SEPTMBER 29, 2011 MEETING SUMMARY

Committee Members Present – Ray Abriel (by phone), Marganne Allen (for Peter Daugherty), Clint Bentz, CalLEE Davenport, Jim Geiger (by phone), Joe Holmberg, Jim James, Derek Johnson, Sara O’Brien, Lois Loop, Misty Seaboldt and Owen Wozniak.

Committee Members Absent – Ken Bierly, Dick Courter, Chris Jarmer, Jim Johnson, Rod Krahmer, Dan Logan, Steve McClure and Jon Weck.

Oregon Department of Forestry Staff Present – Jim Cathcart, Kevin Nelson, Steve Vaught

Guests Present – Susan and Bill Boehner (Caledonia Woods), Alan Christensen (Western Rivers Conservancy), Donna and Chris Heffernan (Northslope Ranch), Crystal McMahon (Klamath Lake Land Trust), Dave Ross (US Fish and Wildlife Service) (by phone) and Evan Smith (The Conservation Fund).

Attachments – See: ftp://maps01.odf.state.or.us/Private_Forests/SFSCC_9_29_11_Mtg_Summary_Attachments.zip

Item 01 – Agenda 9-29-11
Item 02 - Item 02 National Forest Legacy Funding Cycle - Options for Change
Item 03 – Committee Evaluation and Ranking of Proposed FY 2013 Forest Legacy Program Projects
Item 04 – Oregon Forest BioDiversity Explorer (Web Video)
Item 05 – Oregon Forestland Ownership
Item 06 – Priority Forest Areas - General Forest Considerations
Item 07 - Oregon High Stewardship Potential Discussion Map Statewide
Item 08 - Oregon High Stewardship Potential Discussion Map - Jackson County
Item 09 – Forest Stewardship Layer

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Forest Legacy – Committee Recommendations for FY 2014 Funding Process

Jim Cathcart provided background for this topic. See Item 02 - National Forest Legacy Funding Cycle - Options for Change. The issue is that with a doubling of State (and Island Territory) participation in Forest Legacy combined with a flat line in annual appropriations ($50-60 million) that if anything will decrease in future funding cycles - combined with the FY 2011 experience that only the top 12 projects were funded because of the large size of funding requested per project - states conceivable could never be successful in securing Forest Legacy Program funds despite their best efforts in submitting quality projects. At its June 28, 2011 meeting, Jim James, Dick Courter and Jim Johnson volunteered to vet this issue for the Committee and develop a recommendation for the Committee’s position. Jim James presented the subgroup’s recommendation:
• Divide the competition for funds into two categories – large projects and small projects – say a 50-50 split (though the actual split would be left to the discretion of the USDA Forest Service). That is, small projects (say $3 million in request – though the actual cutoff would be left to the discretion of the USDA Forest Service) would compete by themselves for an allocated portion of the funding; similarly for larger projects. The feeling is that with more smaller projects being funded, more states would be successful in getting funds. Further, smaller projects typical of family forestlands would compete head to head – rather in the broader mix of apples and oranges that can categorize the broad array of Forest Legacy Program projects across States and Territories.

• Dropping the current ceiling for all projects combined from $10 million per state (maximum of 3 projects) to $7 million. This would force a state to decide to fund either one big project or up to 3 smaller projects.

Any changes should go in effect beginning with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 funding cycle.

**ACTION** – The Committee agreed with the subgroup’s recommendation. Jim Cathcart to draft and submit under Chair Peter Daugherty’s signature a letter to Paul Ries, Director, Cooperative Forestry, USDA Forest Service, Washington Office, Washington DC stating the Committee’s position on desired changes to the Forest Legacy Program Funding Process beginning with the FY 2014 funding cycle.

**Forest Legacy – Project Evaluation and Ranking – FY 2013 Funding Cycle**

The Committee submitted and discussed individual Committee member rankings for Oregon’s 4 projects under consideration for the FY 2013 Forest Legacy Program funding cycle.

• Blue Mountain Heritage. $1.5 million Forest Legacy Program FY 2013 funding request; conservation easement.

