

Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests

Preliminary Evaluation of Indicator of Sustainable Forest Management



Indicator C.b.: *Timber harvest trends compared to planned and projected harvest levels and the potential to grow timber*

Current desired trend/target: Oregon timber harvest levels are 90 to 110 percent of planned and projected levels (Oregon Progress Board target for Oregon Benchmark 83) and the potential to grow timber is stable or increasing.

The current data report for this indicator can be accessed at:
<http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/indicators/indicatorCb.shtml>

Evaluation Summary: ¹

Key Roundtable findings

- A statewide reporting scale is appropriate but regional breakdowns of the data are also desirable. Consider eastside/northwest/southwest.
- The condition rating should be changed to “Poor.” The trend rating should be changed to “Deteriorating.” Use Gary Lettman’s alternative rating rationale that was presented at the meeting.
- Separately and distinctly address the planned/projected levels of harvest and the amount of total wood growth potential that is being harvested. Consider a separate indicator addressing how much of wood growth potential is being harvested or at least add a separate set of ratings for this aspect.
- Avoid jargon and unclear terms.
- Display harvest levels by landowner categories and substate scales—county level, if possible.
- Cross reference land ownership proportions with harvest proportions.

¹ *This is a summary of the Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests discussion and conclusions regarding the staff report on an Oregon Indicator of Sustainable Forests Management. The summary is organized around nine questions identified by the Roundtable as being central to evaluations of all 19 indicators. It reflects the input from Roundtable participants who attended the November 22, 2010 meeting where the indicator was discussed and from an electronic survey of those participants following the meeting. The summary is based on interpretation of the Roundtable discussions by the seven-person Roundtable Leadership Group, with the assistance of Oregon Department of Forestry staff.*

Conclusions may not have been reached by the Roundtable for every evaluation question. The summary should not be considered as expressing a consensus of the meeting participants or the Roundtable in general. However, this information will be immediately useful to the technical staff working to implement and improve future indicator data collection and reporting and to the Board of Forestry and other Oregonians desiring to use the indicator as one tool in assessing Oregon’s progress towards sustainable forest management.

It is anticipated that the Roundtable will proceed with discussions on all the indicators and will then discuss the body of indicators as a whole – looking for common themes and synthesizing conclusions about the indicators project. Therefore, Roundtable conclusions for this indicator may be revisited and revised at a later date.

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Additional Roundtable comments organized by indicator evaluation questions

1. Is the purpose and intent for the indicator clear?

- The purpose and intent are adequately clear.
- This information generated for this indicator is an important part of the sustainable forestry story. It supports Goal C and Objectives C.2. and C.7.
- It is important to understand that there may be environmental, economic, and social consequences of both overharvesting and underharvesting compared to planned/projected harvest levels. This indicator is also pertinent to overharvesting or underharvesting relative to biological wood growth potential.
- It is unclear how the indicators addresses external market forces that dictate harvest trends regardless of what management plans or harvest projections call for.
- Recognition is needed that the management plans themselves may not be environmentally, economically, and/or socially sustainable.

2. Is the protocol for indicator data collection clear and technically sound?

- Yes.

3. Are indicator data being reported at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales?

- A statewide reporting scale is appropriate but regional breakdowns of the data are also desirable. Consider eastside/northwest/southwest. Report at county level, if possible.

4. Has the Department appropriately assessed the quality of the indicator information?

Original indicator report conclusion
Information = Adequate



Conclusion following Roundtable evaluation
Information = Adequate



- Yes.

5. Has the Department appropriately assessed the conditions measured by the indicator?

Original indicator report conclusion
Condition = Mixed



Conclusion following Roundtable evaluation
Condition = Poor



- No. The participants agree that the condition rating should be changed to “Poor.” Use Gary Lettman’s alternative rating rationale that was presented at the meeting.

6. Has the Department appropriately assessed the current trend measured by the indicator, when compared to the Desired Trend Statement?

Original indicator report conclusion

Trend = Uncertain



Conclusion following Roundtable evaluation

Trend = Deteriorating



- No. The participants agree that the trend rating should be changed to “Deteriorating.” Use Gary Lettman’s alternative rating rationale that was presented at the meeting.

7. Can a case be made that other technical information should be considered as a supplement or an alternative to the information already provided for the indicator?

- Separately and distinctly address the planned/projected levels of harvest and the amount of total wood growth potential that is being harvested. Consider a separate indicator addressing how much of wood growth potential is being harvested or at least add a separate set of ratings for this aspect. It is important to clearly describe how much wood volume the forest produces and how much is actually harvested. Should mortality also be described?
- Avoid jargon and unclear terms. This information must be communicated in a manner that the average Oregonian can understand. For example, “biological potential” can mean different things to different people. Be clear that “wood growth potential” or the “biological potential/capability of forests to produce wood” is what is being referenced.

8. Do you believe there is an adequate level of institutional commitment and resources allocated for continued full implementation and reporting of this indicator into the future?

- Yes there is an adequate level of institutional commitment and resources allocated for continued full implementation and reporting of this indicator with current ODF funding.

9. What improvements would you like to see in future reporting for the indicator?

- Display harvest levels by landowner categories (public/private) statewide and breakout the various public ownerships and their respective contributions to timber harvest. Stacked bar graphs showing the harvest by ownership for at least three periods of time would be helpful. Furthermore, display public and private harvest levels by region. Finally, cross reference land ownership proportions with harvest proportions.
- Clearly describe the implications of the information.

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Oregon indicators of sustainable forest management ratings explanations

Indicator Condition:



Good

Desired trend or target is being achieved



Mixed or Fair

Conflicting factors are affecting the status in both positive and negative ways



Poor

Desired trend or target is not being achieved

Indicator Trend:



Improving

Current status is an improvement compared to previous data



Mixed, Uncertain, or No Change

There are either conflicting (mixed) trends, trend direction is uncertain, or there is no significant change compared to previous data



Deteriorating

Current status is a deterioration compared to previous data

Quality of Indicator Information:



Adequate

Data coverage, frequency, currency, sources, and reliability are sufficient to draw conclusions with high confidence



Partial

Data coverage, frequency, currency, sources, and reliability are of mixed quality which affects the ability to draw conclusions



Inadequate

Data coverage, frequency, currency, sources, and reliability are of insufficient quality to draw conclusions