

Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests Status Report

In November 2008, the Board of Forestry approved its Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring Work Plan. The Work Plan called for the formation of an Oregon Roundtable of Sustainable Forest Management, now referred to as the Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests. The Work Plan described the purpose of the Roundtable as a forum to:

“ . . .engage multiple stakeholders through collaborative efforts to advance understanding, assessment, and reporting of forest sustainability and promotion of forest resource management in a manner that integrates environmental, economic, and social considerations, using the goals and objectives of the Forestry Program for Oregon and the Oregon Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management as common state frameworks.”

In January 2010, the Board of Forestry endorsed *Concepts and Principles for Developing an Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests* (http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/indicators/docs/Roundtable_Concept_Proposal.pdf). This document incorporated the comments and ideas received from the agency partners and Oregonians who provided significant and thoughtful input on the concept throughout 2009.

At its April 22, 2010 meeting, the Board of Forestry approved a charter for an Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests (http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/indicators/docs/Endorsed_Oregon_Roundtable_on_Sustainable_Forests_Charter.pdf). The charter describes the purposes of the Roundtable as:

- Using collaborative efforts to advance sustainable forests across all forest ownerships in Oregon;
- Advancing understanding, assessment and reporting of forest sustainability; and
- Encouraging forest management that integrates environmental, economic and social considerations within the framework provided by the *Forestry Program for Oregon*, and in consideration of the values and policies of the Roundtable’s contributors.

The Roundtable objectives in the charter include:

- Receiving briefings on the empirical data used to evaluate Oregon Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management conditions and trends and making collective findings on the reasonableness of those evaluations available to the Board of Forestry and interested parties;
- Advancing greater use of the *Forestry Program for Oregon*;
- Expanding the public dialogue around sustainable forests;

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- Providing a forum where organizations and individuals addressing sustainable forests can work together;
- Providing a forum where technical and scientific knowledge can be shared;
- Seeking a better understanding of the contributions that each of Oregon's forest estates makes to sustainability of Oregon's forests; and
- Promoting state and federal government coordination in discussing, implementing, and measuring sustainable forest management.

Unless it is extended, the Roundtable charter is scheduled to end on December 31, 2012.

Following adoption of the charter, a Declaration of Cooperation was developed and circulated for executive-level statements of support for the Roundtable participating organizations (http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/indicators/docs/ORSF_Declaration_of_Cooperation.pdf). To date, statements of support have been added to the Declaration by:

- Chair of the Oregon Board of Forestry
- Oregon State Forester
- Dean of Oregon State University College of Forestry
- Oregon and Washington State Director of the USDI Bureau of Land Management
- Director of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Regional Forester of the USDA Forest Service
- Director of the USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station

The Roundtable is directed by a six-person volunteer Leadership Group comprised of:

- Jennifer Allen, Portland State University
- Paul Barnum, Oregon Forest Resources Institute
- Janet McLennan, Former Chair of the Board of Forestry
- John Poppino, Family Forest Landowner
- Keith Reynolds, USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station
- Rex Storm, Associated Oregon Loggers

The Roundtable met on eight occasions between May 2010 and May 2011. Meetings were held in Portland, Oregon City, Corvallis, and Salem. Attendance at the Roundtable meetings varied from eight to 25 people, with an average attendance of 16. Each meeting has been supported by Department Forestry staff and has been professionally facilitated.

The Roundtable's work was also discussed in other public meetings during the year that more broadly addressed sustainable forest management. Those meetings were held in Portland (2), La Grande, Bend, Klamath Falls, and Medford.

The primary focus of the eight Roundtable meetings convened under the charter has been to receive briefings from technical experts on first reports for the Oregon Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management. The Roundtable then worked collaboratively to evaluate these indicators, based on the following questions:

1. Is the purpose and intent for the indicator clear?
2. Is the protocol for indicator data collection clear and technically sound?
3. Are indicator data being reported at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales?
4. Has the Department appropriately assessed the quality of the indicator information?
5. Has the Department appropriately assessed the conditions measured by the indicator?
6. Has the Department appropriately assessed the current trend measured by the indicator, when compared to the Desired Trend Statement?
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?
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?
9. What improvements would you like to see in future reporting for the indicator?

Roundtable evaluations have been completed for 16 of the 19 Oregon Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management and technical staff responses to these evaluations have been produced for nine of the indicators. Additional staff responses are under development. In many cases, these evaluations have resulted in revised conclusions on the current forest resource conditions and trends described by the indicators, as well as conclusions about the quality of the information. Roundtable conclusions regarding the indicators are included in the 2011 *Forestry Program for Oregon*.

Evaluations for three of the 19 indicators have not been possible as technical, funding, and legal issues have prevented data reporting.