• Gilchrist Forest. $3.0 million Forest Legacy Program FY 2013 funding request; fee title acquisition.

• Hood River Forest and Fish Conservation. $5.0 million Forest Legacy Program FY 2013 funding request; conservation easement.

• West Klamath Lake Forest. $3.861 million Forest Legacy Program FY 2013 funding request; conservation easement.

To download the Forest Legacy Information System (FLIS) Project Briefs for each project submitted to the Committee, go to:

ftp://maps01.odf.state.or.us/Private_Forests/FLIS_Project_Briefs_SFSCC_Submitted.zip

To download Letters of Support for each project, go to:

Blue Mountain Heritage -
ftp://maps01.odf.state.or.us/Private_Forests/Blue_Mountain_Letters_of_Support.zip

Gilchrist Forest –
ftp://maps01.odf.state.or.us/Private_Forests/Gilchrist_Forest_Letters_of_Support.zip
Hood River –
ftp://maps01.odf.state.or.us/Private_Forests/Hood_River_Forest_and_Fish_Conservation_Letters_of_Support.zip

West Klamath Lake Forest -
ftp://maps01.odf.state.or.us/Private_Forests/West_Klamath_Lake_Letters_of_Support.zip

Absent Committee members who sent in scores and rankings were: Ken Bierly, Dick Courter, Jim Johnson, Rod Krahmer and Jon Weck. Committee members present for the discussion based on their scores and rankings were: Clint Bentz, CalLee Davenport, Joe Holmberg, Jim James, Derek Johnson, Sara O’Brien, Lois Loop, Misty Seaboldt and Owen Wozniak. Abstaining were: Ray Abriel, Marganne Allen (for Peter Daugherty) and Jim Geiger. Committee members who did not participate were: Chris Jarmer, Dan Logan and Steve McClure.

Committee members were given the opportunity to change their rankings of projects based on the discussion. See Item 03 – Committee Evaluation and Ranking of Proposed FY 2013 Forest Legacy Program Projects for the final results. The decision space for the Committee is to recommend to the Oregon Department of Forestry (as State Lead Agency) up to 3 projects for national consideration for FY 2013 funding as long as no individual project requested more than $7 million in Forest Legacy Program funds and the total Forest Legacy Program funding request for all projects recommended did not exceed $10 million.

**DECISION** – Clint Bentz motioned (Derek Johnson seconded) that based on the arithmetic average of the final rankings of the 14 participating Committee members (see column “AVE” in Item 04) -- with a lower average indicating a higher priority – that the following projects (listed in priority order) are recommended to be submitted to the National Review Panel for FY 2013 Forest Legacy Program funding consideration.

1. Blue Mountain Heritage – Conservation Easement – FY 2013 Funding Request - $1.5 million
2. West Klamath Lake Forest – Conservation Easement – FY 2013 Funding Request - $3.861 million
3. Gilchrist Forest – Fee Title Acquisition – FY 2013 Funding Request - $3.0 million for a total funding request is $8.361 million. The motion passed unanimously.

**UPDATE** - The Department accepted this recommendation and will submit the above three projects (in the priority listed above) to the National Review Panel for FY 2013 Forest Legacy Program funding consideration.

**NEXT STEPS** – The USDA Forest Service Western Regional Forest Legacy Program Managers will be meeting in early November to review and critique the FLIS Project Briefs for submitted projects and will get comments back the States around mid-November. States then have until
November 30th to finalize their FLIS Project Briefs for consideration by the National Review Panel in January 2012.

**Oregon Forest BioDiversity Explorer**

The purpose of the Oregon Forest BioDiversity Explorer is to provide a means for forest landowners to meet the forest management planning element to consult with an expert or authoritative database regarding threatened, endangered, sensitive, rare species and forests of High Conservation Value.

