

STAFF RESPONSE

Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests Preliminary Evaluation of Indicator of Sustainable Forest Management



Indicator A.a.: *Ability to measure and report on all other Oregon sustainable forest management indicators*

Current desired trend/target: Data for all Oregon indicators are increasingly current, complete, and reliable.

The following is a response by Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) technical and policy staff to the May 31, 2011 Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests preliminary evaluation of Indicator of Sustainable Forest Management Indicator A.a.: *Ability to measure and report on all other Oregon sustainable forest management indicators*. This evaluation can be accessed at:

http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/indicators/docs/Draft_Aa_Evaluation.pdf

The current data report for this indicator can be accessed at:

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/indicators/indicatorAa.shtml>

This online report will reflect the revisions indicated in this response as soon as possible.

Key Roundtable findings

1. The online report needs to more clearly spell out up front what the basis is for condition and trend rating determinations. This information was provided in the presentation and it would be helpful to also appear in the report.

Staff Response: The report will be revised to include the following agreed-to criteria for assigning ratings for this indicator:

“Condition” will be considered “good” when the information quality ratings for all the other indicators are “adequate;” “poor” when there are no reports and/or “inadequate” information quality ratings for at least half of the other indicators; and considered “mixed or fair” in all other situations.

“Trend” will be considered “improving” when, compared to previous reporting for indicator A.a., the number of indicators with current data reports is increasing and/or the number of indicators with improving information quality ratings is increasing. The “trend” will be considered “deteriorating” when, compared to previous reporting for indicator A.a., the number of indicators without current data reports is increasing and/or the number of indicators with inadequate information quality ratings is increasing. The “trend” will be considered “uncertain” in all other circumstances.

STAFF RESPONSE

Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests

Preliminary Evaluation of Indicator of Sustainable Forest Management A.a.:

Ability to measure and report on all other Oregon sustainable forest management indicators.

June 24, 2011 Draft

“Information quality” will be considered “adequate” when there are complete, updated, and reliable data for all the other indicators; “inadequate” when there are incomplete, outdated, and/or unreliable data descriptions for at least half of the indicators; and “partial” under all other circumstances.

2. The current protocol is subjective at this point.

Staff Response: The ratings criteria cited above should reduce the perception of an overly subjective protocol.

3. Consider assigning a point scale to the four information quality sub-categories.

Staff Response: Staff does not recommend drilling down to that level of detail at this time. If this indicator remains on the list after a comprehensive Oregon indicators review and revision process is completed, it would be appropriate to consider a numeric rating system for evaluating the information quality elements of the other indicators.

4. Change condition to “poor” with the ratings basis for “poor” ratings changed to when less than half of the indicators have adequate information quality.

Staff Response: This ratings change is reflected on the indicator report web page and in the 2011 *Forestry Program for Oregon*. Also see the staff response to Finding #1 above.

5. More formal interagency coordination for indicator data collection and reporting is needed.

Staff Response: Staff wholeheartedly supports increased interagency cooperation to inform Oregon Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management agreed to by Oregonians. There is some agreement among Oregonians on a short list of information desired to determine if Oregon’s forests are being managed sustainably. Implementing and reporting on these indicators should be assigned a high priority for agency resources allocated for forest resource monitoring, inventories, research, and assessments.

Changes/additions in the online report:

Staff responses to other Roundtable comments

- Consider a more developed technical (mathematical) integration of information for the other 18 indicators.

Staff Response: Initial discussion on a more technically rigorous integration of information from the other 18 indicators took place at the May 10, 2011 Roundtable meeting. Staff does not recommend further work on such tools at this time. If this indicator remains on the list after a comprehensive Oregon indicators review and revision process is completed, it would be appropriate to consider mathematical or other types of integration/synthesis tools at that time.

STAFF RESPONSE

Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests

Preliminary Evaluation of Indicator of Sustainable Forest Management A.a.:

Ability to measure and report on all other Oregon sustainable forest management indicators.

June 24, 2011 Draft

- Each of the other 18 indicators has different embedded temporal and spatial relationships. Should they be more uniform than they are currently?

Staff Response: Each indicator tells a unique story that may be best told at a unique spatial and/or temporal scale. Forcing all the indicators into a common spatial and temporal framework may be desirable over time, but should not artificially constrain currently available indicator data being reported at currently available and relevant scales.

- Need to change reported data frequency for Indicator D.b. The staff response for that indicator provides little hope for continued monitoring. The Indicator D.b. data frequency rating in Indicator A.a. should be less than optimal.
- Make sure the online report symbols are current.

Staff Response: These changes have been made to the Indicator A.a. report.

- Indicator should also address data relevance as it is not covered by other four information sub-categories but it came up in the evaluations for some of the other 18 indicators.
- Can low ratings help focus better cooperation and coordination on data collection in those areas? Illuminating those gaps is one purpose of the indicator framework. If a high priority is placed on informing the indicators, there may be an opportunity to restore budgets for this kind of work.

Staff Response: Staff supports assigning a high priority on filling identified indicator data gaps through interagency cooperation on monitoring, inventories, research, and assessments.

- Data is drawn from sources not designed specifically for the indicators.

Staff Response: Where data collection protocols can serve multiple purposes, the Oregon indicators should continue to use every opportunity to tap into existing data collection efforts and to avoid duplicative, parallel processes. Where data sources are inadequate to fully inform the indicators, then agencies should coordinate to address those shortcomings in the most efficient way possible.

- Better tie indicators to required statewide forest assessments like the northeast states have done.

Staff Response: To put it differently, it would be appropriate to more closely link future statewide forest assessments to Oregon's indicator framework. Time constraints prohibited Oregon in following the Northeast states' lead in doing so with the 2010 assessments. However, another opportunity presents itself with the planned 2015 assessments. Progress towards agreement on a core set of indicators of sustainable forest management among western states would help to achieve this outcome.

- Learn from what other states have done or work at larger and smaller scales, especially where they have succeeded in reporting high quality indicator data. If indicators were compared both within Oregon and across other regions we could compare and learn about how different approaches yield different results.
- Look towards building common western states indicators.

STAFF RESPONSE

Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests

Preliminary Evaluation of Indicator of Sustainable Forest Management A.a.:

Ability to measure and report on all other Oregon sustainable forest management indicators.

June 24, 2011 Draft

Staff Response: Staff will continue to monitor indicator reporting by the 20 states within the Northeastern Area of the USFS State and Private Forestry Program. Continued information sharing among western states is encouraged, perhaps leading to agreement on a core set of western states indicators of sustainable forest management. Such agreement could also result in a more focused application of federal agency energy towards informing indicators of western states' forest resource conditions and trends.

- Consider addressing the importance of forests to people in a future indicator.

Staff Response: This new indicator concept could be considered during the comprehensive Oregon indicators review and revision process is planned following the approval of the 2011 *Forestry Program for Oregon*.

STAFF RESPONSE

Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests

Preliminary Evaluation of Indicator of Sustainable Forest Management A.a.:

Ability to measure and report on all other Oregon sustainable forest management indicators.

June 24, 2011 Draft