



Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) Fire Program Review Committee (FPRC)

January 28, 2016

I. Introduction

For the last three fire seasons, Oregon has experienced a significant increase in wildland fires, and related damages and costs. Contributing to the increasing duration and intensity of high fire danger periods have been long-term drought conditions, limited snow pack, significant lightning events, and record breaking temperature periods.

As a result of this trend, ten-year averages for suppression costs and acres burned, along with loss of resources and structures have significantly increased. The amount of firefighting resources required has at times taxed the system, both financially and operationally. The increased need for agency resources has also coincided with a period of high workloads in the Department's other programs including State Forests, Private Forests, and Administration Services, delaying critical work in these program areas.

In response to these challenges, ODF plans to begin a strategic initiative to move towards a more sustainable large fire funding model, fire organization and an agency organization across all programs for the future. This initiative will seek to develop and implement solutions to address long-term, sustainable financial viability, as well as the agency's capacity to provide the resources necessary for a complete and coordinated system in Oregon. This initiative will also help to inform policy options to mitigate increasingly complex wildfire conditions in Oregon.

A critical first step in implementing this initiative will be to conduct a comprehensive program review of the key elements in Oregon's complete and coordinated wildland fire protection system. To facilitate this effort, and incorporate the broad perspectives necessary to be successful, the Department is convening a Fire Program Review Committee comprised of key stakeholders and partners.

The Committee will be appointed by, and be advisory to, the State Forester and the Department. The Committee's work will be incorporated into the Board of Forestry's work plan for 2016 and beyond as needed to implement Committee recommendations. The Board will be the decision-making forum for implementing Committee recommendations that require legislative action (enacting or amending Oregon statutes or changes to the agency budget).

II. Fire Program Review Committee Purpose

The Committee is created for the purpose of advising ODF in its effort to develop and implement an agency initiative that builds toward a more sustainable fire organization, including large fire funding viability.

Vision

To provide recommendations on “Continuous Improvement Strategies” for Oregon’s highly functioning, complete and coordinated wildland fire protection system, with a focus on:

- *Sustainable large wildfire funding*
- *Sustainable wildfire organization*
- *Policy considerations to mitigate increasingly complex wildfire conditions in Oregon.*

➤ **Objective 1:** Sustainable Large Wildfire Funding

- Long-term goal for future biennial budget development:
 - Consider a range of options for large fire funding, including a self-insurance model and/or an alternate structure to the current private insurance.

➤ **Objective 2:** Sustainable Wildfire Organization

- Short-term goal for 2016:
 - Identify immediate capacity needs to address critical shortages in the protection system, as we enter into the 2016 fire season.
- Long-term goal for future biennial budget development:
 - Broad review of the current agency organizational challenges inherent in supporting all agency programs, in the context of more challenging fire seasons. Consider the development of legislative concepts and policy option packages to address these challenges for the 2017 full legislative session.

➤ **Objective 3:** Help inform policy options to mitigate increasingly complex wildfire conditions in Oregon.

- Identify core issues driving the complex fire conditions.
- Consider initiatives and make recommendations towards an implementation plan that align local, private, state and federal partners towards a cohesive wildland fire management strategy in Oregon that achieves the objective to mitigate Oregon’s increasingly complex wildfire conditions.

III. Committee Timeline

The Committee will begin its work December 2015, with a short-term focus on the 2016 fire season. The Committee should complete its work in June of 2016 with a long-term focus on the Agency Request Budget for the 2017-2019 biennium and recommendations for a long-term strategic plan. It is anticipated that four meetings will be required to complete this work as follows:

December 1, 2015

- Orientation (Background and Overview)
- Review Committee Purpose, Organization, and Charter
- Capture key issues and ideas related to the Committee's objectives, and provide guidance for the Committee's two working groups

January 21, 2016

- Working Groups report on initial discussions
- Emergency Fire Cost Committee report on 2016 catastrophic insurance funding decision
- Discuss and refine key issues and findings of the working groups, and provide further guidance as needed

March 14, 2016

- Report on any discussions or actions from the February legislative session
- Review efforts of the Committee's two working groups and begin drafting committee recommendations:
 1. Sustainable Large Fire Funding recommendations
 2. Sustainable Fire Organization recommendations

June 6, 2016

- Finalize and seek consensus on Committee recommendations related to large fire funding and sustainable organization
- Provide recommendations towards a comprehensive wildland fire management plan for Oregon
- Fire Program Review Committee Close-out

IV. Committee Operations

Committee Support: The Department will be responsible for preparing products for the Committee. This Department support will be provided as needed from both the state office and field employees.

Guiding Principles: The committee will consider and adopt a set of guiding principles at the initial meeting of the committee.

Meetings: Ross Holloway will facilitate the meetings. The committee will meet four times as detailed in Section III.

Notes: Committee discussions will be reflected in meeting summaries and will be provided to committee members. The Department will be responsible for taking meeting notes.