The data was compiled by The Nature Conservancy of Oregon for use in Oregon’s Statewide Forest Assessment. Being assembled by 6th field watersheds the data is at a pretty fine geographic scale (10,000 – 30,000 acres) – so are proximately meaningful to small ownerships. The spreadsheets are designed to get landowners to think about what could be on their property – either the possibility that it is there and they should look for it; or the possibility they could manage habitat in the hopes that the species can be supported. The idea is, by knowing what is in the watershed that contains their land – they can investigate further the habitat needs/requirements of the species and see if there is a fit with their property consistent with their management goals and objectives. Data is only available for those watersheds that contain at least 40% forest cover.

Jim Cathcart demonstrated how landowners could use the explorer in the development of their forest management plans. The Oregon Forest BioDiversity Explorer can be accessed as a feature of the Department’s current Oregon location explorer web tool –LocaTOR @ ODF GIS Data. See Item 04 – Oregon Forest BioDiversity Explorer for a web video rendition of Jim’s presentation. Discussion – The explorer was well received and some members of the Committee plan on using it immediately. Very important to have good technical documentation and definition of terms such as Relative Abundance so landowners know the explorer is for informational purposes and that the information does not automatically trigger a regulatory nexus/obligation. Next Step – The Oregon Forest BioDiversity Explorer will be beta tested as part of the Uniform Resource Plan and Endorsement System project.

**Forest Stewardship Program – High Stewardship Potential**

Jim Cathcart provided a summary of the Committee’s discussion of this topic at their April 27th meeting in Klamath Falls. Candidate areas to be spatially classed as “High Stewardship Potential” for the delivery of the Forest Stewardship Program were identified as follows:

- Stewardship “Potential” lands are all private and tribal forest lands that are eligible for technical and financial assistance through Oregon’s Forest Stewardship Program. See Item 05 – Oregon’s Forestland Owners for a map of Oregon’s forest ownership groupings.

- Options for categorizing “High Potential” lands as a subset of “Potential” lands included:
  1) using the priority landscape ratings for General Forest Considerations as determined by Oregon’s Statewide Forest Assessment (see Item 06 – Priority Forest Areas - General Forest Considerations),
  2) using the urban-rural interface priority areas as determined
by Oregon’s Statewide Forest Assessment, 3) using wildland-urban interface areas designated by local ODF District Foresters or Community Wildfire Protection Plans or 4) some combination of (1), (2) and/or (3). See Item 07 - Oregon High Stewardship Potential Discussion Map Statewide and Item 08 - Oregon High Stewardship Potential Discussion Map - Jackson County.

In April 2011, the Committee recommended spatially identifying “High Potential” forestlands as those Non-Industrial Private, Private Industrial and Tribal Forestlands falling within HIGH and MEDIUM General Forest Consideration Priority Landscapes as identified in Oregon’s Statewide Forest Assessment.

Jim Cathcart passed along to the Committee that the Department accepted the Committee’s recommendation in part, but not in its entirety; the Department modified the Committee’s April 2011 recommendation as follows:

Non-Industrial Private and Tribal Forestlands falling within HIGH and MEDIUM General Forest Consideration Priority Landscapes; Private Industrial Forestland falling with HIGH General Forest Consideration Priority Landscapes. The Department’s modification to the Committee’s recommendation was to only drop private industrial forestlands falling within MEDIUM General Forest Consideration Priority Landscapes from being High Potential.

There were no Committee objections to these modifications. See Item 09 – Forest Stewardship Layer for a statewide map of the final designations.

**Next Steps** – Steve Vaught summarized how the Department plans on using the “High Potential” layer in future allocations of Forest Stewardship Program funds for forest management planning cost-share assistance to family forestlands – beginning with the FY 2011 money.

1. Conduct training to Stewardship Foresters on the background, interpretation and use of the “High Potential” layer.
2. Open a six month sign up window for Forest Management Planning Cost-Share assistance --
   - Stewardship Foresters determine if cost share application covers lands classified as
   - “Potential” or “High Potential”
   - Stewardship Foresters have the option to disagree with the map call of “Potential” or “High Potential” but must provide justification for doing so such as better local information than the map data used.
   - Applications covering “High Potential” lands will be awarded in the order received based on the availability of funds.
   - At the end of the six month window, applications covering “Potential” lands will be awarded in the order received to the extent there are funds available and no pending “High Potential” applications to be awarded.
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- Stewardship Forester justifications for going around the map call of High Potential or Potential will be used to assess the quality of data used in the original spatial analysis – if systemic deficiencies are identified – the spatial analysis will be updated based on improvements in the spatial data – and a new High Potential/Potential classification map developed accordingly.

