

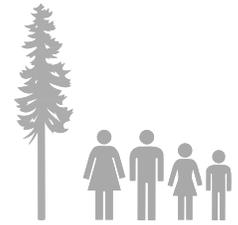


"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

Committee for Family Forestlands

Conference Call Minutes

September 25, 2017



Pursuant to public notice made by news release with statewide distribution, a committee meeting of the Committee for Family Forestlands [an advisory body to the Oregon Board of Forestry with authority established in Oregon Revised Statute 527.650] was held on September 25, 2017 via conference call hosted in Salem.

CFF Committee members participating:

Kyle Abraham, ODF, Deputy Chief Private Forests Division
Ed Weber, Chair, Professor of Public Policy at OSU, (Voting)
Evan Smith, Conservation Fund, Environmental Rep. (Voting)
Gilbert Shibley,, Landowner-At-Large (Voting)
S. Mark Vroman, Industry Rep. (Voting)
Scott Hayes, Chair of OTFS, Ex-Officio
Rex Storm, AOL Ex-Officio
Julie Woodward, OFRI Ex-Officio
Sherry Fountain, USFS Ex-Officio
Bonnie Shumaker, Landowner, NW Rep. (Voting)
Rex Storm, AOL Ex-Officio
John Peel, Landowner, Eastern OR Rep (Voting)
Janean Creighton, OSU College of Forestry Extension Ex-Officio

Guests:

Russ Lane, ODF Protection, Fire Operations Manager

Members not in attendance:

Evan Barnes, Vice Chair, Landowner, SW Rep. (Voting)
Jim James, Ex-Officio OSWA

ODF Staff:

Ryan Gordon, Family Forestlands Coordinator
Thomas Whittington, Incentives Coordinator
Susan Dominique, Committee Administrative Support
Nick Hennemann, Public Affairs

Call to Order 9:03 am

1. Welcome and Review of Agenda

Ed Weber, Chair of the Committee for Family Forestlands, opened the meeting. The agenda included regular housekeeping business; an update from the Private Forests Division; an ODF Fire Season update; and reported on the implementation of the rule changes before briefly walking through the 2017-18 Work Plan.

2. Roll Call

Gordon filling in briefly as host of the call for Abraham conducted a member roll call. He noted that there were two new members to the group, S. Mark Vroman with Green Diamond, the new Industry representative taking Scott Gray's place. And the new USFS State Liaison, Sherry Fountain. Gordon introduced Russ Lane, ODF Protection Operations Manager who was present to give members an update on the fire season. A roll call was conducted and the meeting turned back over to the Chair. [Quorum was reached.]

3. Approval of the Minutes

Weber asked members to review the drafted Minutes from their May meeting for Approval. Smith made a Motion to Approve the Minutes as submitted. Peel seconded the Motion to approve but pending changes requested for clarity. All were in favor, none opposed. Peel will forward his requested changes to Susan for revision and the Minutes would be posted as Approved.

4. Public Comment

None offered.

5. Fire Season Update – Russ Lane, ODF Protection Operations Manager

Lane provided a self-introduction being new to the Protection Division in June of this year, from his position as Assistant District Forester at the North Cascade District and had been with ODF just over 30 years.

Providing context to the current fire season, he recalled throughout the spring meteorologists had predicted a below average fire season, pretty consistently with each forecast. The Division was also putting a lot of planning effort into the Solar Eclipse event at the time. Then the State embarked on, depending on where you lived, 80 to 85 days without significant precipitation which really changed the dynamic from below normal expectations to something that looked a lot different. Fortunately, for capacity needs, the Eclipse wasn't quite the event we expected. There were a few fires associated with the Eclipse but they were able to repurpose a lot of the resources brought on in preparedness for the event to support efforts on the large fires that came on the landscape. Those fires started really in late June, early July. He provided the following statistic: That there are somewhere between 900 and 1000 total fires in Oregon, burning 42,000 acres of ODF-protected lands. (That is about 130% of average over projections.) Our 10 year average is about 34,000 acres burned. So, these numbers represented a fairly significant workload.

