

Agenda Item No.:	7
Work Plan Title:	Emerging and Overarching Issues
Topic:	Climate Change
Presentation Title:	Climate Change Adaptation Recommendations
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SUMMARY

This agenda item provides the Board of Forestry the historical context of the agency's contributions and efforts devoted to the climate change issue and provides a set of recommendations for an overall approach to adapting to the effects of climate change.

CONTEXT

Oregon's forests are strongly influenced by climate and topography. Modeled predictions of changes in climate from increasing concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide present additional risks to sustainability of forest ecosystems now and in the coming decades. Predicted changes in climate patterns have been used to model the likely effects on the geographical distributions of individual species of trees, other forest plants, and wildlife. Other potential climate change related issues include an increase in the occurrence of wildfire, and changes in hydrology and water supply.

The climate change adaptation issue was added to the Emerging and Overarching Issues work plan as a way for the Board of Forestry to ensure the agency is considering and integrating climate change adaptation sufficiently within agency operations, and therefore prepared for the changes that are most likely to occur.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

There have been many state and agency lead efforts over the last 25 years to integrate climate change within forest policy and management. Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) staff have made, and continue to make, contributions in various task forces, workgroups, technical committees, and research projects that focus on the issue of climate change. An annotated history of these efforts is included as Attachment 1.

Since 1990, the State of Oregon and numerous work groups have researched the potential problems presented by climate change, and made recommendations and proposed actions to deal with the problems. The projects include inventorying carbon sources and developing strategies to reduce carbon emissions, examining vehicles to increase carbon sequestration, creating a synthesis of science findings, and establishing the Oregon Global Warming Commission to keep

Oregon moving toward a goal of reducing emissions and help the state prepare for the effects of climate change.

The past project most directly related to this work plan is the 2010 Climate Change Adaptation Framework. The Framework lays out expected climate-related risks, the basic adaptive capacity to deal with those risks, short-term priority actions, and several steps that will evolve into a long-term process to improve Oregon's capacity to adapt to variable and changing climate conditions.

We used the Climate Change Adaptation Framework to identify the issues each ODF operating division is likely to face, and worked with the divisions to identify ways the issue could be addressed in the normal course of business.

RECOMMENDATION

The overall approach of the recommendations is for ODF to integrate climate change adaptation within the context of regular agency business, planning, and budgeting. The recommendations are organized and aimed at the Board and each of the major divisions under which the agency is organized. Specific recommendations can be found in Attachment 2. In summary, we recommend:

- The Board of Forestry approve the recommendations in Attachment 2.
- Close out the Climate Change Adaptation issue in the Emerging and Overarching Issues work plan.
- Direct staff to begin the process of integrating recommendations regarding climate change adaptation into regular agency work.

NEXT STEPS

Climate change is a complex and uncertain issue, which makes accurate planning difficult. The ultimate outcomes are not known and informed decisions have to be made on the information that is known, with the understanding that new decisions will need to be made as more certain information becomes known. ODF staff have built a long history of working on this issue in partnership with other agencies, commissions, and interagency workgroups, and will continue that work into the future. Staff will:

- Continue to support Global Warming Commission
- Pursue additional science
- Keep the Board informed of climate change issues as they emerge.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Annotated History of Climate Change- Related Policy in Oregon
- 2) Climate Change Adaptation Policy Recommendations for the Board of Forestry