At each Roundtable meeting, time has been provided for an open forum for information sharing on other topics related to sustainable forestry. These topics have included:

- The 2011 *Forestry Program for Oregon*
- Western Governor's Association policy recommendations, including a call for western states to agree to a common set of indicators of sustainable forest management
- Columbia River Gorge Commission Vital Signs Indicators Project
- The Klamath-Lake Forest Health Partnership
- Green builders/Oregon wood products manufacturers collaboration
- Oregon Forest Biomass Work Group
- Oregon Forest Cluster Working Group

- Oregonian's values and beliefs polling
- Oregon Forest Resources Institute publications and events
- Pacific Northwest Research Station activities
- OSU distance learning sustainable forest management degree programs
- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board accomplishment reporting
- Oregon statewide assessment and forest atlas

Currently, 206 people are on the email distribution list for Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests information. This information is also maintained on a website managed by the Department of Forestry: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/indicators/roundtable.shtml>

At its May 10, 2011 meeting, Roundtable participants were asked to discuss and respond to a series of questions to evaluate the current status, and to help determine the future of the Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests:

1. *Are Roundtable concept paper, charter and Declaration of Cooperation documents still relevant?*
 - In general, the Roundtable participants agree these documents remain relevant.
 - The Roundtable should not undertake new work outside of the Board's charter at this time.
2. *To what extent have their aspirations been achieved?*
 - The Oregon Roundtable is a noble and novel idea.
 - Participants believe the original aspirations have only been partially achieved.
 - Indicator evaluations have been limited by the information available.
 - The original Roundtable concept paper spoke to seeking a better understanding of the contribution of the various forest estates (federal, other public, tribal, private industrial, family forest, etc.) to sustainable forest management. It is not clear if or when that objective will be addressed.
 - The process has largely been driven by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) Forest Resources Planning Program Director's energy and efforts and the program's Principal Forest Economist has been responsible for managing seven of the 19 indicators. Both are leaving the agency this summer. It is not evident to Roundtable participants that anyone remaining in the department is up to speed on the Roundtable and ready/available to step into these roles.
3. *Has the Roundtable lived up to the original expectations?*
 - Some participants have found the process interesting and engaging.
 - A greater number and diversity of Roundtable participants is needed. New methods are needed to get the right people at the table.
 - The Columbia River Gorge Commission staff sees significant value in the indicator

framework and is adapting concepts for that local scale.

4. *What have we learned?*

- We have learned some forest resource conditions and trends are not as good as we thought they were.
- We picked a difficult way to evaluate the indicators.
- The Roundtable concept has not caught fire due to its complexity and time commitment needed.
- Indicator results are a call to action. Roundtable participants are now the most knowledgeable of anyone on these topics. More work is needed, including a “synthesis” of the entire body of indicator information to assess how Oregon is doing compared to the desired triple-bottom line of environmental, economic, and social sustainability.
- The big negative and big positive indicator conditions and trends being reported really tell a story. Are we asking the right questions? Pesticides are not being addressed and social indicators are lacking. What else is missing?
- The Roundtable has been a really good “focus group” for the Department of Forestry and the Board of Forestry but may not be the best group to now undertake an indicator synthesis project.
- We need to look at other technologies for truly statewide Roundtable communication and collaboration.

5. *Should the Roundtable continue to exist?*

- The Roundtable is chartered to continue operating through December 2012. Some participants argue if not the Roundtable, who else will engage to meet the charter’s objectives? Others believe they cannot commit to more time on this process. A real service has been provided, but it should not be an open-ended commitment and process.
- There is concern about losing momentum with ODF staff retirements.
- The Leadership Group and the Board should assess whether the Roundtable is yielding sufficient value to justify the time and resources invested.

6. *What possibilities should be considered for future Roundtable work (with the “how” to be determined later)?*

- Roundtable participants generally believe the indicator evaluation work is a value-added process. Continued work is needed to improve the indicators and to keep the Board of Forestry informed on their conclusions. The indicators should remain central to the Board’s strategic planning. However, the Board should be given a range of options on how to proceed from here, which could include:
 - a. Keeping the Roundtable effort a finite process focused in indicator evaluations. Finish indicator evaluations and then the Roundtable process should be

suspended until further Board of Forestry direction is provided. The indicator synthesis is not part of the Roundtable charter. Some participants believe ODF resources are better spent on its three core business functions.