The story of the fire season as a lot of you know was that the driver of the fires was that they were coming off other jurisdictional ownerships such as federal land. ODF placed a corresponding effort staffing those fires with Branches, Supplemental Overhead to deal with the impacts coming off the neighboring lands. There were 3 Incident Management Team deployments, the first one was to the Flounce Fire in southwest Oregon. And then we rotated two teams through the Horse Prairie Fire in Douglas County, the one significant Large Fire that burned entirely within ODF Protection. We've had four FEMA fires that qualified for Fire Management Assistance Grants. Those were the Jones Fire in Klamath County, the Milli Fire in Deschutes County, Chetco Bar in Curry County and then the final was the Eagle Creek Fire which qualified both in Multnomah and Hood River Counties for FEMA funding. Our Severity Resources, Type II Helicopters, air tankers, are mostly finished for the year. We have two Type II Helicopters remaining on duty. Severity Aircraft flew 1470 hours for us. Almost up to 1500 hours of flight time. We also put 201 hours on National Guard Heavy Helicopters as the season went along.

On the cost side, our projected net cost for Large Fires after FEMA reimbursement so far this year are \$31.5 million dollars. And that compares to the 10 year average of \$20.7 million, so we are about 30% above the 10 year average there as well. We get 75% of our suppression costs back on those four FEMA fires so that is significant for us. As we go into the end of the season here we still are at a Regional Preparedness Level of 3 currently, which is right in the middle of the ball park. We spent 40 days in a row of the highest level PL 5 which was a record-setting number of days for the Northwest. There still are 5 uncontained Large fires out there in Oregon. Looking across the State, at the ODF Significant Fire Potential, most Districts are sitting either in Moderate or Low but we still haven't seen that season-ending event that will let any Districts out of fire season yet. There may still be an east wind event which is of a little bit of concern with the fuels, which are still fully cured. So, any dry, low humidity days are causing an uptick in initial attacks.

Storm offered that about 96% of the acres burned were National Forest and about 4 or 5% on ODF-protected lands.

Shumaker asked how the costs and responsibilities are determined in multijurisdictional fires. Lane responded that usually we are integrated into the organization that the Federal government has fighting the fire, so on small fires, its initial attacking together in a joint, and unified command-type organization. When they put a larger Incident Management Team (IMT) on a Federal fire, and I'll use Chetco Bar as an example. It's a real easy one. Huge fire on Federal land, relatively smaller, but significant ODF ownership. About 20,000 acres I think burned on ODF-protection at Chetco Bar. We engaged with ODF-controlled resources on our jurisdiction. We had a Unified Incident Commander and then we staffed a 'Branch', a couple of Divisions of ODF-led firefighters taking care of our jurisdictional responsibility there. But then in unified command there's a commander representing both the Federal and the ODF-protected there. But each fire is a little different and unique. We enter into a cost-share agreement to divide the costs and a lot of times those are done on the percent of the acres involved. Depending on what kind of action led to the fire escaping onto ODF-protection, which can influence the cost-share agreement and how we split

the costs. So, for example at Chetco Bar up to a certain date, when it made the big run, all the costs were carried by the Federal government until that big run was stopped and from then on we shared costs.

Private Forests Division Updates – Ryan Gordon, ODF Family Forestland Coordinator

Gordon began first with the budget. When the CFF had last met the Legislative Session was still winding down and we hadn't had a final answer or resolution on everything. Obviously, since then our budget has come together and the news is actually far better than when we were talking last winter and spring. At the last meeting we reported that there was a potential to have some relatively large cuts, particularly to the Private Forests Program in the Governor's Proposed Budget. We didn't end up being forced to take those cuts with the Legislatively-Adopted Budget. The primary cuts we did take were in the Oregon Plan funding. That funding is used to help support landowner assistance. In the past it helped to pay for some coordinators time and provided some service and supply funding for Stewardship Foresters, etc. to engage with landowners. We are working on ways to leverage funding using some of our Federal grants and other funding sources. Overall it was about a \$1 million dollar reduction to our General Fund Budget and Agency Administration also took about a \$1.3 million dollar hit which ultimately will cause some challenges. The Protection Division took a 25% reduction in General Fund support of Forest Patrol Assessments for the east side low-productivity woodlands. That support has traditionally been a match to the funds that folks on those low-productivity lands pay into for fire protection.