Communication and Outreach: Broader communication will be an important component to achieving a positive outcome. The Department will lead efforts here (and seek committee support) on multiple fronts to connect throughout the Committee's effort.

V. Fire Program Review Committee - Membership

ODF:

- Doug Grafe, (Chair) Chief - Fire Protection Division
- Nancy Hirsch, (Vice Chair) Deputy State Forester
- Nils Christoffersen, Board of Forestry Liaison
- Tom Imeson, Board of Forestry Liaison
- Tim Keith, Working Group Co-Chair – Sustainable Large Fire Funding
- Dave Lorenz, Working Group Co-Chair – Sustainable Large Fire Funding
- Travis Medema, Working Group Co-Chair – Sustainable Fire Organization
- Brian Pew, Working Group Co-Chair – Sustainable Fire Organization

Legislature and Governor's Office:

- Brett Brownscombe, Governor's Natural Resource Office
- Matt Stayner, Legislative Fiscal Office
- Cathleen Connolly, Chief Financial Office
- Representative Kathleen Taylor
- Representative John Huffman
- Representative Gene Whisnant
- Senator Bill Hansell
- Senator Betsy Johnson
- Senator Michael Dembrow
- Senator Chris Edwards

Stakeholders and Agency Partners:

- Ken Cummings (Vice Chair), Emergency Fire Cost Committee
- Kristina McNitt, Oregon Forest & Industries Council
- Rex Storm, Association of Oregon Loggers
- Roger Beyer, Oregon Small Woodlands Association
- Amanda Rich, The Nature Conservancy
- Joe Justice, Forest Landowner
- Phil Adams, Forest Landowner
- Jim Walker, Oregon State Fire Marshal
- Mike Haske/Cathy Harris, Bureau of Land Management

Congressional Delegation:

- U.S Senator Jeff Merkley
- U.S. Senator Ron Wyden

VI. Working Groups

Sustainable Large Fire Funding Work Group:

- Tim Keith, Co-Chair
- Dave Lorenz, Co-Chair
- Ken Cummings/ Pete Sikora, EFCC Representative
- Cathleen Connolly, Chief Financial Office
- Matt Stayner, Legislative Fiscal Office
- Melvin Thornton, District Manager
- Dave Jacobs, Unit Forester
- Mike Cafferata, District Forester
- Kate Skinner, District Forester
- Todd Scharff, DAS Risk Management
- Tracey Wrolson, Area Admin Representative
- Toni Chambers, Salem Protection Staff
- James Short, Administrative Services
- Phil Adams, Land Owner
- Roger Beyer, Oregon Small Woodlands Association
- Rex Storm, Association of Oregon Loggers
- Heath Curtiss, Oregon Forest & Industries Council
- Jim Walker, OSFM
- Amanda Rich, The Nature Conservancy
- Jeff Friesen, Willis Representative
- Greg Miller, Land Owner

Sustainable Fire Organization Work Group:

- Travis Medema, Co-Chair
- Brian Pew, Co-Chair
- Mike Totey, District Forester
- Mike Robison, District Manager
- Joe Hessel, Unit Forester
- Matt Mackey, Assistant Unit Forester
- John Tillotson, State Forests
- Brent O’Nion, Stewardship Forester
- Karen Swearingen, ODF Salem Protection Staff
- Laura York, Executive Support-COD
- Roger Beyer, Oregon Small Woodlands Association
- Rex Storm, Association of Oregon Loggers
- Seth Barnes, Oregon Forest & Industries Council
- Mariana Ruiz-Temple, Deputy Oregon State Fire Marshal
- Joe Justice, Land Owner

Wildfire Policy Working Group:

- Chad Davis, Chair
- Meg Mitchell, USFS Representative
- TBD, BLM Representative
- Phil Adams, Land Owner
- Roger Beyer, Oregon Small Woodlands Association
- Rex Storm, Association of Oregon Loggers
- TBD, Oregon Forest & Industries Council
- Jim Walker, Oregon State Fire Marshal
- Amanda Rich, The Nature Conservancy

VII. Outreach & Coordination

Broader communication, collaboration and outreach will be an important component to achieving a positive outcome for the Committee's effort. Meetings will be open to the public and the following groups and individuals will be invited to attend the Committee meetings, in addition to receiving updates on the Committee's progress.

Legislature:

- Senator Devlin
- Representative Rayfield
- Oregon House Interim Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee
- Other Committees?
- Others?

Stakeholders and Agency Partners:

- Oregon Farm Bureau
- The Conservation Fund
- Association of Oregon Counties
- National Wildfire Suppression Association
- Oregon Fire Chief's Association
- Committee for Family Forestlands
- Tribes
- Oregon Military Department
- Oregon National Guard
- Office of Emergency Management
- Oregon Department of Corrections
- Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training
- U.S. Forest Service
- Keep Oregon Green
- Oregon Conservation Network
- Others?