

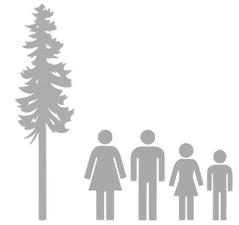


"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

Committee for Family Forestlands

Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2018



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 Sept. 11, 2018 at the Oregon Dept. of Forestry, Clatsop Room, 2600 State Street, Salem, OR 97310.

CFF Committee members participating:

Guests:

Kyle Abraham, ODF, Deputy Chief Private Forests Division
Glenn Ahrens, OSU College of Forestry Extension Ex-Officio
Evan Barnes, Acting Chair, SW Landowner Rep. (Voting)
John Peel, EO Rep. (Voting)
Rex Storm, AOL/OTFS Ex-Officio Forest Operators
S. Mark Vroman, Industry Rep. (Voting) Hampton Family Forests
Julie Woodward, OFRI Ex-Officio
Gilbert Shibley, Landowner-At-Large (Voting)

Members not in attendance:

ODF Staff:

Linda Lind, USFS State & Private Forestry Ex-Officio
Jim James, Ex-Officio OSWA, Executive Director
Bonnie Shumaker, Landowner, NW Rep. (Voting)

Lena Tucker, Private Forests Division Chief
Susan Dominique, Committee Administrative Support
Sarah Lathrop, Protection from Fire
Danny Norlander, Forest Health Survey & Monitoring Specialist/Food Plot Rule Process Coordinator
Jim Gersbach, Public Affairs

Call to Order 10:05 am

1. Welcome and Review of Agenda – Evan Barnes, Chair

Barnes opened the meeting scheduled as a conference call with some members and staff attending in person. He reviewed the agenda asking for any additions. The agenda topics included a Private Forest Division update. And updates from the Fire Program and Food Plot rulemaking effort as well as an update on the Forest Zone Dwelling Allowance effort.

2. Introductions/Roll Call

He then called roll of those attending. Glenn Ahrens, Gilbert Shibley, John Peel, Julie Woodward were present on the conference line.

3. Approval of the Minutes

The Chair called for any additions or corrections to the Minutes from April and May 2018. He noted there was a quorum available to entertain a Motion. Vroman motioned to approve the drafted minutes from April and May as presented. Storm seconded. All approved the Motion.

4. Public Comment

No public comment offered.

5. Private Forests Division Update - Kyle Abraham

Abraham welcomed the members and staff getting back to business during a still challenging fire season. He reported that that Evan Barnes, Gilbert Shibley and Bonnie Shumaker presented the Committee's Annual Report to the Board in July. From his perspective it was really well received. The Board seemed very engaged as folks at the table from CFF talked a little bit about their property, their ownership, what sort of ties they have to the land and why serving on the Committee was really beneficial for them. Evan talked a little bit about the role of the Committee for Family Forestlands being available to the Board in an advisory capacity regarding issues pertinent to family forestland owners. Members testified on behalf of their efforts to have the Legislature consider a Forest Zone Dwelling Allowance similar to what allowance is

provided for Agricultural lands. That was one of the bigger topics that the Committee worked through in the last year and continues to work on. The Board did ask some questions and so did State Forester Daugherty about some framework regarding what ownership size could potentially be eligible. Barnes reiterated that he felt there was some initial support for the concept by at least one of the Board members and the concept is now on their radar.

Returning to the Division update, Abraham reported that at the Board meeting in September the Division's Forest Health and Monitoring Unit presented the Annual Monitoring Update and talked a little bit about where they are with some of the Monitoring Projects, including finishing the Western Oregon Streamside Protection Review and the Compliance Audit which is moving into a new contract phase. The past 5 year contract focused on FPA compliance on rules for roads, riparian areas and Other Wetlands. They are currently looking towards developing the next set of protocols for a new contract looking only at reforestation compliance. Along with that they provided an update on where they are at with the Siskiyou Streamside Protection Review as well. Staff will be sending out Analysis Methods for the Western Oregon Field Data Analysis and are looking for stakeholder input in terms of the field data analysis and the methods that they are proposing to use. Abraham stressed that the Siskiyou Systematic Review project will probably follow the same protocols focusing on stream temperature, shade and the Desired Future Condition. He assured members that he will continue to keep members updated on process and progress over the next few months.

