



Committee for Family Forestlands Meeting December 10, 2020



Pursuant to public notice made by news release with statewide distribution, a 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 convened on December 10, 2020 as a virtual online meeting hosted off-site.

CFF Committee members participating:

Eric Hartstein, Interim Private Forests Deputy Chief
Ryan Gordon, Family Forestland Coordinator
Josh Barnard, Deputy Chief Private Forests (Secretary)
Kaola Swanson, Conservation Rep. (Voting/Vice Chair)
Glenn Ahrens, OSU College of Forestry Ext. Ex-Officio
S. Mark Vroman, Industry rep (Voting) Hampton Family Forests
John Peel, EO Landowner Rep. (Voting)
Wendy Gerlach, Citizen-At-Large (Voting) Pacific Forest Trust
Evan Barnes, Committee Chair & SW Landowner Rep. (Voting)

Additional ODF Staff:

Susan Dominique, Committee Administrative Support
Kristin Whitney, Office Specialist

Members not in attendance:

Barrett Brown, NW Landowner Rep. (Voting)
Jim James, OSWA Executive Director Ex-Officio
Julie Woodward, OFRI Ex-Officio
Janelle Geddes, USFS State & Private Forestry Ex-Officio

Guests/Public:

Clair Klock, Clackamas County SWCD
Jeremy Felty, OSWA

1. Welcome and Review of the Agenda

Barnes opened the meeting. Welcoming those attending and asked for a roll call.

2. Roll Call

[Roll call reflected above.]

3. Approval of the Minutes

Barnes asked for any corrections to the minutes from the last meeting. Swanson asked for clarification on quorum and whether there was a decision made that allowed for a majority vote on internal documents and letters. But as there was a quorum on hand, Peel moved to approve the minutes as drafted. Gerlach seconded the motion. Barnes called for agreement. All were in favor. Motion carried. Minutes from the November meeting were approved.

4. Public Comment

There were no members of the public in attendance. Dominique noted that Clair Klock of the Multnomah SWCD asked for the meeting link but hadn't joined the meeting at that point. Klock didn't indicate he had any formal comment. From there Barnes moved up the agenda to the Private Forest Division Update with Hartstein and Gordon reporting.

5. Private Forests Division Update

Hartstein began the update noting that Gordon would participate later in the discussion covering the post-fire recovery. He reported that the Governor's Recommended Budget for the 2021-2023 Biennium was released the week prior to the meeting. He prefaced that by declining to speculate on the details of the Governor's Budget as it is still under review by the ODF Fiscal folks. He was able to report broadly that the Governor's Budget for ODF is \$438.5 million dollars, total funds which includes 1195 positions (FTE) within the Agency. A 12.8% increase from the 2019-2021 Legislatively-Approved Budget. That includes 3 fund shifts to support Agency operations; equal cost-share between General Funds and private landowners for base fire protection costs; shifting expenditures in the Federal Forest Restoration Program to utilize more of the federal funding and less General Funds. And additionally shifting the Forest Practices Act work to be funded by 50% Harvest Tax revenue which is up from the 40% it is currently. For the Private Forests Division individually, the Governor's Budget has \$44.7 million dollars with 117 FTE. This is about a 2.8% decrease from 2019-21 biennium but it's largely from the phase out of what was a one-time shot of funding for Sudden Oak Death Program. He shared that there

currently no position reductions for the Division. Positions that had been held vacant for cost-containment (Pathologist, Monitoring Unit Manager and several Stewardship Foresters) which they are now developing Exception Requests to fill them ahead of the next biennium as those positions were included in the Governor's Budget.

