

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



## Indicator F.b.: *Invasive species trends on forestlands*

Current desired trend/target: No invasive species on Oregon’s “100 Most Dangerous” list are uncontained in the state’s forests, and a stable or decreasing forest acreage is affected by invasive species.

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. This evaluation 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 January 10, 2011 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 six-person Roundtable Leadership Group, with the assistance of Oregon Department of Forestry staff. For context, readers are encouraged to first become familiar with the full set of Oregon indicators and particularly the report for Indicator F.b. on which this evaluation is based. This evaluation and a follow-up staff response will be posted on both the Roundtable and Indicator F.b. web pages. The current data report for this indicator can be accessed at:

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

### Evaluation Summary: <sup>1</sup>

#### Key Roundtable findings

- The January 10 meeting presentation provided greater detail than the online report. Revise the report to include that information.
- Need to clarify what information is being reported on established invasive. Consider separate assessments for “new” vs. “established” invasives.
- Address already established invasive species and their effects on forest ecosystems.
- Recommend changing the information quality rating to “inadequate.”
- Need to provide criteria on what numbers would have to be to be considered in “good” or “poor” condition

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<sup>1</sup> *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.*

and an “improving” or “deteriorating” trend.

- Provide more focus/clarity on invasive species that are meaningful to forests.
- Preventing establishment of the 100 most dangerous invasive species is important, but sustainable management of Oregon forestlands requires more information and measurement with respect to programs to eradicate plant and animal pest species now present on the state’s forestlands.
- Future commitment to tracking broader invasive species trends may be lacking.

## **Additional Roundtable comments organized by indicator evaluation questions**

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

- There was agreement the purpose and intent are clear.

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

- Many in the group had serious concerns about the protocol, however some thought that the protocol followed a reasonably logical – if not a scientific approach that was adequate for the current state of knowledge and use of the indicator.
- Define “invasive” and clarify what is a "non-native invasive species."
- Clarify what is the significance of a change in the 100 most dangerous species score.
- The Scorecard approach made conditions appear positive, but the more detailed information make current conditions appear more negative.
- Clarify that only non-established species are on the 100 most dangerous list.
- The indicator needs two metrics:
  - Detecting and containing new invasive species (prevention)
  - Limiting the spread of existing invasive species
- "Uncontained" needs to be defined.
- The 100 most dangerous species list has subjective rationale. Subjectivity impairs comparability.
- Many of the species on the 100 most dangerous list may not be a threat to forests so the reported information may not be relevant. What are the invasive species that do threaten Oregon's forests? Consider developing a forest subset of the top 100.
- The Invasive Species Council focuses on public awareness and action, but does not say much about sustainable forest management. We may need different metrics. For example, Himalaya blackberry not on most dangerous list but may have a much more significant effect on forests.
- Hard to see if there is a protocol at all. We seem to be tracking species that may have no effect and ignoring species that are already having an impact.
- How is it determined that a species has moved from “new” to “established?”
- Established invasives that are a threat to forests need to be included also.
- This indicator should be focused on species that affect forests and forest streams and waterbodies, not on the 100 Most Dangerous. USFS Region 6 staff may be able to assist ODF in narrowing the “100 most dangerous” species list to just those species affecting forests.

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

- Species occurrence information by county would be helpful. There is recognition we are unlikely to get actual acres and a site-specific distribution information for each invasive species.
- Decision makers need more particularized info.

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

Original indicator report conclusion  
*Information = Partial*



Conclusion following Roundtable evaluation  
*Information = Inadequate*



- Recommend changing the information quality rating to “inadequate.” The information is appropriately assessed but it is not entirely the right information. At least one group member thought a rating of “adequate” was appropriate.
- The problem is there not any data available other than what was reported.

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

Original indicator report conclusion  
*Condition = Fair*



Conclusion following Roundtable evaluation  
*Condition = Fair*



- Agreement that condition rating is appropriate.
- A score of 99 out of 100 leaves no room to improve.
- Many invasions are being prevented, but established invasives still present a problem.

**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 = Uncertain*



- The desired trend statement reads like a desired condition and trend statement.
- Agreement that the trend rating is appropriate.

**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?**

- Use Weedmaper.org as another source of information about the general spatial distribution of invasive plants.
- Does the FIA inventory data have useful information on invasive species?

**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?**

- Past commitment to Sudden Oak Death detection and eradication has been huge, but it may not continue.
- The current budget situation makes it impossible for the department to make commitments.

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

- Consider a similar approach as was used in the “species at risk” indicator (E.c).
- Add perspective on how the indicator performs as a “sustainability indicator” versus a “red flag” system on invasives.
- Too reliant on the "100 Most Dangerous". Should include forest-related species only from the "100" list and forest-related species that are not on the "100" list because they've established.

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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