

Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests Meeting Summary

**9:00 to 3:00p.m. January 10, 2011
Gregory Forum, Clackamas Community College
Oregon City, OR**

Meeting summaries for the Roundtable characterize the meeting discussion but do not document every comment made. Presentation materials and web links to important documents are usually posted on the Oregon Roundtable webpage on the Oregon Department of Forestry website,
<http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/indicators/roundtable.shtml>.

Introductions and Agenda

Brief introductions were made and Roundtable processes and progress to date were summarized. Meeting handouts and the day's agenda were reviewed. Attachment A provides the participant list.

Roundtable Evaluation of Indicator of Sustainable Forest Management C.b.: *Timber harvest trends compared to planned and projected harvest levels and the potential to grow timber*

Based on the discussion of this indicator at the November 22 Roundtable meeting and after the results of the online surveys were compiled, staff prepared a draft report describing the key Roundtable findings for Indicator C.b. The Leadership Group reviewed and commented on the initial draft and staff redrafted the reports based on those comments. These draft reports were then distributed to Roundtable participants prior to the January 10 meeting.

The following concerns and suggestions for improving this indicator report evaluation were expressed by January 10 Roundtable participants:

- It is unclear how the indicator addresses external market forces that may 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.
- Display harvest levels by landowner categories and sub-state scales—down to the county level, if possible.

Department of Forestry staff will incorporate these additional comments and finalize the initial Roundtable evaluation for this indicator and post it on the Roundtable webpage and Indicator C.b. web page.

Presentations and Discussions on Indicators D.b., F.a., and F.b.

The Leadership Group has developed nine indicator evaluation questions to guide Roundtable discussions on the Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management. Discussion points raised on the three indicators reviewed during January 10 meeting are assigned to the nine questions. Listed below is the staff's and Leadership Group's summary of the comments from the January 10 meeting. Roundtable participants asked clarifying questions, discussed its strengths and weaknesses, and generated ideas for improvements.

Everyone may not agree with the assignments and the Roundtable participants are encouraged to make alternative assignments or use the comments as makes sense to them as they consider the nine questions.

A short summary report for each indicator will be generated to summarize the draft Roundtable responses to the nine questions and list any additional observations, recommendations, or conclusions that the Roundtable chooses to offer. This report will be available for Roundtable participant review and comment prior to and at the next Roundtable meeting.

It is anticipated that the Roundtable will proceed with discussions on each of the indicators and will then discuss the body of indicators as a whole – looking for common themes and synthesizing conclusions about the indicators project.

*Statements in **Bold** type are points of emphasis and possible points of agreement that appeared to emerge during the meeting.*

Indicator D.b.: Biological integrity of forest streams

Shannon Hubler (DEQ) presented the indicator report, referencing information posted online at: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/indicators/indicatorDb.shtml>

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

- Most agree the purpose and intent are clear, but there may be technical problems addressed under other questions.
- **The science is clear but it remains unclear to some how to interpret the data and what conclusions can be drawn from the information.**
- Clarify indicator is just using PREDATOR information and not the displayed fine sediment and temperature stress data. They are supplemental and removing the latter two from the online report would make the information on which conclusions are being drawn much clearer.
- PREDATOR has the potential to integrate a lot of possible aquatic stressors.
- Biological communities are beneficial uses. The information can be used to address water quality impairment--better than just water quality index which only looks at water chemistry.

- Is all “disturbance” considered bad? Riparian blowdown is an example of a disturbance that has potential positive and negative disturbance effects. Temporal story is important. Additional large wood in streams from blowdown could be good for macroinvertebrates in the long run.
- b. Is the protocol for indicator data collection clear and technically sound?*
- There is some concern about the subjective determinations of what is disturbed and what is not.
 - **Improve terminology and maybe get away from using the term “disturbance” altogether.** Perhaps “degree of variance from reference conditions.”
 - **Increased sample sizes would be an improvement, particularly in Eastern Oregon. Increased probabilistic sampling will improve statistical strength.**
 - **Report raises unanswered questions about what is happening on family forestlands that is different than other forest ownership classes. Better identify ownership--more detailed analysis needed.**
 - The report relies on “found data.” Data collection protocol would be different if it was specifically designed for this indicator. The probabilistic sampling design used in the Willamette Basin Study provides stronger data.
 - Strength of protocol will be better known once a trend can be established.
 - Better acknowledge data and sampling limitations.
 - **Some confusion over what defines reference sites.** Natural disturbance occurs in reference sites. Clarify reference conditions are real world and not “potential” or “optimal.” By definition 10 percent of reference sites are “most disturbed.”
 - Improve ownership determination protocol. Limit to upstream catchment and do not include a radius area downstream from the sample point.
- c. Are indicator data being reported at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales?*
- No specific comments.
- d. Has the Department appropriately assessed the quality of the indicator information?*
- No specific comments and no changes recommended to the assigned information quality rating.
- e. Has the Department appropriately assessed the conditions measured by the indicator?*
- Conflicting factors are affecting conditions in positive and negative ways.
 - **No changes recommended to the assigned condition rating.**
 - **Need to provide criteria on what numbers would have to be to be considered in “good” or “poor” condition.**

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

- **Recommend changing the trend rating to “not available.”**
- **Need to provide criteria on what numbers would have to be to be considered an “improving” or “deteriorating” trend.**

g. *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?*

- No specific comments.

h. *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?*

- Appears there is no plan in place to get a new report in five years. Data will continue to be spotty.
- **Concern about reduction in funding for continued future data collection.**

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

- Online report indicator title is mislabeled.
- **The report should be simplified for better reader comprehension. The multitude of graphs should be simplified.**
- The Board needs to use this existing indicator information to determine what changes in policies and practices are needed.

