



## Issue Paper #1

### Deschutes County

#### Forestland Classification Committee

#### Issue: Who should do the initial mapping?

November 24, 2014

#### Background

As lands are digitized through the Forestland Classification process, a GIS map will be created to visually display the classification. These maps will also be used to generate assessment role data for the County tax assessor to use for the collection of ODF protection assessments.

#### Issue

Should the committee itself spend the time drawing lines on all the maps or should they establish some mapping standards for ODF to utilize in producing initial maps for the committee to edit and approve.

#### Alternative 1: Have the committee produce the initial maps.

- The committee would not have to develop mapping standards for ODF to use, but would have to develop standards for themselves.
- The committee may have difficulties deciding on where initial lines should be drawn. This would be time consuming.
- ODF would only have to digitize the lines the committee gives them which would be easier and less time consuming for ODF.

#### \*\*Alternative 2: Have ODF produce the initial maps.

- The committee would simply have to edit the maps as ODF produces them saving the committee considerable time.
- ODF would have better access to all the layers affecting the decisions such as ownership, soils layers, tax lots, etc. This would make drawing the lines easier and more productive.
- The committee's time may be better served by setting mapping standards and having ODF GIS staff make the initial maps.

**\*\*Alternative 2 selected at the 11/21/14 Committee Meeting**



**Issue Paper #2**  
**Deschutes County**

**Forestland Classification Committee**

**Issue: Mapping standards – polygon size**

November 24, 2014

**Background**

As lands are digitized through the Forestland Classification process, a GIS map will be created to visually display the classification. Setting standards for polygon size will provide the person digitizing good sideboards for proper mapping.

**Issue**

Mapping size (acreage of individual polygons) will affect the accuracy of the classification of lands, the assessments landowners pay, and the amount of effort required to produce the classification maps. What should the standard be?

**Alternative 1: Limit mapping size to 10 acres.**

- No polygon would be smaller than 10 acres in size.
- Small areas of Class 2 forestland within a larger swath of Class 3 lands would be classified as Class 3 because they wouldn't meet the 10 acre requirement.
- Small areas of Class 3 forestland within a larger swath of Class 2 lands would be classified as timber because they wouldn't meet the 10 acre requirement.
- Mapping would be generally easier.

**\*\*Alternative 2: Limit mapping size to 5 acres.**

- Mapping would be a bit more time consuming.
- Accuracy would increase, due to the smaller polygons, for delineating areas such as stringers of timber or openings.
- All areas 5 acres or less would be incorporated into the surrounding classification.

**\*\*Alternative 2 selected at the 11/21/14 Committee Meeting**

**Alternative 3: Limit mapping size to 1 acre or no lower size limit.**

- Mapping would be tedious and time consuming.
- Accuracy would increase, due to the very small size of the polygons, for delineating areas such as small openings and stringers of timber.



## Issue Paper #3

### Deschutes County

#### Forestland Classification Committee

#### Issue: Mapping standards – edge detail

November 24, 2014

### Background

As lands are digitized through the Forestland Classification process, a GIS map will be created to visually display the classification. Setting standards for edge detail will provide the person digitizing good sideboards for proper mapping.

### Issue

Mapping polygon edges can be very detailed (following all areas of type changes) or less detailed (using straighter or softer edges around type changes). The level of edge detail will determine the assessments landowners pay, and the amount of effort required to produce the classification maps.

#### **Alternative 1: Follow edges in very detailed manner.**

- This will be very tedious and time consuming.
- It will provide the best detail for mapping and assessing acres to the landowner.
- Mapping accuracy will increase.

#### **\*\*Alternative 2: Follow edges in a smooth and general manner.**

- Mapping will be much less tedious and time consuming.
- The mapping will still be accurate, however not as detailed.

**\*\*Alternative 2 selected at the 11/21/14 Committee Meeting**



**Issue Paper #4**  
**Deschutes County**  
**Forestland Classification Committee**

**Issue: Right-of-Ways**

November 24, 2014

**Background**

Many utilities have Right of Ways through forestland. Of these, many are required by statute to maintain adequate clearing along these Right of Ways with the exception of grass and brush.

