

Governor's Council on Wildlife Response Meeting Summary

June 21, 2019 - 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

World Forestry Center, 4033 SW Canyon Road, Portland, OR 97221

Members in attendance:

Matt Donegan, Eric Cutler, Mark Bennet, Russ Hoeflich, Mark Labhart, Chris Chamber, Karla Chambers, Representative Lynn Findley, Representative Pam Marsh, Ken Cummings, Kirstin Aird, Allyn Ford, Linda Lind, Charles Wilhoite

Chair Matt Donegan started the meeting by making a few key points:

- The purpose for convening a special meeting; to secure support/guidance from the Council for narrowing the focus of its work on a number of priority areas:
- The Council should not try to replicate others work; it is a strategic body — designed to give efforts to manage wildlife a boost/focus/emphasis
- Mitigation is perhaps the Council's biggest challenge — so it must be strategic in its approach to recommending the optimal plan to achieve the state's priorities
 - Recommendations must be sustainable: what form must the public/private partnership take to executive the Plan?
 - Part of sustainability is identifying funds necessary to carry out mitigation work.

Mr. Donegan summarized what he believes is the opinion of the Council:

- Wildland Urban Interface (WUI): management priorities are much clear – manage to protect people, property, critical infrastructure. Social and economic values take highest priority
- Non-WUI: There is higher clarity for ecological priorities
- Non-WUI, multiple use: areas with most values, least clarity for priorities. priorities best revealed through scenario analysis

Mr. Donegan suggested that agreement on this matrix will help focus the work of the mitigation committee focus its scenario planning. A discussion followed:

- Mr. Cutler, Commissioner Bennet, and Mr. Hoeflich suggested that water has a unique role to play:
- Rep Findley: suggested special Consideration perhaps is a better term than restricted
- Ms. Chambers: sees sustainable forestry at the center of our model.
- Mr. Hallman supported the idea of using a risk/benefit model to help decisionmakers prioritize mitigation
- MR. Hoeflich argued that considering both public and private timberland in the WUI was important. Mr. Donegan concurred; trying to get to asset protection in WUI, so adding public timberlands to the asset list makes sense

Mr. Donegan summarized this discussion: While he will continue to wordsmith, there is an agreement on

Treating WUI separately, with a focus on social and economic values
Non-WUI, main priority is ecological; while balancing other priorities

The then focused on the subject of developing an integrated management strategy

Council members focused on the scenario analysis slide, and the discussion focused on three subjects

- Response: How are objectives (social, environmental, economic) impacted by different policies? How do we measure response? The example used to illustrate was ‘Guided by policy X, what is the fire response and smoke response and human health response?’
- Policy options include forest management; thinning, prescribed burn, and managed wildfire (given certain levels of public funding)
- Funding sources: Given levels of public funding, and costs, what additional funding sources (timber, water/energy/property surcharges, carbon, outdoors, ecosystems serves) are needed to achieve financial sustainability?

Discussion then focused on Scenario Analysis Slide 2

- Mr. Hallman and Mr. Donegan discussed the role wildfire plays in promoting a healthy natural system.
- Ms. Chambers suggested that sustainability goals may argue for a big burn to put a forest ecosystem on a path to sustainability
- Representative Marsh and Mr. Chambers discussed fuels treatment and commercial thinning
- There was a discussion about the role (if any) increased commercial activity might play in forest restoration, and Representative Marsh urged caution when using the term commercial thinning to describe forest restoration efforts.
- Ms. Linde indicated that differentiating commercial and non-commercial thinning is important.
- Mr. Labhart suggested that a better term to use is density management
- Mr. Donegan agreed that care should be exercised when using the term commercial thinning
- Mr. Wilhoite asked whether or not commercial harvest proceeds had ever been used to pay for restoration? ODF Chad Davis confirmed that proceeds have been used in the past (back to about 2010)

- Mr. Hoeflich said that ecologically strategic thinning would help communicate the right purpose.
- Ms. Aird asked if we can delineate the prescribed burn (from a health point of view)?

Conversation then focused on management objectives

Objectives must be aligned with public support

- There was general agreement that vulnerable populations should be a priority, including elderly
- Findley: emphasized measurable and attainable
- Ms. Linde also emphasized recreation
- Commissioner Bennett emphasized the need to cover rangelands and western juniper
- Mr. Cummings reported that the fire suppression committee will offer specific recommendations on rangeland protection association
- Mr. Ford asked how quickly recommendations can be acted on? Mr. Donegan suggested that there would likely to be different timelines for each recommendation. There was a general discussion about the opportunity created by the emerging relationship between Oregon and the USFS under the Shared Stewardship Agreement.
- Mr. Miner reiterated the need for short term progress and long-term planning efforts
- Mr. Hoeflich emphasized the value of a unified, bi-partisan message to convey to Governor and others.
- Representative Marsh proposed that work in the WUI should be prioritized because it's an area of agreement
- There was general discussion about smoke as a priority, and the fact that reducing smoke risk was a long-term goal

Mr. and Mr. Donegan discussed the interconnection between the work of the Suppression and Mitigation committees. The more completed by the suppression committee, the clearer the mandate becomes for the mitigation committee.

Mr. Donegan concluded that the mitigation committee would focus first on modeling/scenario possibilities in time to present to the Governor in September, then plan longer term decision making and funding.

Mr. Hallman supported the WUI focus, which would involve both public and private forest land.

Commissioner Bennett used California as an example of when private lands cause increases in fire intensity. Mr. Hallman referenced some forest management efforts in Florida to reinforce the point made by Commissioner Bennet

Mr. Hoeflich reminded the group that Oregon has a defensible space law, offering his opinion that it is not enforced beyond the point that property changes ownership.

Mr. Bird discussed the focus on WUI and its connection to transmission lines. He used his companies approach to 'continuous improvement' to illustrate how PAC approaches fuels/forest management.

Mr. Labhart suggested that the Spokane, Washington area might have some transmission/fuels management experiences to share with our efforts.

Mr. Hoeflich reminded the room that the public worries about economic viability of sectors most impacted by wildfire.

The meeting concluded with a summary from Mr. Donegan:

- The Council confirms that the work of the suppression and mitigation committees is on track,
 - Focus on WUI with social and economic goals as highest priority
 - Focus on non-WUI with ecological goals as priority
- Mr. Donegan then discussed briefly the subject of communications: The Mission of the Council is not to replace existing communications but what should we do or recommend?