Welcome and introductions

- Committee members and guests introduced themselves and their representation. There was a slight change in the order of the agenda.

Opening remarks and review of agenda – today’s work flow

- Fire Protection Chief Grafe noted that the objective today is to fine-tune a set of clear recommendations for the June 6th FPRC. He acknowledged a need to look at the big picture to help sustain the fire protection system, noting there’s a parallel project through the Secretary of State’s office. Important upcoming meetings: June 7th EFCC, and June 8th the Board of Forestry. Co-Chairs Brian Pew and Travis Medema shared appreciation of the Fire Protection Division on the details of this work group and everyone’s participation here today and well as everyone’s flexibility with a compressed timeline.

- The agenda is compressed today with an aim to have a general discussion on the issue papers, provide input, and answer any questions.

Discussion Topics

Severity Incremental Investment Considerations

- Reviewed the 2015/2016 severity plan matrix and what each additional $500k increment would provide.
- Severity investments for the 2016 fire season were provided, generally in ranking of Division priority. Thinking to the 2017-19 budget process, does this group have recommendations to consider investments above and beyond these?

  - If dollars were available to procure these now:
    - The first $500k (contracted resources) would be available money in August, but at the time of need, they may or may not be there, depending on each fire season.
    - The second group (Helitack) Type III helicopters should be ready now, but there would be work to get the additional firefighters. It was noted that it is very challenging to put Helitack together for this fire season, but within a year or two with training and qualifications, would still be a great asset. Discussion how a helitack crew functions, how the crews are located between John Day and potentially La Grande, and clarification the use and meaning of aviation ‘management’ as a certification and not as a job classification.
    - The third group (SEATS) are available now due to additional resources available nationally.

- A request for clarification on the Policy Option Package, covering the $5.8M and any additional severity funds. An E-Board request would have to be made for the 2016 fire season. ODF has historically used the process of asking for a budget that comes through the special purpose
appropriation (SPA). Co-Chair Hirsch assured the group that the agency is still going to do the right thing if fire comes up but ODF is trying to provide assurance for this system.

- What is planned and proposed for severity this fire season raises concerns with adding additional pieces to a program that is hard to manage now.
- Aviation assets are very effective in a timely initial attack, but a request was made for ODF to perform a ‘value for cost’ estimate. There is potential for the FPRC to ask for examples of what we can do with these additional resources. Clarification that ODF lacks capacity to analyze these cause & effect statistics, hindering the ability to design effective firefighting techniques.
- Severity recommendation – The group has the desire to move to FPRC for review but wishes to determine the added value of the additional severity investment. Co-Chair Hirsch noted that this group doesn’t have recommend specific dollar amounts, but to perhaps can recommend that the severity discussion be presented full Committee with information relative to investment options above the current budget.

**Issue paper / business case reports feedback**

- Doug Grafe provided context on the agency’s POP process, noting that this group has influenced ODF already through the usual budget process.
  - Aviation capacity support position
  - Fire business finance position
  - Investments in training are key (workforce capacity) as is building outside the agency, gaining greater access to training.
- Discussion on issue papers: It is difficult to determine priority as a work group not having the same expertise that fire protection division has. ODF did the staff work to capture the issues in detail but still desires input from this group on the priority, etc. Doug Grafe noted that it would be enough for the group to provide information on the most important issues to bring forward.

**Workforce Capacity**

Co-Chair Hirsch noted that these POPs are regarding the fire protection division but there are POPs that go across the agency, specifically the POP regarding private forests that’s focused more on the WUI. A position added in private or state forests adds capacity to the fire and the agency as a whole. There is concern about moving forward with a recommendation until we understand where that goes. Chief Grafe noted that there is redundancy on the stewardship forester side with regard to the POP.

With regard to the mid-level management issue paper, stewardship foresters play a big role in the field leadership management. The purpose is to have people with the correct skills and abilities to stop fires with initial attack. The context of adding capacity could apply to any forester in private or state forests and should be married with some fire funding to maximize use of fire and other funds.

Consensus that this does not rise to a recommendation to the FPRC but was agreed that this will need to be looked at more closely in the future.

Reminder to group of the charter – sustainability across agency. When this process was started, the co-chairs went to five different places to look at this information both internally and externally. Co-Chair Hirsch noted that this is a vast array of investment considerations and it is important to find a balance between what you need to build the agency versus what you can do to add capacity externally.

With the training capacity piece, ODF is already training current staff but the issue paper says it could be done better. Potential to expand to include other agencies/people.
It was noted that so far, the only discussion has been around added capacity. With training, the attempt is to determine the foundation for enhancing ready reserve militia to provide quality training across the board to work with landowners and contractors because those relationships are already built, then reach out to other state agencies and National Guard.