Since Private Forests didn't have to take those big cuts we are actually able to hire a lot of positions back that we had been holding vacant. As part of that we have a big recruitment for 11 Stewardship Foresters across the State which is really going to help us rebuild back capacity in the field. The Division also is able to move forward with a few positions within the Private Forests program here in Salem.

Whittington added that the Stewardship Forester positions to be filled are openings from retirements in eastern Oregon, one in Klamath Falls, or Lakeview. Then Prineville. The next round of hiring will be one in Union County in LaGrande and in The Dalles. Essentially what they did there, is opened up a big pool, allowed everyone to apply to that pool and specify the areas they are interested in working. And then those receiving offices will sort through applications and schedule interviews accordingly. There has been talk of trying to pool up some of those interviews so that folks can come in and do one interview and be considered for multiple positions in particular areas.

Gordon reported that the Division is also going to be hiring a Water Quality Specialist, the position that Kyle vacated when he moved into the Deputy Division Chief position. We are also recruiting for an additional Field Support Coordinator as Brad Knotts retired. On the Forest Health and Monitoring side, Terry Frueh had been the Acting Program Manager and Marganne Allen is now back from her detail down in State Forests. They are moving forward to hire the NRS3 and NRS2 Monitoring Specialist positions there. The Program will be hiring a series of folks on the Admin side over the next year or two as we are looking at a couple of retirements there.

Moving outside of Private Forests, the Federal Forest Restoration Program was also funded in this Legislative session to become a permanent program within the budget and was funded with roughly \$3 million dollars in General Fund and received a limitation of about \$700,000 in Other funds and \$500,000 in Federal funds. So that program is also moving forward to hire some additional capacity. A position closed here in Salem recently that will coordinate that program. That person will be somewhat responsible for helping shape the future of that program and they will be hiring additional capacity to work out in the field as well.

Storm asked whether the focus of the Federal Forest Restoration Program will be on projects on the federal/private lands interface. Gordon responded that it's their intent to look at opportunities to leverage funding to work both on the federal and private side of the line. He thought that our primary interface with that program should be to support and further projects of that nature.

Shumaker had a question about how that program interacted with the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) or the Joint Chief's Projects. Gordon clarified that both of those are opportunities that allow us to work at the public/private interface. So the Federal Forest Restoration Program does utilize the GNA to be able to get work done on Federal ground. That authority actually enables ODF staff to work with the Forest Service to help lay out and make timber sales happen on Federal ground. And then in a lot of places particularly on the east side we are working to leverage NRCS funding to accomplish forest treatments on private ground adjacent to some of those projects. The Joint Chief's Projects are joint projects between the Forest Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) which bring in additional funding and allow for treatments on federal ground which are then paired up with treatments on adjoining private ground. There is a lot more flexibility for us to use the Forest Service dollars on the private landowner side and we are able to work directly with the landowners on the entirety of the project providing the cost-share directly to them whereas on the NRCS side we only provide the technical assistance piece and the landowner has the relationship with the NRCS for the cost-share. One scenario works better for some landowners and the other works better for others.

There was also additional funding on the east side for a full time position to help support the Rangeland Protection Associations. And the Fire Protection Program received funds for a new Aviation Coordinator position here in Salem. The Sudden Oak Death Program (SOD) received \$450,000 through the next biennium from the Legislatively-Approved Budget which will be a really good match for the Federal funding that we receive on the Forest Service side.

Gordon also provided a status check on the Eastern Oregon Area/Siskiyou Streamside Protection Review. Recall that we implemented the new Riparian Rules in western Oregon, west of the Cascades July 1st. Those rules pertained to the west of the Cascades excluding the Siskiyou area and the Board instructed the Monitoring staff to begin looking at some potential questions regarding streamside protections that should be addressed on the eastside and the Siskiyou region. Staff were also instructed to set some timelines around how that review would proceed. He shared that our Monitoring shop has been doing some data collection, reaching out to stakeholders, doing some focus groups and informal surveying to corral those questions. Storm recalled that it was to be an 18 to 24 month period of assessing what the available science is on that and developing any questions that may warrant answering through further study, further research.