**Issue**

A Right of Way that traverses the landscape and passes through forestland may not have any timber growing within the Right of Way but the land has the site productivity potential to do so.

**\*\*Alternative 1: Classify land within a Right of Way based upon site productivity of the immediately adjacent land.**

- Land within a ROW may have potential for timber production, but given current Statutes, it may be manually kept void of timber.
- Would make classification simpler by not having long narrow strips of Class 3 grazing through Class 2 forestland (unless the surrounding classification is also Class 3).
- Fire in ROW's can quickly spread to the surrounding timber where suppression is more difficult and costly to fight.

**\*\*Alternative 1 selected at the 11/21/14 Committee Meeting**

**Alternative 2: Classify land within a Right of Way based upon vegetation present at time of classification with consideration to statutory obligations.**

- A power line ROW could create a very long and narrow polygon within the surrounding forestland classification.
- This land may have the potential site productivity to be forestland.
- In a large fire, this narrow clearing through forestland may or may not provide for an adequate fuel break.
- This would make digitizing harder due to the need to create long narrow strips that don't generally follow taxlot or other GIS layer boundaries.



**Issue Paper #5**  
**Deschutes County**

**Forestland Classification Committee**

**Issue: Non-paying/Paying Land inside a Forest Protection District**

November 24, 2014

**Background**

By statute, all lands that meet the definition of 'forestland' within ODF's Forest Protection District should pay an assessment for fire protection. Currently some classified and unclassified lands within the district boundary are not. These lands would generally be classified as Class 3 grazing lands. It is not known exactly why during the last County Classification process some of these lands were not included in the county fire protection assessment rolls. This does not pertain to agricultural or other exempted lands.

**Issue**

A decision point for Forest Land Classification Committees is whether or not all classified lands (Class 2 and 3) within a Forest Protection District should be assessed. In many cases these classified lands that do not pay fire patrol assessment receive the same fire protection services as classified paying lands; creating an inequity among landowners.

**Alternative 1: Continue with current approach of having Paying and Non Paying lands within a Forest Protection District boundary.**

- Classification error and assessment inequities will continue to exist among landowners.
- Some land will receive fire protection services without paying assessment which will increase costs to landowners paying the assessment.
- This is not in alignment with statute.

**\*\*Alternative 2: Classify and assess all land within ODF's Forest Protection District Boundary.**

- Classification Committee would review and make a determination as to the forestland definition (Class 2 or Class 3) on all lands within the existing District Forest Protection Boundary. This approach will provide an opportunity to review current classified and non-classified or non-assessed lands.
- All land receiving fire protection would pay for the service.
- Creates equity among landowners in that all landowners receiving protection would pay their fair share.
- Land currently protected will continue to be protected. Would eliminate any unprotected land within the district boundary.
- May have some effect on Rural Fire District budgets if ODF classifies and assesses new acres within a current RFD boundary.

**\*\*Alternative 2 selected at the 11/21/14 Committee Meeting**

**Alternative 3: Recommend realignment of the ODF Forest Protection District Boundary to exclude nonpaying land.**

- The Forest Land Classification Committee would recommend the best placement of the District's Forest Protection boundary.
- This may create additional land within the County that will not receive any fire protection services (unprotected land).
- Would not have a negative impact to RFD budgets.



**Issue Paper #6**  
**Deschutes County**  
**Forestland Classification Committee**

**Issue: Dual Assessment**

November 24, 2014

### **Background**

The incidence of fighting fires in Urban Interface areas is increasing as traditional forestland continues to be transformed into small acreages with homes dotted across the landscape. This type of fire fighting requires a complete and coordinated system including both wildland and structural agencies in order to protect homes and forest resources.

### **Issue**

Forest Land Classification Committees are charged with deciding whether or not to continue to assess forestland within Rural Fire District (RFD's) boundaries. This decision is very important as it dictates the level of wildland fire response ODF provides. In addition to the response from ODF, this decision may impact the revenue that RFD's will receive. In Deschutes County, all fire districts within ODF's protection district have dual assessments.