Indicator F.a.: Tree mortality from insects, diseases, and other damaging agents

Rob Flowers (ODF) presented the indicator report, referencing information that is an update to previously posted online at:

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

a. *Is the purpose and intent for the indicator clear?*

- Clarify whether the indicator is measuring tree “mortality” or tree “mortality and damage.” Both terms are used.
- Consider adding “fire” specifically in the indicator title.

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

- Generally, the protocol is clear.
- There will be a natural level of mortality. Do we know what that is from all sources?

Staff response was that four percent mortality per year is normal barring any large fires or insect epidemics taking place.

- *Staff reported a higher confidence in the mortality acreage figures than volume.*
 - Report small fire data separately rather than mixed into the aerial insect and disease survey data.
 - Provide narrative of major events to go with the bar chart time series to explain the big spikes.
 - What information is lost by not tracking fires between 100 and 1000 acres in size? Can that gap be filled?
 - Recognize limitations of only going back 30 years. Different historical comparisons could lead to different conclusions.
 - Are we remapping the same mortality year to year?
 - Landowners frequently harvest dead or dying trees – it appears this could be missed by the protocol.
- c. Are indicator data being reported at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales?*
- Be clearer about where mortality is occurring. Rob's presentation provided greater detail than the online report. Revise the report to include that information
 - **There is interest in reporting at regional sub-state scales (NW, SW, E). We already have a good spatial display but could break down tabular data by region.**
- d. Has the Department appropriately assessed the quality of the indicator information?*
- Information quality is better than for most of the other indicators.
 - **Recommend quality rating be changed to "adequate."**
 - Rob's presentation provided greater detail than the online report. Revise the report to include that information.
- e. Has the Department appropriately assessed the conditions measured by the indicator?*
- **Need to provide criteria on what numbers would have to be to be considered in "good" or "poor" condition.** Hard to do with multiple variables.
 - What are the mortality goals and how are those goals justified? What would be a normal ecological occurrence?
 - Rob's presentation provided greater detail than the online report. Revise the report to include that information .
- f. Has the Department appropriately assessed the current trend measured by the indicator, when compared to the Desired Trend Statement?*
- **Focus on recent historical trends and do not try to project future conditions with trend rating. Report future outlook separately.**

- **Need to provide criteria on what numbers would have to be to be considered an “improving” or “deteriorating” trend but data appears to lead to a conclusion that there is an improving trend.**
 - Rob’s presentation provided greater detail than the online report. Revise the report to include that information .
- g. 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?*
- Look at the same GNN vegetation data used for Indicator E.a. Perhaps more useful than FIA-only data.
- h. 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?*
- **There is concern about the ability to continue the same level of data collection beyond 2011.**
- i. What improvements would you like to see in future reporting for the indicator?*
- Rob’s presentation provided greater detail than the online report. Revise the report to include that information.
 - Need more information about what each of the fire severity classes used really means -- perhaps pictures of severity examples.
 - Look at a rolling 10-year average to smooth out data trends
 - Provide more discussion on the relationship between weak/dead trees and fire occurrence. This relationship is often assumed but not born out by available research.

Indicator F.b.: Invasive species trends on forestlands

Rob Flowers (ODF) presented the indicator report, referencing information that is an update to previously posted online at:

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

- a. Is the purpose and intent for the indicator clear?*
- **There was agreement the purpose and intent are clear.**
- b. 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.
 - **Need to clarify what information is being reported on established invasives.** Clarify that only non-established species are on the 100 most dangerous list.
 - Include, “established invasives” in the indicator.
 - The indicator needs two metrics:
 - a. Detecting and containing new invasive species (prevention)
 - b. Limiting the spread of existing invasive species
 - "Uncontained" needs to be defined.
 - The 100 most dangerous species list has subjective rationale
 - 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?”
- c. 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.
- d. Has the Department appropriately assessed the quality of the indicator information?*
- **Almost all in the group, recommend changing the rating to “inadequate.”** The information is appropriately assessed but it is not entirely the right information. At least one group member thought the rating of “adequate” was appropriate.
 - The problem is there not any data available other than what was reported.
 - Rob’s presentation provided greater detail than the online report. Revise the report to include that information.
- e. Has the Department appropriately assessed the conditions measured by the indicator?*
- **Agreement that condition rating is appropriate.**
 - **Consider separate assessments for “new” vs. “established” invasives.**
 - **Need to provide criteria on what numbers would have to be to be considered in “good” or “poor” condition.**