- b. Continue to drive the process until we have good conditions, positive trends, and quality information for all Oregon indicators.
 - c. For the three indicators without first reports, there is interest in considering alternative metrics and/or protocols that can be immediately implemented.
 - d. Further work on a “framework for indicator integration” leading to an “indicator synthesis” was supported by several participants. Should this synthesis occur at the indicator level, *Forestry Program for Oregon* goal level, or both? Options could include:
 - Delaying synthesis work until indicator data and trend information is more complete,
 - Making recommendations to the Board on how others could continue evolution of a synthesis process,
 - Continued Roundtable engagement in a synthesis process--at least initially to define its superstructure (probably less painful than indicator evaluation work to date), or
 - Spin-off synthesis work to another group for continued work.
 - e. Anticipate a significant new workload if the Board asks the Roundtable to lead an indicator review and revision process. The Roundtable probably cannot accomplish both that and an indicator synthesis.
 - f. Take advantage of the 2011 International Year of Forests and use the Roundtable forum to promote greater awareness of sustainable forest management.
 - g. Promote a wider conversation among Oregonians exploring the importance of forests to people and evaluating the current indicators’ relevance to those values. The 2010 Oregonians’ values and beliefs study provides a strong foundation for such work.
 - h. Work to better incorporate reference conditions for the indicators. That concept is not limited to “historic” or “desired” conditions, but rather to the outer bounds of sustainable forest management, within which a range of sustainable pathways can be followed.
 - i. A better explanation is needed of the Board of Forestry’s strategic planning process and how indicator reports can directly influence future *Forestry Program for Oregon* objective revisions, Board priorities, and Board work planning.
7. *What ideas do Declaration of Cooperation co-signers have for possible future Roundtable projects?*
- The Bureau of Land Management is willing to remain committed to the Roundtable, as stated in the Declaration of Cooperation. It is important for the Roundtable Leadership Group to assess if it has received the support it expected from the BLM and other organizations that signed the Declaration.

- USDA Forest Service Region Six regards the Roundtable experience as positive.
- More effort is needed to institutionalize the sustainable forest management framework within participating agencies at the field level.

Next Steps










1. The Roundtable participants generally agree that while staff transitions within ODF are underway to not schedule another meeting until the fall of 2011, at the earliest, and then decide if and how the Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests will proceed. The options listed under Item 6 on pages 5 and 6 above can form the basis of that discussion.
2. The Board should determine if, when, and how it would like to proceed with a review and potential update of the Oregon Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management. The documented indicator evaluation work produced by the Oregon Roundtable on Sustainable Forests will provide a strong foundation for this project.
3. The Department of Forestry should continue to promote understanding, support, and use of the 2011 *Forestry Program for Oregon* goals and objectives, the Oregon Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management, and general sustainable forestry concepts at local, state, regional, and national scales.

OREGON INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION STATUS – June 16, 2011




























Indicator	Designed	Implemented	Data Collected	Data on Website	Roundtable Initial Eval.	Technical Response	Data Report to BOF	Trend Data Available	Projections Available	Target Set
A.a. Indicator Reporting	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid
A.b. Knowledge	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Solid
A.c. Compliance	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Solid
B.a. Revenues	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid
B.b. Employment	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid
B.c. Ecosystem Services	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	2012?	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid
B.d. Forest Sector Vitality	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid
C.a. Forestland	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	BOF
C.b. Harvests and Inventory	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Solid	Solid	OREGON BM
D.a. Water Quality	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	OREGON BM
D.b. Aquatic Biological Integrity	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Solid
D.c. Forest Roads	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Solid	2012?	Solid	2012?	Solid	Solid	Solid
E.a. Forest Vegetation	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	SEPT 2011	Solid	Solid	Solid
E.b. Protected Areas	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid
E.c. Species At Risk	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid
F.a. Tree Mortality	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid
F.b. Invasives	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	Solid
F.c. Fuels	Solid	Solid	Cross-Hatched	Solid	2012?	Solid	2012?	Solid	Solid	Solid
G.a. Carbon	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	Solid	2012?	Solid	Solid	Solid

Solid Box: Completed Step / Cross-Hatched Box: In Process



















Indicator Evaluation Assessment Symbols

<i>Indicator Condition</i>		
		
good	mixed or fair	poor
Desired trend or target is being achieved	Conflicting factors are affecting the status in both positive and negative ways	Desired trend or target is not being achieved
<i>Indicator Trend</i>		
		
improving	mixed, uncertain or no change	deteriorating
Current status is an improvement compared to previous data	There are either conflicting (mixed) trends, trend direction is uncertain, or there is no significant change compared to previous data	Current status is a deterioration compared to previous data
<i>Quality of Indicator Information</i>		
		
adequate	partial	inadequate
Data coverage, data frequency, data currency, data sources, and data reliability are sufficient to draw conclusions with high confidence	Data coverage, data frequency, data currency, data sources, and data reliability are of mixed quality which affects the ability to draw conclusions	Data coverage, data frequency, data currency, data sources, and data reliability are of insufficient quality to draw conclusions

OREGON INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT RATINGS –
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Indicator	Condition	Trend	Information
Cumulative indicator measurement and reporting			
Sustainable forest management knowledge			
Compliance with forestry regulations			
Forest-related revenues to state and local governments			
Employment and wages			
Ecosystem services			
Forest products sector vitality			
Area of non-federal forestland			
Timber harvest trends			

OREGON INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT RATINGS –
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Water quality			
Biological integrity of forest streams			
Forest roads			
Forest vegetation			
Forest cover type in protected area categories			
Forest plant and animal species at risk			
Tree mortality			
Invasive species			
Forest fuels			
Carbon stocks on forestlands and in forest products			