Christine Buhl and Danny Norlander presented a Forest Health Update to the Board of Forestry in May and provided information on the status of Forest Health; the Aerial Survey and the Oregon Bee Project.

Looking towards the agenda for the November BOF Meeting, the plan is to ask as a Consent Agenda Item to continue into rulemaking process for Food Plots. Weikel will be presenting in November on the Marbled Murrelet Rule Analysis about the status of the Tech Report and a high level report on the comments that she received from the Expert Review Group. The Seed Orchard will also report in November.

In terms of our Agency Request Budget, the Agency Strategic Initiative had been discussed with the CFF several times. This emphasis is out of the sincere need for the Agency to build our program to be able to meet core business functions given the increasing fire workloads. That was submitted at the end of August after a huge amount of work Tucker put in with Doug Graff putting that together for all of the Divisions as a cohesive package. At the time of the meeting the Department was in a wait-and-see game until we get through the November elections and figure out what the Governor's Recommended Budget has in it. Legislative Days are coming up September 24 through the 27th. Staff is still expecting to have 3 Board members confirmed and appointed to the Board of Forestry in that time period. So November will be the first formal meeting for the 3 appointments. The Board Work Plan will be developed as well with issues like the Marbled Murrelet, Food Plots, Siskiyou Project and Western Oregon Projects going into 2019.

Adding to the Update, Abraham announced recent changes to Division personnel. Thomas Whittington (formerly the Incentives Field Coordinator) was promoted as the Water Quality Specialist for Private Forests. They will also be coming out with recruitments for the Office Specialist position in Forest Health, a Fiscal Analyst position and the Incentives Coordinator vacancy. He also introduced Jim Gersbach, as taking the Public Affairs Forest Practices Division portfolio over from Nick Hennemann who went on a sabbatical. Ryan Gordon, the Family Forestlands Coordinator was asked to assume the Director position in Public Affairs on a short term basis till a recruitment for that position is filled. Woodward expressed some concern voicing that the Coordinator workload that Ryan had as super important to the Family Forestland community in terms of some of our operational planning for grants and expectations of how the money gets spent. Tucker assured the Committee that a back fill arrangement will be sorted out soon.

Storm wanted to note that when determining future agenda topics he recommended that the Committee should continue work on addressing the inability of family forestland owners to procure seedlings to reforest. The family forestland community is experiencing continued difficulty in finding seedlings. He theorized that it's real uncomfortable situation for the State and industry to respond to required reforestation when finding seedling sources has become such an obstacle. Barnes noted it was a Tier 1 Issue for the Committee with previous efforts made on education and outreach in advanced planning for harvests and clarity regarding the procurement process. Vroman added that seed availability and available nursery bed space available compounded the demand. He added that one of his concerns is with Weyerhaeuser taking

their nursery offline to the public, as they were a significant producer. Landowners need to get seeds in a nursery bed growing seedlings prior to the beginning of the harvest.

Tucker reminded members that Mike Taylor from IFA had begun a project called MySaplings.com, where he bundles orders from small woodland owners so that they can have a big enough unit to reserve the bed space. She hadn't heard feedback on its use. Storm didn't think that the situation had improved from a couple of years ago. She suggested that maybe members can recommend some sorts of remedial actions the Department could assist with. Ahrens contributed that Extension would definitely like to be involved and help see where the gaps are and what can be done to make more opportunities for landowners. Vroman noted that growing forest seedlings is very much an agricultural process with cultural practices required to create seedlings with the caliper, height and everything else that works well in a forest environment. Norlander noted that there is also a certain amount of infrastructure that has to be in place. Freezers, sorting sheds and all the other stuff that isn't usually there for traditional agriculture.

