry Policy for Practicing Silviculture on State Lands, and will emphasize the long-term compatibility of growing and harvesting timber with other forest uses.”

The Oregon Constitution (Article VIII, Section 5) authorizes the State Land Board to manage Common School Forest Lands “with the object of obtaining the greatest benefit for the people of this state, consistent with the conservation of this resource under sound techniques of land management.” According to a 1992 opinion of Oregon's Attorney General, the “greatest benefit for the people” standard requires the State Land Board to use the lands for schools and the production of income for the Common School Fund. The resources of the lands are not limited to those such as timber that are currently recognized as revenue generators for the Common School Fund. The Land Board should consider other resources, such as minerals, water, and plant materials, that may offer revenue for the fund. In addition, the Land Board may take management actions that reduce present income if these actions are intended to maximize income over the long term.

Board of Forestry Lands are managed to produce income for counties and local taxing districts. The Oregon Revised Statutes direct that the lands shall be managed “so as to secure the greatest permanent value of such lands to the state” and that income produced from the lands shall be shared with the counties. To this end, the statutes authorize the State Forester to produce timber and other commodities as well as to conserve, protect, and use a variety of natural resources.

5. Lands will be identified and managed to optimize long-term revenue, biological capability, and social values. The plan will recognize that there will be trade-offs between revenue-producing activities and other activities that do not produce revenue.

The concept of sustained yield over the long-term is a vital part of the management policy for Eastern Region State Forests. Short-term gain will not be sought at the expense of the long-term capability of the forest.

As part of the planning process, all lands will be inventoried and data collected on a number of resources. The planning process will also evaluate the economic and social impacts of management decisions and the overall role of the Eastern Region State Forests in local economies. As dictated by the constitutional and statutory obligations of the forest, the forest will be managed to produce long-term revenue. This management will be consistent with sustainable ecosystem and social values, which include impacts to local communities and amenity values on the forest.

6. The plan will examine opportunities to cooperate with other agencies, user groups, or organizations.

Management objectives can often be achieved more effectively and efficiently through collaboration with others. One example is the cooperation already going on between the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Forestry. The two agencies work together to reduce poaching and harassment of elk during critical calving and winter staging periods through a large seasonal area road closure, and to incorporate fish and wildlife considerations in timber sale plans.

Additional opportunities will be explored in the forest planning process to cooperate with adjacent landowners, user groups (both commodity and amenity oriented groups), and other individuals and groups who are interested in the management of the Eastern Region State Forests.

7. Diverse input from a variety of interested parties, including user groups, business interests, adjacent landowners, and the general public will be a high priority throughout the planning process.

Public involvement in the Eastern Region State Forests planning process is based on the fundamental truth that inclusion and consideration of diverse viewpoints is critical to public understanding, support, and acceptance of this plan.

The public involvement effort:

- Seeks appropriate insight, opinion, and data on planned management actions.
- Gains understanding, acceptance, and support for the management planning process and the management plan.
- Capitalizes on important opportunities to educate the public about forest systems and forest stewardship.

8. The plan will be goal-driven.

A goal-driven plan begins by defining overall management goals for the forest. Examples of overall goals for the forest are found in these guiding principles. Once overall goals have been established, then specific goals can be developed for each resource. These specific goals spell out exactly what the vision is for the development or protection of the resource. In a goal-driven plan, issues are considered within the context of the goals that have been developed. Strategies that do not meet the goals are not considered.

In contrast, an issue-driven plan begins by identifying concerns about existing management practices and works to analyze and address those concerns. This is usually done by developing a series of alternatives that deal with the issues in a piecemeal fashion.

9. The plan will manage the forest as a sustainable ecosystem, and maintain the forest's ecological processes and biodiversity in order to provide long-term sustainability.

The goal of ecosystem management is to maintain the complex processes, pathways, and interdependencies of forest ecosystems, keeping them intact and functioning well over long periods of time. The essence of maintaining ecosystem integrity is to retain the health and resilience of systems so they can accommodate short-term stresses and adapt to long-term change. The key elements include: maintenance of biological diversity and soil fertility; conservation of genetic variation and its dispersal; and conservation of the system's capacity for future biological diversity through evolution (Riggs 1990). Maintenance of these ecological processes and properties sets the boundaries within which specific ecosystem management objectives can be pursued, including the sustained yield of products.

Over much of Eastern Oregon, fire suppression and past harvesting practices have resulted in slow but significant change to the forest. The end result of these changes has been a forest characterized in many places by severely overcrowded trees, and a change in tree species composition from the more drought, insect, and disease-resistant ponderosa pine to true fir. This plan will address the sustainability of the current ecosystem and determine the sustainable ecosystem to be managed for in the future.

10. The forest will be managed to meet state and federal Endangered Species Acts while fulfilling the State Land Board’s responsibilities under the Oregon Constitution and the Board of Forestry’s statutory responsibilities. Management plans for threatened or endangered species will seek to complement or supplement habitat provided by other landowners.

The forest management plan must comply with all federal and state laws. Plans for complying with the state Endangered Species Act will recognize the State Land Board’s constitutional responsibility to maximize long-term revenues from Common School Forest Lands.

The intent of the plan is to adopt management strategies that contribute to providing for the survival and recovery of currently listed T&E species, and assist in preventing future listings of other species. The fact is recognized, however, that the Eastern Region State Forests are one part of a larger landscape, and cannot by themselves provide sufficient habitat to guarantee the survival or recovery of a species. Habitat conditions on the Eastern Region State Forests should mesh with those of other public and private landowners in order to meet species population goals.

11. Adaptive management will be used to incorporate new information as it becomes available.

This plan will gather, for the first time, as much of the available natural resources data for the forest as possible. However, new information will continue to become available after the plan’s completion, and will be incorporated into the plan through adaptive management.

Adaptive management is the process of monitoring and analyzing management actions in order to understand their effects, and adjusting plans accordingly. It acknowledges that we do not fully understand ecosystem processes, especially across landscapes, through time, and in response to natural or human-induced changes. Greater understanding occurs over time through research and monitoring programs. Adaptive management is a necessary approach if ecosystem management is to succeed.