Further reporting was on Sudden Oak Death (SOD), a high profile topic here for the last six to twelve months with pretty substantial involvement from State Legislators and Federal Legislators. We did get \$450,000 dollars added through the Legislatively-Approved Budget. There was a working group that was funded with some additional E-Board funding which came together towards the end of the last biennium to front a team to start looking at opportunities for external funding for SOD. The topic has heated up right now with the outbreak of EU1, which is a new strain that hadn't until recently been detected here in North America. It's been identified in some isolated areas and the hope is to try to actually eradicate it so a lot of the new funding is going to focus on that. Of course the Chetco Bar fire burning down on the south coast, he thought (at the date of the meeting) to be approaching 200,000 acres and it has burned through some of the SOD infected areas. Having fire on that landscape has really changed the picture overall for SOD and has heightened people's awareness of it.

The next thing to report on was our Statewide Agreement with NRCS. That Agreement is one of the primary mechanisms through which we are able to help provide technical assistance to small family forestland owners. Through that Agreement we are able to be reimbursed for the time that we spend providing technical assistance in support of NRCS EQIP programs and some of the other programs that they have through the Farm Bill which provides cost-share to landowners to complete various forest treatments. We did just get signed a new million dollar agreement with them. He shared his opinion that this new agreement it will really sort of open the throttle on the east side of the state where we have had really great engagement and success and on the west side perhaps make some of our District Foresters a little bit more comfortable engaging with that program and potentially partially funding some staff. As we are emerging from fire season Gordon looks forward to re-engaging with that particularly on the west side.

Transitioning the update to post-fire restoration, Oregon obviously had a lot of fire on the landscape this summer which has impacted some non-industrial landowners as well as federal lands. Gordon and Whittington will be cranking up the post-fire restoration work and start interfacing more with the Farm Service Agency to get the Emergency Forest Restoration Program spun up in counties where there is need to accelerate providing some assistance to those landowners who were impacted. Whittington reported especially down in the Chetco Bar fire area where many landowners are already moving ahead with salvage work where feasible. As a nexus, seedling availability will be a topic of importance again and we have that extra funding that we got from the Forest Service through our Stewardship Grant this year to address that.

Abraham brought the update back to addressing our staffing transitions, most related to Marganne Allen's return to manage Forest Health and Monitoring. He knew that members had worked quite a bit with Marganne and Daniel Olson as we drafted the Eastern Oregon/Siskiyou materials and the letter that you members wrote to the Board of Forestry. So he wanted to recognize that Marganne will be back in that role.

6. Rule Changes and Implementation – Kyle Abraham, Private Forests Deputy Chief

Regarding the Marbled Murrelet inquiry, in March and April of 2017 staff presented to the BOF some of the materials related to the petition and projecting next steps to include an 18 to 24 month process for developing a technical report. There will be some opportunity for input from the Committee there. The reason that we put the 18 to 24 months in there is because of some existing work being done by OSU at their research lab in Corvallis and also work that is being done by ODF&W as well that can help inform that technical report. We would probably present that within a year and a half to two years. There are a lot of moving pieces and we want to make sure we provide ourselves adequate time to capture all of that material.

On the Eastern Oregon/Siskiyou project all of the materials from the Committee that were provided to the Department went to the Board in July as well as materials from the Eastern Oregon Regional Forest Practices Committee and also the Southwest Regional Forest Practice Committee. The Board will be probably be considering more closely what the role the CFF and the other committees will have by January.

Gordon announced that regarding rule changes the Salmon, Steelhead and Bull Trout Riparian rules went into effect July 1st and the revised Bald Eagle rules went into effect September 1st. OFRI is working pretty rapidly on an updated version of the Illustrated Guide for the Forest Practices Act to encompass these rule changes. And believed we are also going to be producing the new newsprint full version of that sometime early next year as well.

