

April 22, 2015

Report by Brian Schlaefli, Chair SW Oregon Regional Forest Practice Committee
On behalf of the NW and SW Regional Forest Practice Committees

Chair Imeson, Board Members, State Forester Decker,

For the record, my name is Brian Schlaefli and I am here to give a report on behalf of the NW and SW Oregon Forest Practice Committees. I serve as the SW Committee Chair. With me today is Jon Stewart, a member of the NW Committee.

As you know, the Forest Practice Committees consist of nine members each for three regions within Oregon: NW, SW, and Eastern Oregon. We are appointed by you, the Board of Forestry, to assist you in developing rules appropriate to the forest conditions within our state's regions.

In September 2014, you directed the Department to continue with the current rule analysis, and in conjunction with the Regional Forest Practice Committees and stakeholders, to develop prescriptions for a new Riparian Protection Rule designed to meet the Protecting Cold Water (PCW) criterion to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP) and facilitate flexibility in harvest approaches through consideration of regulatory measures, voluntary approaches or a combination thereof, including:

- a. Variable retention;
- b. No-cut buffer rule alternatives; and
- c. Appropriate criteria for a Plan for Alternate Practice.

In addition, you directed the Department to work in conjunction with the Regional Forest Practice Committees and stakeholders, to continue analysis of:

- a. Geographic Regions in western Oregon to which the rule should apply, and
- b. To which stream segments the rule should apply (i.e., only those streams with salmon, steelhead, or bull trout present; the entire network of small and medium fish streams; or something in between).

Since this assignment in September, the NW and SW Committees have met jointly for a total of five meetings. The vast majority of the combined 18 members of our committees have been in attendance at each meeting. We have had good representation from, and participation by, Salem staff and ODF field personnel. And, we have had much participation and input from other interested individuals from the public. While we have had other topics on our agendas at each meeting, our time and effort has been primarily focused on review, analysis, deliberation, and formulation of recommendations and prescriptions for a new Riparian Protection Rule designed to meet the PCW criterion to the Maximum Extent Practicable. At the June Board of Forestry meeting, you will hear the outcome of our work. Today, my intent is to give you a general summary of our meetings.

We actually began our efforts in August 2014. The sole purpose of this meeting was to expand the depth and breadth of choices that the BOF might consider as you decide how to proceed (or not) with rule analysis. We used this meeting for our members to "think outside of the box". I gave public comment at the September 3, 2014 BOF meeting regarding the outcome of our August meeting and it is part of those minutes.

At our November meeting, we reviewed the BOF June 2014 Riparian Rule workshop documents, we reviewed of the RipStream study and the Department's modelling work, we revisited the Systematic Review, and we discussed some shade approaches to meeting the PCW Standard.

In December, we looked at methods for delineating salmon, steelhead, and bull trout (SSBT) streams with ODF&W personnel. We reviewed ODFW distribution maps, data sources, update processes, use of barriers, and the use of a gradient/basin size limit model. We discussed georegions and deliberated the inclusion/exclusion of the various georegions with regard to potential rule changes. And, we began a site-specific analysis of the aerial imagery and tabular data for each private RipStream site.

During our January meeting we reviewed specific data requests previously made to the Department. We continued our detailed review of private RipStream site aerial imagery and tabular data looking for possible root causes and possible operational "fixes" for PCW "failures" and looking for commonalities for PCW "successes". We began our prescription development and recommendation discussion of how to meet the PCW criterion to the maximum extent practicable.

In March, we reviewed and discussed the Department's "decision matrix" and the BOF's process. We continued a focused effort to develop prescription elements and recommendations that you will hear in June. A strong opinion began to form among members to recommend voluntary efforts over regulatory measures. Our members agreed to get feedback on our preliminary prescriptions and recommendations and to explore any further prescriptions or recommendations for our next meeting.

April's meeting was nearly entirely centered on refinement and approval of detailed prescriptions. In May, we intend 1] to review results from the modeling of prescription options, where possible, 2] to address any loose ends remaining, and 3] to finalize our development of prescriptions and recommendations for a final report to you at your June 2015 meeting.

Considerable human capital has been invested in this effort from the NW and SW Committees. However, we are not unique in this regard. I am sure there has been similar efforts by other stakeholder groups and other interested individuals and entities. Not to mention the members of the BOF and ODF. This is important work. I wish to commend the Board's commitment to doing this well rather than doing it quickly. It has allowed time and opportunity to more adequately analyze, deliberate, and formulate approaches to meeting the PCW to the maximum extent practicable.

Thank you for hearing this report from the NW and SW Forest Practice Committees. You will hear more from us in June.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Schlaefli
Chair, SW Regional Forest Practice Committee
On behalf of the NW and SW RFPCs