

# Appendix G

## State Lands Research Policy



The Board of Forestry’s Forestry Program for Oregon (FPFO) includes an objective related to research and monitoring: “Use research and monitoring of the forest condition to understand the effectiveness of forest regulations and management strategies, incorporate the knowledge gained into policies and programs.” As the FPFO notes, “Sound forest management is based upon decisions that take into account the best available information about all components of the forest — trees, fish, and wildlife, soil, air, water, and recreation. This requires a commitment to an ongoing research program that is targeted to meet overall objectives.”

The Board of Forestry Policy for Practicing Silviculture on State Forests notes that: “this policy commits ODF to an ongoing program of monitoring and research. Adaptive management will be used to incorporate new information as it becomes available.”

Research, in the context of this policy, includes formalized research, monitoring, and technology transfer. The Oregon Department of Forestry works closely with the Oregon Forest Research Laboratory and other research entities in obtaining the best available information in support of sound forest management.

### **Background and Situation**

The Department of Forestry manages about 800,000 acres of forest land through the State Forest Management Program. Historically, the department has been actively involved in supporting research and participating with research institutions to design, develop, and implement research projects. The Department of Forestry recognizes the Oregon Forest Research Laboratory as the state entity with specific responsibility for the conduct of forestry research in Oregon. Federal Agencies (USDI, USDA) and other state agencies

also have forestry related research programs which are relevant to the mission of the department.

Public funding for forestry research at state and federal institutions has declined markedly over the last decade. In 1995, Oregon rated thirteenth among the states in funding for forestry research. Forest land management organizations in Oregon are finding it increasingly difficult to acquire the necessary level of scientific knowledge through publicly funded research programs. Concurrently, threatened and endangered species considerations, and emphasis on providing for a range of resource values in managed forests, has accelerated the need for valid scientific information in support of sound forest management.

The level of the State Forest Management Program involvement and investment has not kept pace with the number and complexity of issues and opportunities that currently exist. In addition, a proactive approach is needed to ensure that priority scientific information needs are met in a systematic and logical manner.

Long-range management plans for state forest lands and the Policy for Practicing Silviculture emphasize the need for adaptive management approaches. Adaptive management requires a significant commitment to obtaining critical information over time and feeding the information back into the decision-making process. Current levels of research, monitoring, and technology transfer are inadequate to meet the standards established in long range management plans and by policy.

## **Research Policy Goal**

The state forests research policy goal is to acquire knowledge in a timely and cost-effective manner concerning questions of significant importance to achieving the program's mission, and ensure that knowledge is effectively and efficiently transferred and applied.

## **Funding**

Financial resources will be committed to reaching the research goal. Approximately 5 percent of the state forest management program budget will be invested in this effort. Periodic evaluations will be undertaken to determine how the funding level contributes to achieving the goal. As necessary, funding will be increased in order to more effectively achieve the goal.

## Guiding Principles

The policy is framed by the following guiding principles:

1. Research supported by the State Forest Management Program will contribute to achieving the program's mission.
2. The program will actively participate with research organizations to direct, design, and conduct research that meets the program mission.
3. The program will sponsor research rather than conduct research. For example, the program will not build a research organization such as the Forest Research Laboratory at Oregon State University.
4. Research will provide knowledge to support all aspects of the program.
  - It will include all relevant disciplines, e.g., insect and disease, forest genetics, silviculture, fish and wildlife, etc.
  - It will include a component of operational research to support timely decision-making by operational managers, e.g., University of Washington Stand Management Cooperative.
  - It will include a component of strategic research to enable the program to be proactive in dealing with potential future issues and to create new opportunities, e.g., northern spotted owl retrospective study.
  - It will include short-term research that addresses immediate needs, as well as long-term research that requires more time to yield useful results.
5. Research priorities will be assessed using criteria developed by program employees.
6. The program will identify important information needs, prioritize support for research projects, and take a proactive approach to acquiring needed information.
7. Research cooperatives will be used where feasible to increase cost-effectiveness.
8. The program is committed to technology transfer and implementation of research and monitoring results.

## **State Forests Research Policy Implementation**

To effectively implement this policy, the following process will be undertaken:

### **1. Information needs assessment**

Conduct a periodic assessment of critical information needs that can be potentially addressed by research. This assessment will be used as the basis to determine important issues and opportunities that affect state forest lands that are potentially worthy of research support.

### **2. Evaluation**

Using criteria, rank the relative merit of information needs that are identified in the needs assessment. Determine what methodology will be most effective and efficient to address priority information needs, e.g., literature review, transfer, and application of existing knowledge, monitoring, or formalized experimentation. The task of determining appropriate methodologies may be conducted by department personnel and/or a research institution that is responsible for addressing the specific information need.

### **3. Determine type and level of support**

Organizational support for research may take several forms including direct funding, in-kind work or cooperative participation. For long-term projects the program will consider factors such as fluctuating revenues and budget levels when determining research priorities. Long-term research will be designed to provide measurable interim products, when feasible, to insure that some benefits are provided even in the event of early termination due to funding constraints.

### **4. Determine appropriate organizational structure and staffing**

State Forest Management Program personnel will work directly with research institutions to design appropriate studies. Personnel will work directly with principal investigators to ensure that research objectives reflect identified critical information needs. In addition, program employees will work with research personnel to insure that new information is transferred to appropriate levels, in an understandable manner. Using the adaptive management concept, ongoing monitoring will be needed to ensure that research results are valid when translated into practice.

Overall responsibility for implementing this policy will be the responsibility of the State Forest Management Program Director, with decisions and project management delegated to appropriate levels in the organization. Organizational structure and staffing levels may need to be adjusted to effectively implement this policy. The Forest Research Laboratory at Oregon State University and other stakeholders will be involved in the implementation of this policy.

This policy was approved by the State Forester on September 14, 1995.