**Additional feedback/comments on issues papers & wrap up**

- Co-Chair Medema reminded group that perspective/thoughts are really important for full Committee
- It was noted that there are several of these issue papers that belong in the base level of protection such as seasonal employees, etc. Provide distinction between what belongs state-wide (HQSC) and what belongs in the district level. This should include equipment since it is a district issue.
- With regard to the area training coordinator issue, there is value in training to add additional capacity and would take this recommendation to the June 6th meeting, recognizing that more work may need to be done. Discussion on state vs. Federal training requirements, curriculum development, local geographic training and spending training dollars wisely.
- As we look into the future at POPs, the homework around components and what issues are help define the themes that are priorities.

**Fire Prevention Policy Refocus**

- ODF should refocus to address causes of fires and the response to them, rather than adding more people and money, channeling future investments on prevention and initial attack to better understand how responses are successful or unsuccessful. There is concern that more money is spent on industrial prevention when most fires are human caused. Should ODF continue to invest in tradition prevention tactics?
- Consensus from group to move forward with this recommendation with more detailed work to be done within the division.

**Fire Business (Workforce Capacity)**

- Collecting outstanding revenues (federal, FEMA) is very important and ODF doesn’t currently have staff to get these done in a timely manner.

**Aviation Capacity (Workforce Capacity)**

- Flexibility is needed to move resource from geographic to statewide availability.
- Hard to determine priority but should move on recommendation to full Committee

**Extended seasonal employment (Empowering our Ready Reserve and Militia)**

- While extremely important, this is a longer-term look and need to have discussions with landowners and associations as to what that will look like.
- No recommendation for full Committee now

**Common Operating Picture Technology (COP)/Technology**

- This was a robust discussion in a previous meeting of this group and folks understand that there is value but want to understand more about it. Keeping up with new/emerging technology will allow ODF to become more efficient at a statewide level.
- There is high potential for a COP taking the longer-term approach. ODF should seek the best system out of the two pilot phases, with the preference is for a single platform.
- Consensus was made that more work as division and agency needs to be done around which platform to use – what makes most sense, is most cost-effective, and provides highest level of service. No recommendation for full Committee now

**Fire Prevention Outreach (tied to Fire Prevention Policy Refocus)**

- This issue is underdeveloped and lacks funding.
- SB 360 discussion around mitigating landscape from being more receptive to fires. With regard to funding, when SB 360 was implemented, ODF received federal funds for its implementation. There is a triple assessment for small landowners within the WUI. Co-Chair Hirsch noted the SB 360 discussion is also being had in the Wildfire Policy work group and the agency will merge what comes out of this workgroup with the Policy workgroup before taking to the full Committee.
- Consensus that prevention is important but the agency should seek opportunities to leverage or merge in order to keep things such as aviation, capacity, and prevention.
- Community outreach for prevention is important as most fires are human caused, not industrial. Consensus from group is for education outreach rather than put money into incentives for landowners for defensible space and to amplify prevention messages through KOG.

- **Sustaining State Forest and Other ODF Division Participation in Statewide Fire Effort**
  - Discussion on the cost of training for other, non-fire divisions including the concept of a training fund to help fund fire training for private forest, state forest, administration divisions and potentially training for other agency personnel, landowners, contractors.
  - Also noted was that State Forests pays for all fire training, paying full assessment on property, and the admin. rate then asked to leave normal jobs.
  - There was concern that this may create a conflict with the contractor’s community, but this fund does not pertain to traditional contracting. Another part of this vision is to train people for non-traditional positions i.e. FEMA claims training. There is no “on the shelf” training for FEMA; ODF would have to provide that to the other agencies. Rangeland Protection Associations rely on ODF for training but it is something that we’re not getting to it because there isn’t time.
  - Would ODF outsource training? The primary issue is how to fund it; how to deliver it secondary. Some trainings are very specific to ODF, which ODF will put on. More standard trainings could be done by contract.
  - Offering incentives to get people trained – if person gets trained to specific level for fire, they become fire/police eligible for PERS, which is a huge benefit. This idea is brought up related to ODF being able to tap other agencies (are they eligible for P&F in other non-P&F agencies - would it be an incentive?).
  - Consensus from work group is to recommend this issue - internal/external training for sustainability to get most people to participate when the need arises.

- **Sustainable Organization Discussion/Round Table**
  - Broader discussion needed regarding leveraging, partnerships/relationships – exploring beyond current. Sustainability of the organization goes far beyond just additional capacity.
  - It was noted that the system is stressed right now, organizationally, and when looking across divisions, stresses are growing and demands that the fire program places on other divisions are considerable. This interactive system needs help in figuring out how we get there. If fire is core, what does that mean for the other programs in the agency? Can ODF do the job across the divisions in the way the public expects, under its current system? Do other programs and division shrink and cut staff? If that’s the case, it reduces the size of the militia, even if the militia model is maintained, it puts more strain on system. Everything is connected.
  - There was concern that this workgroup is not equipped to answer this question because there are many unknowns, in cause and response, forest resiliency and increasingly complex fire seasons. There needs to be a more strategic look integrated into things that ODF has to respond to. We are trying to discuss trends but we don’t have the data. The system works but continuous improvement is healthy.
  - There is never going to be perfect data but we should aim toward a better sense of sustainability than we currently have, not necessarily a perfect sense. It is important to come up with some steps that make sense and have some sense of a broad agreement to achieve success and improve, knowing that
it won’t be perfect. The hope is to improve ODF’s ability to manage through difficult situations (fire & other objectives of agency). The SOS audit is going to point as much as anything at true costs of fire, which show greater than what most of us talk about.