6. Fire Season Update – Sarah Lathrop

Lathrop provided the Committee with the same presentation provided the Board of Forestry as their September Fire Season update. She reported that at the time of the meeting the Preparedness Level was at 3 both nationally and here in Oregon. What that meant for Oregon is, less activity and less resource competition which is very welcomed. She went on to report that there was a lot of successful initial attacks through the weekend. 14 fires were caught and a total of 7 acres burned. She went on to describe the status of ongoing fires. She clarified that the objectives for the Fire Season Update presentation are just to give a quick update on fire danger, the weather outlooks and drought conditions across the state to provide an overview of significant fires and trigger events this season and to review year-to-date statistics versus 10 year averages and to share the preliminary year-to-date financials. When we talk about the National Significant Fire Potentials, this talks about the potential we have for Large, costly wildfires. And what we've seen this year is that, since July, nearly the whole state has been above average significant fire potential. In comparison with 2017, both in July and September basically the whole State was abnormal, so the State is still in fire season and definitely of note, much of our State including Central and SW Oregon has above normal significant fire potential. The fire indices have been near 20 year maximums so there is a high potential for large, costly fires. Our energy-release component and 1000 hour fuel indices have been at near record highs since early in the season proof of which that we were really subjected to fire weeks earlier than we typically are. Some other contributing factors are fuel moistures in the single digits since mid-July and we've had lower humidity's and overnight humidity recoveries. So looking at September, we have expected below average precipitation for most of the State. We are looking at temperatures above average from Central to SW Oregon, so basically the lower portion of the State coupling that with low precipitation and high temperatures we basically ended up with a longer fire season. Another huge factor is drought. We are basically over 70% of the State is under Severe Drought conditions and probably 22% of the State is in Extreme Drought Conditions. She then moved into a quick rundown of some of our early season fires, with our first significant large fire the Graham Fire, that was an ODF fire and also a FEMA fire managed by an ODF Incident Management Team. That started on June 21st 15 miles north of Sisters threatening 200 homes. Our IMT did an excellent job in managing that fire, ending it at 2175 total acres. 1053 of that was ODF. The next significant fire was the Lobster Creek Fire and that was also an ODF fire with an ODF IMT that started on July 1st. It was 10 miles east of Gold Beach and we ended that fire quite rapidly actually another great catch by the ODF IMT. We ended that at 397 acres. The next large fire that was on the landscape was Substation Fire that was a BLM Joint with the Oregon State Fire Marshall that was also a FEMA fire was burning 5 miles south of The Dalles. And there were agricultural resources at risk and over 1000 structures threatened. The Silver Creek Fire was the next significant fire on the ODF landscape in the Silver Falls State Park. It was burning in a remote drainage and was a very difficult fire to catch, because we couldn't use retardant because of the creek presence there.

She brought up that there were 3 major lightning events this season that put a ton of fires on the landscape. In July 15th and 16th we had a huge number of ignitions in Southern Oregon. Another mass ignition situation August 16th and 17th where we had a huge number of starts, new ignitions and a lot of smoke in the NE Oregon area. She wanted to share one thing of note that some of the fires in NE Oregon from this lightning event were actually detected by Distributed Real-time Infrared, which is a military asset that the Region picked up this year. The Region had it flying and it picked up 9 new fires with infrared images of each new start. So there is this emerging technology that is coming out now for wildfire detection that we are really interested in. Infrared is especially helpful when facing the smoke conditions that we have

been in the last few seasons where traditional resources can't really fly and do the visual observations for new detections and many detection cameras are hampered by the smoke. This is a resource that is going to be really important in the future. An air-based sensor flown at high altitudes above the smoke layer and still pick up heat. The military flies it so it must be requested and then the request is prioritized based upon the number of lightning strikes. It's currently free to us but the only downside to being free is we don't have operational control of it. So our priority may not be the region's priority. If we *could* tap into that within our agency, and actually have the right communications we could speed up detections a whole lot. Having communications directly with the Dispatch Centers detecting it, getting the right resources there in a timely manner, all would be hugely helpful. Along with that she reported that aircraft were a huge component this year in initial attack. We did beef up our normal Severity suite by 5 or 6 helicopters this year just during the thick of the season. We've tacked in to other resources, and the FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared) was the other resource that we used out on Horse Prairie.

She reported on some of the key fire statistics as of September 2nd. We had 94% of fires caught at 10 acres or less. For ODF protected lands specifically we had a total of 827 fires burning 69,000 acres. Acreage figures are still increasing. Of note are the 827 fires, are only about half of the total fires for All Jurisdictions at 1657 fires burned 750,000 acres in the State. But even with a very high fire workload ODF is doing a great job in keeping the majority of those fires small and manageable. A large portion of our acres burned this year were lightning caused fires above our 10 year average at this time.