#### **\*\*Alternative 1: Continue to assess within Rural Fire Protection Districts**

- The committee will classify lands within fire districts (that are within the ODF Protection District Boundary). The amount of acres under dual assessment may shift a bit but is not expected to dramatically.
- In this scenario, ODF provides protection for the wildland fuels, while the RFD's provide protection for the wildland and structural fuels. In addition the RFD's may assess for the structure and up to 5 acres. These two services are complimentary and interdependent for providing fire protection to landowners.

**\*\*Alternative 1 selected at the 11/21/14 Committee Meeting**

#### **Alternative 2: Do not assess within Rural Fire Protection Districts**

- If ODF does not assess, a typical wildland response (within the RFD) would be under a Mutual Aid type agreement unless the fire is deemed a threat to ODF protection outside the RFD.
- Under this scenario, RFD's are able to assess on the value of the entire property.
- Wildland protection would be performed by the RFD's with some support by ODF through mutual aid only.
- RFD's would have to bear the costs of additional firefighting resources that may be necessary (such as helicopters and airtankers).

#### **Other Considerations:**

- Areas East of the Classification line but West of the District boundary are not currently being assessed and will have an impact on the Cloverdale FD budget.



**Issue Paper #7**  
**Deschutes County**  
**Forestland Classification Committee**

**Issue: Juniper Classification**

November 24, 2014

**Background**

In parts of Deschutes County, much of the fringe area adjacent to the typical Class 2 forestland is occupied by Juniper. Juniper has encroached upon typical grazing land over the last 50 years with the suppression of fires. Many of these areas once occupied by a scattered Juniper now have thicker stands with scattered Pine as well. Currently there is a very limited market for Juniper wood products as compared to other conifer species.

**Issue**

Within Deschutes County, much of the Juniper dominant stands have a healthy stand of grass in the understory and Juniper stands are very proficient in creating a thick duff layer. Fires in these stands require more effort than a typical grazing land fire which increases the cost to suppress those fires.

**Alternative 1: Classify Juniper dominant stands as Class 2 forestland.**

- Must have potential site productivity of 20 cubic ft per acre per year at culmination of mean annual increment.
- Is there growth yield data available for Juniper?
- This will require a shift in the way Juniper has been classified in the past.
- Juniper may not have a market today, but could in the near future.
- If Juniper is classified as Class 2 forestland and the area undergoes a Juniper eradication project, would the land be reclassified or maintain Class 2 classification because of potential site productivity?

**\*\*Alternative 2: Classify Juniper dominant stands as grazing land.**

- Status quo with past approaches of classifying Juniper as Class 3.
- Grazing assessment is less than timber assessment but Juniper fires are more expensive to fight than grazing fires, so is this land paying its' fair share for fire protection?
- Does land dominated by Juniper have the ability to pay for itself? Since Juniper is not a marketable commercial tree species, those lands can be considered unproductive, hence not feasible for landowners to pay the higher assessment rate.

**\*\*Alternative 2 selected at the 11/21/14 Committee Meeting**



**Issue Paper #8**  
**Deschutes County**  
**Forestland Classification Committee**

**Issue: Agricultural Lands**

November 24, 2014

**Background**

Deschutes County has some agriculture industry that ranges from crop land, irrigated pasture to dry land pastures. Through the classification process, agricultural lands may be identified and exempt from the classification process due to the limited fire hazard present on those lands.

**Issue**

Given the array of agricultural uses on land within Deschutes County, what constitutes agricultural land which would be exempt from the classification process of forestland?

**Alternative 1: All agricultural lands that are annually cropped shall be exempt.**

- This would be fairly easy to identify through aerial photos, it would be consistent with current classifications and not include significant new lands.

**\*\*Alternative 2: All agricultural lands that are irrigated to prevent fire spread shall be exempt.**

- This would exclude all non irrigated lands and add those acres to the assessment roles. It would also potentially be a contentious issue with ranching community.
- This would also exclude dry pasture lands that may be heavily grazed.

**\*\*Alternative 2 selected at the 11/21/14 Committee Meeting**