7. Review of the 2017-18 Work Plan – Ed Weber, Chair

Weber began a review of the 2017 Work Plan and asked members to note that instead of having three tiers of issues on the work plan, the Committee had cut it down to two and separated out the Standing Agenda Items on the bottom. He asked about any potential Board of Forestry directed items (Topic 1.2). Abraham thought currently it would be on the Eastern Oregon/Siskiyou topic.

Weber surmised that with Forest Health, Water Quality and Fire those issues were pretty well intertwined. Then noted that Smoke Management (a bullet point under Fire) is going to be a major topic for the BOF at their November meeting down in Eugene. He suggested that it would be beneficial to get up to speed on that as quickly as possible to either be able to provide some input to the Board prior to their field trip or soon after. Abraham suggested that the topic hasn't moved forward much due to fire season activity and the Committee did have that as an agenda item previously on the Smoke Management Review Process. He will consider if there have been any updates to provide in December.

Weber asked if the members should be involved again in the Seedling Availability topic. Shumaker expressed interest in forwarding the topic of forestland viability and homestead zoning equity with farmlands.

Weber refocused on prioritizing the work plan issues. Shibley thought there could be an opportunity to move on the fire liability/smoke management as pertinent and suggested Scott Hanson, past president, OSWA is well up on the family forest owners' side of those discussions and we should be sure to get his perspective on that.

Storm suggested it was worthy of consideration to look at the complexities of the Federal/Private Lands interface and how fire and smoke and insects and disease and all those things that cross forest boundaries from Federal onto private ownership. Those issues are here and present and this fire season has so vividly and tragically illustrated how the impacts of federal forestry impact the private forestland neighbors. Abraham asked how he envisioned that as a presentation. Storm responded that possibly somebody from ODF Protection Division talking about the facts and figures on those interfaces, talking about where the fires were and what the consequences were from both private sector and the Forest Service sector in terms of resource damages, firefighting costs, and those sorts of things. The starting point would be the raw facts as illustrative of how big a problem this is. In addition he mentioned an ongoing study with the BLM transference of risk, also the Forest Service relationship with the BLM on their firefighting contract and how that has progressed over the years. The last five fire seasons have really set the stage for a very tragic, dramatic play that shows of some very stark differences between the private forestlands and the federal forestlands in terms of fire, smoke and resource damages and the cost thereof. Also, the human consequences of wildfires and how those affect the private sector versus the federal ownerships.

Shumaker saw a connection the Good Neighbor Authority and how that can work where the federal forests are and the GNA warrants more understanding. Storm added that perhaps we could get a private landowner that has had that experience in the last 4 to 5 years being a neighbor of the National Forests and those sorts of things. There are a number of companies and individuals that have suffered mightily because of their juxtaposition on the landscape being a neighbor of National Forests. Weber agreed that even though there aren't that many current GNA projects. He suggested as part of the fact-gathering, how *did* those adjacent private lands adjacent fare in the last couple of seasons, in terms of how long those projects have been ongoing.

Gordon added as well that the Governor's Budget did strongly favor the Federal Forest Restoration Program. Although the program was actually funded at a level less than what the Governor had originally asked for, we are able to staff it and add capacity, so the Department hopes to increase the pace at which we are able to take advantage of the GNA. And as I mentioned there was a project down in Klamath Falls which would be a model we would like to try to replicate around the state, matching the work on Federal with the work on private lands.

Peel referred back to Roje's lessons learned comments at the last meeting regarding the Ritter Collaborative. He wasn't clear on what CFF's role should be in these collectives, and perhaps we should look for other examples of collaborative projects to round out the Committee's thinking. Should there actually be more hands-on consultancy from members of the Committee from time to time? Shumaker added that perhaps the role wasn't well-defined and frustration came out of a lack of understanding.