Barnes inquired whether there was a breakout of the types of ignitions: lightning vs human-caused and whether they are categorized as operator or public use causes. Lathrop didn't have access to that data at the meeting but will get the breakdown of human-caused types. Gersbach offered that obviously in every category there is a few, but debris burning and illegal campfires tend to be the two biggest and operator activity being the least seen cause.

Tucker added that there was an interesting series of 6 fires down along the freeway over the weekend usually caused by sparking from chain breaks, catalytic converters sparking into receptive fuel beds along the freeway. And Lathrop reiterated that those situations are similar to a mass ignition situation in a lightning event because starts are spread out along the freeway a different intervals so IA resources get spread thin to suppress multiple fires at the same time. Oregon is about at 115% acres burned over a ten year average to date. Gersbach directed members to the Wildfire Blog <https://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/pages/FireStats.aspx> to get up to date on causes and comparisons to the 10 year averages on a daily basis.

She reported that year to date gross fire costs at \$87.3 million with net estimated at \$40 million. They are working to figure out how the FEMA reimbursements shake out and cost-share. The deductible for the insurance is \$50 million. The fire finance workload will be ongoing and the Agency is assembling a 20 person team to start handling those payments and getting their vendors paid within 45 days.

Tucker clarified that the 'team' Sarah described is basically another iteration of a 'fire team' where you bring in your finance experts to basically pay bills and audit and sort out the reimbursements. Having Salem post the finance team here means they can tap into resources from our Program, State Forests, perhaps other agencies as well for folks to come in and just do the documentation, bill paying and auditing. Barnes, having been on the receiving end of those checks, shared that for the vendors you get 60 to 90 days out to cover expenses and the complexity of documentation and delayed payments can put vendors in a bad spot that are counting dollars owed them to cover their own expenses. As the Aviation Coordinator she noted that there have been changes in the resources we use and suppression tactics. Rather than having one aircraft, we had 15. And there are differences in how we are doing business, so definitely the complexity levels continue to increase as well.

Gersbach continued that Fire Finance people also face additional complexity in that some fires merged that have different names and have to be reconciled and other fires where they were split becoming more an USFS fire rather than an ODF fire. Very complex. Storm likened the sheer volume of administrative requirements to turn those transactions and collect reimbursements as a multi-year process, and the accumulating back log an Administrative tsunami.

In closing, key things to highlight were the huge success this year with IA, the Severity Program, and our landowner cooperation. We had a lot of ODF presence on those fires that were threatening ODF lands which worked very well. We tried a few new models on those Federal fires to ensure ODF interests were protected.

Adding to that report Tucker shared that the Fire Division will be asking for basically the insurance premium amount at Legislative Days. We've got \$1.7 million available to pay the premium plus \$400,000 available from the Oregon Forest Protection Fund. So we have a shortfall of \$1.4 million to the premium on the policy. So in these situations when we have a plethora of bills to pay and fire expenses we need to ask for additional limitation so there will be an ask for \$68 million in Other Funds limitation. Those two requests will go before the E-Board here before the end of the month. Abraham wanted to mention that the Department will also be doing an E-Board request for funding a million dollars for EU1 treatments for SOD as well.

7. Forest Zone Dwelling Allowance Update – Bonnie Shumaker/Jim James

As Shumaker and James were the leads working on this topic and unavailable at the meeting Barnes opened the discussion asking for any comments or questions members had at that point. He thought that he was certainly leaning towards bigger acreage and not a smaller acreage. His opinion was if you have smaller parcels you'd really be doing real estate development and it would be taking away from the forest base.

Abraham reminded members that one of the things that discussed last year was once we get some of the structure of the concept in terms of the acreage and sideboards together it may be beneficial to have a conversation with 1000 Friends of Oregon and as a future agenda topic. Shibley offered his assistance.

Some data that would be useful to the construct discussed were defining family forestland acreage and corresponding parcel sizes in a way that would be searchable. Some determination of the average family forest sizes. In general how many forest parcels would this concept pertain to? What is the definition that would be used to define 'family forestland'? Where can that data be found? Abraham offered that those are some questions that the Legislature would want answers in terms of the budget ask for Wildland/Urban Interface Forester positions. He suggested that interested members reach out to Bonnie and Jim and see where they need help.