Review of Committee Authorities, Governance and Purpose – Looking to the Future

With its Forest Legacy Program responsibilities out of the way for the year, there is opportunity for the Committee to start planning its work for the future. Jim Cathcart and Ray Abriel provided the Committee some Food for Thought that will be taken up at the Committee’s December 15, 2011 meeting. Examples of emerging opportunities for the Committee are:

1. Strengthening the Committee’s role as the forestry subcommittee to the Oregon Technical Advisory Committee to the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA). This would strengthen the integration of USDA Forest Service State and Private (Cooperative) Programs (the Committee’s current charge) with programs administered by NRCS and FSA.

- Committee members recently accepted an invitation from NRCS to assist District Conservationists in their development of Conservation Implementation Strategies for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

- FSA’s Emergency Forest Restoration Program is just one example where it is hard to predict where Congress will place an important forestry incentive program – especially when a tried and true program for agriculture is expanded or mimicked for forestry.

- Oregon’s Unified Resource Management Planning and Endorsement System and Oregon’s Partnership for Forestry Education projects – both funded through the USDA Forest Service Western States FY 2010 State and Private Forestry Competitive Grants – are two examples (forest management planning, forestry education and outreach) where the silos are breaking down among the state and federal agencies to provide a common product to family forest landowners.

2. Change in national direction seems to be a constant with emphasis on accountability and program accomplishments that meet national priorities. An example is further evolution of the Forest Stewardship Program to adopt a landscape context – it is not just providing assistance to family forest landowners, but understanding the benefits of this assistance in the context of greater landscape scale goals and objectives. Making this landscape context real – and not come at the expense of the fundamentals of landowner assistance – will be a challenge. But, if there ever was a group assembled that had the right people to take this on – it would be the Committee.

3. The Committee put a lot of work in developing Oregon’s Statewide Forest Assessment and Resource Strategy. The Department is just scratching the surface of this work in implementation and setting priorities (i.e., the development of the “High Potential” layer for Forest Stewardship being one example). The Resource Strategy is a living effort – its best use will be to get strategies integrated with other strategic planning efforts /
action plans developed by other agencies such as the Oregon Conservation Strategy, the Board of Forestry’s Forestry Program for Oregon, NRCS Resource Assessments and Implementation Strategies, the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, and assessments / strategies developed by non-governmental organizations representing conservation and landowner interests. Wouldn’t it be great if that by 2015 – when the next Statewide Forest Assessment and Resource Strategy is due – that it serves the broader purpose of all these needs in a common effort. (Heads Up – the National Association of State Foresters is recommending a stronger role/link of the Statewide Forest Assessment and Resource Strategies (aka Forest Action Plans) across ALL the Farm Bill Titles (e.g., Conservation, Forestry, Energy, Research, Pest and Disease) to be defined in the 2012 Farm Bill. Stay tuned.)

4. The Committee for Family Forestlands advises the Oregon Board of Forestry on matters/policies/issues/needs/recognition that affect Oregon’s forest family forest landowners as well as to advocate and create greater visibility of the many benefits these lands and people provide Oregon. Is there opportunity for better coordination and division of work between the Committee for Family Forestlands and the Committee?

This discussion will continue at the Committee’s December 15, 2011 meeting. State Forester Doug Decker has been invited to join the Committee.

**Roundtable**

No roundtable items were presented.

**Next Meeting:** 10 am to 3 pm, Thursday, December 15, 2011, Salem, (NOTE – DIFFERENT LOCATION – Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District, 650 Hawthorne Ave SE, Suite # 130, Salem, Oregon 97301).

We will be joined by State Forester Doug Decker to discuss ongoing and future work of the Committee.

Prepared by Jim Cathcart, Oregon Department of Forestry, October 4, 2011.

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