- A score of 99 out of 100 leaves no room to improve.
 - Rob's presentation provided greater detail than the online report. Revise the report to include that information.
- f. Has the Department appropriately assessed the current trend measured by the indicator, when compared to the Desired Trend Statement?*
- The desired trend statement reads like a desired condition and trend statement.
 - **Agreement that the trend rating is appropriate.**
 - **Consider separate assessments for “new” versus “established” invasives.**
 - **Need to provide criteria on what numbers would have to be to be considered an “improving” or “deteriorating” trend.**
 - Rob's presentation provided greater detail than the online report. Revise the report to include that information.
- g. 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?
- h. 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.
 - **Future commitment to tracking broader invasive species trends may be lacking too.**
- i. What improvements would you like to see in future reporting for the indicator?*
- **Provide more focus/clarity on invasive species that are meaningful to forests.** 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.
 - **Address already established invasive species and their effects on forest ecosystems.**

Staff response to the Roundtable evaluation of Indicator E.b.: Extent of area by forest cover type in protected area categories.

The Roundtable briefly discussed adequacy of the staff response, the need for further Roundtable evaluation of the indicator at this time, and use of this staff response as a

template for staff responses to other indicator evaluations.

It was recommended that future staff responses highlight any instances where there are disagreements between the Roundtable evaluation and the response.

The participants accepted the Indicator E.b. response without changes and directed staff to distribute staff responses to other indicator evaluations via email. Roundtable participants will then be allowed time to review and provide comments to the Leadership Group. The Leadership Group will then decide if further Roundtable meeting time will be devoted to any of the previously evaluated indicators..

Next Steps

- The Leadership Group will have a conference call to debrief and plan next steps.
- Initial Roundtable evaluations for Indicator C.b.: *Timber harvest trends compared to planned and projected harvest levels and the potential to grow timber* will be finalized and posted online.
- The staff response to the Roundtable evaluation of Indicator E.b.: *Extent of area by forest cover type in protected area categories* will be posted online.
- All the participants at today's meeting are encouraged to complete the online survey with the nine questions for Indicators D.b., F.a., and F.b.
- Staff will draft preliminary Indicator D.b., F.a., and F.b. Roundtable evaluation reports based on the input from today's meeting and the survey results. The draft reports will be reviewed by the Leadership Group and then with the rest of the Roundtable at the next meeting.
- Current plans are for the next Roundtable meeting to focus on evaluations of Indicators:
 - A.b. *Sustainable forest management knowledge*
 - B.c. *Forest ecosystem services contributions to society*
 - A.a. *Ability to measure and report on all other Oregon sustainable forest management indicators* -- This indicator could provide the beginning of the indicator integration discussion that has been asked for at several previous meetings.
- It remains uncertain what, if anything, we will have to report on two indicators in the short term:
 - D.c. *Forest road risks to soil and water resources*
 - F.c. *Forest fuel conditions and trends related to wildfire risks*
- Following *Forestry Program for Oregon* adoption by the Board of Forestry later in 2011, the Roundtable may be asked to provide recommendation for changes in the list of Oregon Indicators of Sustainable Forest management heading forward into the next eight-year Board strategic planning cycle.

Reports From Round Participants - Recent Sustainable Forestry Developments

The public comment period on the Board of Forestry's draft 2011 *Forestry Program for Oregon* ended on December 31. Thoughtful comments were provided by Roundtable participants at the November 22 meeting. A wide range of public comments were received. The Board of Forestry will be provided with all of those comments along with a Department of Forestry prepared summary, staff comments, and recommended *Forestry Program for Oregon* text changes –most likely at its April business meeting. Final adoption of the 2011 *Forestry Program for Oregon* would then occur in June, at the earliest.

It was noted that Roundtable participants will soon be offered copies of the Oregon Forest Resources Institutes 2011 edition of *Oregon Forest Facts Book*.

The Western Governors' Association staff is working on recommendations on collaboration for identifying western states indicators of sustainable forest management based on their 2010 Policy Resolution. WGA staff are closely studying Oregon's work to date with indicators.

Attachment A - Participants

Paul Barnum, Oregon Forest Resources Institute
Aaron Borisenko, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Steve Calish, USDI Bureau of Land Management
Dave Fulton, Mt. Hood Corridor Community Planning Organization,
Shannon Hubler, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Chris Jarmer, Oregon Forest Industries Council
Janet McLennan
Don Nearhood
John Poppino
Cassandra Profita, Oregon Public Broadcasting
Cheryl Renner, Western Governors Association (by phone)
Keith Reynolds, PNW Research Station
Dillon Sanders, Inbound, LLC
Josh Seeds, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Rex Storm, Associated Oregon Loggers
Ann Walker, Western Governors Association (by phone)

Oregon Department of Forestry Staff: David Morman, Rob Flowers, Andy Herstrom,
Cathy Clem

Mediator: Mike Schnee