Ahrens offered that pertaining to that question about the family forestland ownership numbers and parcel size, the Partnership for Forestry Education has a Woodland Owner Database that they have been working on for years. Data is gathered from updates to County Tax Assessor data. A recent iteration is to look at where the trees are, regardless of how land is classified. But you get a much higher number of people that have acres of trees but ownerships aren't classified for tax purposes as forestland. So Extension can provide a resource that can help look at family forest owners across the state as far as how many and how big and also get rid of the duplications for the family and how many parcels they own. OFRI is assisting with this as part of the Partnership. Woodward shared that the biggest hurdle will be determining whether people actually live on the forestland or not or are absentee landowners. There have been discussions leading to formulation of the questions that we want to filter the database to tell us.

8. Food Plot Rulemaking – Danny Norlander

Norlander provided an update on the Food Plots rulemaking effort. ODF staff met with Oregon Fish and Wildlife to present and discuss the current information he had on the subject and they commented that they are on board with the effort and willing to provide needed technical information for implementation like seed mixes for species and target animals and forage types and things like that. They plan to reconvene with them sometime this fall. They also met with the Dept. of Revenue and one of the issues discussed was Food Plots and potential interaction with forest deferral determinations. They didn't see a real nexus specifically with the DOR but they did bring up that the County Tax Assessors might be interested. He is currently figuring out how to provide information to county assessors and get input and opinions from them so they understand that the parcel is not being withdrawn from forestland use. It's only a temporary change. Then staff will be going to the Board with this as a Consent Agenda item basically to give an update and provide them with information provided to the Committee and the RFPCs about Food Plots to ask their 'blessing' (even though we have been instructed by the Legislature, make rules for food plots) and once that happens we'll actually start drafting the rules. He is hoping for finalization of rules sometime in 2019.

The role for this Committee is as the Advisory Committee for the Food Plot Rulemaking. He would be bringing the draft rules to the Committee seeking additional input, edits or language changes to assure that it meets the desires of the Committee for Family Forestlands as an Advisory Committee representing family forestlands to the Board on this issue. Abraham stressed that we want to ensure that the framework for the rules matches the Department's ability on the ground to work with landowners and isn't too burdensome for landowners to implement. Norlander agreed and further suggested that if the Agency's full initiative is funded and ODF gets the 12 additional Wildland/Urban Interface Foresters that will have a real tie in with the resources available to these locations. He then explained that these plots occur only as a reforestation exception not a change in zoning and is a forest practice. Tucker provided that it is something many landowners do as good stewardship taking advantage of natural openings, seeding in Legacy roads, but the statute provided more specific direction with an exemption from reforestation after harvest so landowners aren't in conflict with the FPA. There is no harvest of this forage, it's there as wildlife feed.

The important caveat is that if the plot is not maintained it will need to be reforested. To put in a food plot will require a Plan. It will be monitored. And if they are found not maintaining that food plot they are going to have to reforest it. And if no longer complying with the food plot requirements the plot would be in violation of forest practices rules and the County Assessor may then be interested in its forestland tax deferral status. Establishing and maintaining food plots could potentially be a more expensive choice than reforestation. Hampton Family Forests is piloting a pollinator food plot using research out of OSU. Vroman shared it's been a little challenging at times determining the needs of the species.

Members were cautious regarding how the issue is framed before approaching assessors regarding the topic. Tucker replied that if assessors have issues they will need to bring it up with the Legislature, as we are following Legislative direction and intent. But Tucker believed replicating the County Assessor's training that was done last spring in Partnership with OFRI and others on forestry basics could help with buy-in and understanding on this topic. Ahrens wondered if the landowner cannot meet the 200 trees per acre reforestation expectation could still get an exemption for turning those acres into a food plot. Norlander responded that as it is actually a rule in the FPA it would be an additional notification for that harvest unit.

9. Good of the Order/Adjourn

- The Committee was asked for the best dates to schedule the next meeting. As October is challenging for staff because of the Operator of the Year Tours and RFPC meetings, the next Committee for Family Forestlands meeting was scheduled for November 15th, location to be determined 9:00am to 3:00pm.
- Peel reminded staff about sending out the research procedures discussed earlier on Western Oregon followed by the protocols for Siskiyou as completed.

Barnes adjourned the meeting. (11:35am)