Gordon offered that the criticism that some folks in the Ritter community have shared is that we were, we being the Committee, ODF and to an certain extent OSU extension were too involved or too bureaucratic and did not allow the group enough freedom to shape their destiny the way they wanted to and let it be really grassroots. And from his perspective it's a challenging thing because there were grant funds that came in with specific deliverables that we are ultimately responsible for creating. So in some respects it is a chicken-or-egg sort of argument too in the sense that when you are starting from scratch you need some structure and sideboards to push forward and get the foundation in place before a group is in position to really be in control of its destiny.

Abraham acknowledged the challenges in efforts such as this and agreed a review on CFF's role and goals in participating at that level could only benefit future projects. It's good for staff to know what information and materials we can bring to help you do whatever it is you want to do. But from the outset it's good to hear what people's expectations are for outcomes dealing with these issues.

Weber suggested inviting Emily Jane Davis, OSU to bring us a closing report when she has finished her Grant obligations to the Ritter Project. Abraham offered to follow up. Gordon added that he has been in correspondence with her and they plan on speaking soon. Shibley suggested that the CFF members need to consider what the CFF learned as well, independent of that. Weber recalled that Roje Gootee, being the main liaison from CFF to Ritter had given her perspective and lessons learned, which should be reflected in the minutes of that meeting.

Weber moved along through the other Work Plan items.

Forest Chemical Use (1.5)? Smith acknowledged it is an ongoing concern within the environmental community especially the coastal concerns over their drinking water. [CFF will keep monitoring.]

Woodward suggested as we get into 2018 it might be of interest to have my Southern Woodland Collaborative Group come in and do a presentation on the work they are doing there with OSU, ODF and OTFS contributed some funds as well as OFRI. And so it's another collaborative that is happening for fire prevention. So it's kind of pressing, but I think that they can do a presentation because they are into it for about 2 years now on another approach for collaboration. Weber noted it also fits nicely under bulleted topic 1.4 Prevention and Risk Reduction. She continued that it's a unique partnership with American Forest Foundation and having just finished their Annual Report they could come in to give a nice overview. I know some of our Committee members like Scott Hayes and Rex have been following it as well.

Storm agreed and added that CFF has a bundle of issues surrounding east side small family forestland owners in terms of tax, taxation and markets and accessibility to conduct forestry on small private forestlands in eastern Oregon. The challenges are increasing and becoming more insurmountable for the small forestland owner over there. We ought to at least have a placeholder on the agenda to talk about that. Peel agreed with that assessment completely although disheartened to think of the issues as insurmountable. That topic can be considered under Tier 2, Forest Taxes/Forest Business succession, although not specific to eastern Oregon it could be. Abraham asked that members keep in mind that there are a number of topics on this work plan so being centered on priorities that we can collaboratively work together to some end he thought would be helpful.

Weber continued that 2.7 also gets into Forest Ownership and Viability. 2.1 and 2.7 had some clear overlap. Which gets to what Rex and John have just mentioned. Weber will work with Kyle and Susan to get some of these things going for our meetings. The next meeting date is October 20th.

Gordon clarified that the meeting on the 20th is the day before the OTFS Annual Meeting at the Oregon Garden in Silverton and he has invited the State Stewardship Coordinating Committee to join us.

Weber then suggested that the next meeting be held off to the second week of December. Members checked their calendars for available dates. December 4th was chosen. Future dates to be decided later.

Abraham will work with others on the next agenda but asked if there were any more suggested agenda items to contact him.

Weber suggested that going with Bonnie's idea on the family forest homestead, staff should get a hold of the 1000 Friends of Oregon. Gordon thought it appropriate for an item on Taxation. An update on the seedling issue as well with an update on the post-fire work.

Dominique suggested getting a hold of Clint Bentz who is on the SSCC and could probably address some family forestland owner succession concerns.

Gordon wanted to add as a roundtable items that ATFS is having a 'fly-in' in D.C. the first week of October to support the Farm Bill renewal. [Contact Scott Hayes for more information.] And the week of October 16th he'll be headed to Saratoga Springs, N.Y. to represent the Department at the National Forest Stewardship Conference.

Weber suggested we put a report on that from Ryan on the agenda in October.

Weber called the conference call adjourned.