

## STAFF RESPONSE

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



#### **E.b.: *Extent of area by forest cover type in protected area categories***

Current desired trend/target: Following establishment of a statewide plant and animal conservation policy, allocations of Oregon forest cover types to protected area categories are consistent with desired future conditions.

The following is a response by Oregon Department of Forestry technical and policy staff to the November 2, 2010 Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests preliminary evaluation of Indicator of Sustainable Forest Management E.b.: *Extent of area by forest cover type in protected area categories* (this evaluation can be accessed at: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/indicators/docs/EbRoundtableEvaluation.pdf>)

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

This online report reflects the revisions indicated in this response.

#### **Key Roundtable findings**

- The indicator is really a zoning map for forest uses in Oregon. The zones are clear but more discussion is needed on what land allocations go into each zone category.
- There are questions on whether using the amount of restriction on human activity in a location relates very well to conservation of animal and plant species.
- The Roundtable identified terminology issues that need to be corrected. The names of classes implied different meanings, depending on the experience and affiliation of the participant.
- The emphasis for this indicator should be biological diversity zoning, not wood production zoning.
- A dilemma with this indicator is that finer delineations are needed to truly understand management allocations, but coarser scaled delineations are needed to aggregate and simplify information for public understanding.
- Clarify how riparian buffer acres are included in the statistics.

#### **Changes Made to the Indicator Report in Response to Key Roundtable Findings**

- All forested land has been categorized into one of seven different land management categories based on ownership, land allocation by the owner, and management intentions. These seven categories generally reflect the type and level of protection administered across all of Oregon's forested lands.
  - **Withdrawn** There are three withdrawn categories (congressionally withdrawn, agency withdrawn, private withdrawn). These forest lands are withdrawn from intensive active

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management to emphasize values such as natural processes, scenery, habitat, and wildlife protection.

- **Congessionally Withdrawn:** Federal land withdrawn by an act of the U.S. Congress.
  - **Agency Withdrawn:** Federal or State land withdrawn by agency regulations or management plans. Plans can be changed by formal modification.
  - **Private Withdrawn:** Private land specifically managed for habitat conservation and natural processes by the private landowner.
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- **Multi-Resource:** Land managed for a variety of objectives but not exclusive to any particular one. These objectives may include a combination of wood production, habitat, water resources, and wildlife protection.
  - **Private Land Managed Under the Oregon Forest Practices Act:** All timber operations on privately owned forest land are regulated by the Oregon Forest Practices Act. In general, large industrial owners manage their land primarily for wood production revenue. Family Forest owners, often referred to as non-industrial private owners, may manage their land for a variety of objectives including wood production revenue, habitat, water resources, wildlife protection, and family legacy.
  - **Urban / Residential:** Land classified as either “Urban” or “Residential” by the Oregon Department of Forestry’s Development Zone Study. In general, these forest lands are in private residential ownership or parks within municipalities.
  - **Riparian Buffers:** Land adjacent to rivers and streams and within the above defined “Multi-Resource” and “Private Land Managed Under the Oregon Forest Practices Act” management classes. The area within riparian buffers are **estimates only** because: the density of rivers and streams varies geographically (Eastern Oregon vs. Western Oregon; lowlands vs. uplands); actual riparian buffers are determined on a project by project basis based on topography, fish presence/absence, and other local factors.
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- Terminology has been changed so as to be not so pejorative, biased sounding, vague, or have multiple meanings. For example: “Wood Production” is now “Private Land Managed under the Oregon Forest Practices Act”; “Reserved” is now “Congessionally Withdrawn”; “Riparian Reserved” is now “Riparian Buffers” to reflect that there can be some management within these buffer areas.
  - The method used to calculate the “Riparian Buffers” and a listing of what ownership/land allocation goes into which management category have been documented in the link on the indicator report website: “Land Management Classifications and Examples.”

#### **Changes/additions in the online report:**

- Document: “Land Management Classifications and Examples”
- Map: “Land Management Classifications”
- Map: “Private Land Managed under the Oregon Forest Practices Act”
- Map: “Forest Land Ownership”

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- Map: “Oregon Forest Land Dominant Species”
- Graph: “Graph - Land Management Categories”
- Graph: “Graph - Species by Land Management Categories”
- Graph: “Graph - Owner by Land Management Categories”
- PowerPoint: “History of Congressionally Withdrawn Forest Land 1960-2010”
- PowerPoint: “Wilderness Areas 1960-2010”

### **Staff responses to other Roundtable comments**

- The following text has been added to the “Why is this indicator important?” section of the online report: *“Indicator E.b will provide the basis for documenting landscape-level changes to forest cover types allocated to various management categories. This documentation will provide a context for discussing whether current land management allocations are adequate for providing other environmental, economic, and social benefits.”*
- When linked with information provided through Indicators E.a.: *Composition diversity and structure of forest vegetation* and E.c.: *Forest plant and animal species at risk*, staff believes these three indicators selected by Oregonians can be useful in measuring progress towards the strategic policy goal of contributing to the conservation of diverse native plant and animal populations and their habitats in Oregon's forests. As with all the indicators, this indicator is not intended to be analyzed in isolation. Staff believes the indicator report is faithful to the intent of the indicator but notes that there remains some dissatisfaction with the indicator itself. This feedback will be carried over into the review, and potential revision of the set of indicators following adoption of the 2011 *Forestry Program for Oregon*.

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