- Landowner components have changed significantly, with a new challenge to engage non-traditional landowners (less local mom & pop and more corporate)
- Money is tight, especially for Eastern Oregon landowners who have the highest cost and lowest productivity and no market. There is no incentive left to be forestland owner in Eastern Oregon. From the west side perspective, how much more can west side landowners afford to subsidize the east side to be a complete and coordinated system?
- Discussion on the stress of ODF IMTs which the division is trying to maintain.
- The lack of training to Rural Fire Districts has shown significantly. RPAs can’t afford to pay a consultant for training, it has to come from us. We either add capacity to plug holes or start pulling things away. It is difficult to pull things back without significant impact on the agency.
- With regard to priorities, morale is very important, not always asking for help but looking at the structure and organization and taking peoples’ skills and abilities into account and shuffling things internally to get the best out of our folks and bring out longevity. Fire folks are a rare breed and love doing what they do but there’s a fine line when doing what you love becomes work and we’re approaching that as an agency. This process has been helpful to take every opportunity to look at what we’re doing and ask why.
- It is interesting to see the dynamic between ODF & Forest Protective Associations. Partnerships and respect between ODF & landowners are the basis of sustainability. From a private landowner perspective, ODF is committed to working with landowners. Oregon is one of a handful of western states experiencing the process of trying to get ahead of the curve. Looking at what is going on in the bigger picture is important. Aviation management is something very important and ODF should try to put that at a high level.
- All issues discussed are important. Given the lack of General Fund dollars, there is a need to prioritize what’s doable in the next year or two. All issues should be kept alive and on the table.

- **Wrap-up/Feedback**
  - Chief Grafe stressed the power of discussion in today’s round table and appreciates everyone’s honesty, genuineness and trust to speak freely.
  - Co-Chair Pew echoes Doug’s commented that this group really didn’t hear the private forest or administrative services story about what they put aside for fire. It should be noted that State Forests has legal mandates too, there is no clause that says you no longer have to do your daily job when there is a fire. State Forests already has low staffing levels so the division is not doing anything extra and State Forests prioritizes the revenue generating activities after fire.
  - Co-Chair Hirsch noted that when discussing sustainable organization, particularly around investment opportunities and added capacity, we really mean “towards something,” the mission of the agency. It is about keeping Oregon forests green and growing and working and providing that range of benefits. From policy perspective, our agency has multiple mandates. Policy questions at stake go beyond the scope of the workgroup. On operational level, ODF puts fire first on a day to day basis that put at stake other things that ODF is mandated to do. Is that sustainable towards the longer term mission of the agency? No. The dialog from today is much appreciated. A complete and coordinated system is not about ODF, it’s about cooperators, landowners, ODF employees. If we can’t do it here, we can’t do it in the field. It’s not about ODF capacity, it’s about enjoying Oregon.
  - Co-Chair Medema noted that ODF values continuous improvement. With additional stresses recently across ODF, OSFM, landowners, and with options to make investments or system enhancements, we need to be looking towards the future and think differently about our business.
The co-chairs will gather today’s discussion and share with the workgroup to give an opportunity to help guide the framework for the presentation to the full Committee. The final set of recommendations is due to the full Committee by May 31st.

We will go ahead with recommendation for severity and also present a suite of concepts and ideas vetted and discussed presented to Committee, noting that stronger alignment is still needed on some issues.

Meeting adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

Attendees

- Doug Grafe, ODF FPR Committee Chair
- Travis Medema, ODF Workgroup Co-chair
- Brian Pew, ODF Workgroup Co-chair
- Ron Graham, ODF Deputy Chief Protection
- Brett Brownscombe, Governor’s Natural Resource Office
- Tom Imeson, BOF Chair
- Karen Swearingen, ODF
- Rex Storm, AOL
- Matt Mackey, ODF Asst. Unit Forester
- Roger Beyer, OSWA
- Gary Springer, State Forests
- Nancy Hirsch, ODF FPR Co-Chair
- Chrystal Bader, ODF Core Team

- Jamie Paul, FPRC Project Manager
- John Tillotson, ODF State Forests
- Seth Barnes, OFIC
- Randy Hereford, Starker Forests
- Joe Hessel (cc)
- Mike Totey, ODF District Forester
- Bob Young, ODF Wildfire Policy WG Co-Chair
- Rod Nichols, ODF Public Affairs
- Major Corey Jones, Deputy Director Military Support
- Amelia Eveland, Secretary of State Auditing Team
- Ann Walker, Private Landowner
- Adam Meyer, Oregon Conservation Network
- Tom Fields, ODF Fire Prevention
- Amy Patrick, OFIC