Swanson wanted to clarify that she understood that the shift of funds for the Federal Forest Restoration Program would mean more federal funds and less General Fund and that the public/private share of State fire costs and FPA work is shifting from the previous 60/40 to an equal cost share of 50/50. Hartstein continued that the Harvest Tax is set every biennium by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources that includes representation by the Oregon Forest Resources Institute. They discuss and set the rate, within what they can receive. Ahrens asked if Hartstein could share the significance of the shift in funds on Fire Protection and the General Fund and the implications. Staff explained that they couldn't speculate until ODF Fiscal has finished their review. That there is a specific process by which that rate is set based on the actual costs to the Forest Protection Fund. He recalled it is run through the Emergency Fire Cost Committee. Further than that he didn't want to speculate. Gordon agreed. Hartstein reiterated discussion of the consequences to small landowners needed to wait for the Fact Sheet Analysis which they will be able to discuss at the next meeting. He did know that the Protection Division budget has been increased between 12 and 13%. Gordon replied that with a 50/50 rather than 60/40 they are shifting that balance back a little bit effectively freeing up some General Fund and adding more landowner dollars in that mix. The specific economic summary was due out soon. Hartstein noted that it is at Step 2 in the budget process. 1) The Agency Request Budget; 2) the Governor's Recommended Budget and 3) the Legislatively Approved Budget.

Returning to the update Hartstein reported that at the end of September the Board of Forestry will have only 3 members whose terms have not expired. Which leaves 4 members of the 7 member Board with expired terms. No new members were placed before the Senate Rules and Executive Appointments Committee in December as the Appointments Committee had removed all Executive Appointments from the agenda. So regardless, to meet quorum they will need 4 BOF members, so expired term members are able to still participate for quorum. Chair Imeson will be continuing. Members with terms expiring are Nils Christoffersen, Cindy Deacon-Williams and Mike Rose.

The final item in the update was the continuing COVID restrictions. To the greatest extent possible employees are expected to work from home unless teleworking is not an option. All employees at the office are expected to maintain a 6 foot distance and wear a face mask (unless in an office with a door and walls), and employees must be masked if traveling in a vehicle with others.

Barnes asked whether the Agency maintained records on causes of fire ignitions. His interest stemmed from his perception that small woodland owners like himself go to incredible lengths to prevent fire and performing initial attack on their properties and didn't understand why human-causes were higher than lightning strikes. Gordon provided some stats on the 10 year averages on ODF-Protected Lands of human-caused versus lightning fires indicating human-causes create the most fire starts. He didn't have the breakdown of those causes but referred him to the Protection Division that does categorize cause in the FIRES database. He offered to add someone from Protection to a future agenda to answer those questions. Another member agreed it would be useful to know about what unintentional activities create the most concern. Gordon noted that Keep Oregon Green (KOG) tries to target their prevention campaign messages to address common ignition concerns. He went on to show graphing of fire acres burned each decade which showed a doubling of acres burned over the last 30 years for all jurisdictions in Oregon over 50,000 acres. Five of the 25 largest fires in Oregon's history occurred this last fire season with the Beachie Creek, Lion's Head, Holiday, Riverside and Archie Fires. Swanson offered that there is an After-the-Fire website with an interactive map for property assessment and other resources. Ahrens noted that the site has been completed and the information should be distributed and promoted. <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/forests/fire/after-wildfire> and <https://wildfire.oregon.gov/>

Swanson had interest in providing recommendation to the Private Forestlands Habitat Conservation Plan being led through the Governor's MOU and Executive Order. She had heard that a facilitator had been hired and that they are planning to move forward with that process in January starting with setting sideboards on what an HCP might encompass. She shared that in support of that work, Sustainable NW has worked with some others to get funding to start a small forestland owners table for sharing information related to the HCP and be a resource and sounding board for small

woodland owner's specific concerns and as Jim James is a member of that larger MOU group he would represent their concerns. The Committee for Family Forestlands is obviously similar to that and she asked to be included on future CFF agendas to update the members on the HCP progress. She is looking for interested small woodlands participants and they intend to do a sort of HCP 101 to bring their group enough information to know the ways and means to be engaged in that. Also related to that she is working with Glenn, ODF, Ryan and others about ways Sustainable NW can join the Partnership for Forestry Education.

6. Post-Fire Recovery Updates

- **Landowner Assistance**

Gordon continued sharing his screen with some fire stats. So, shortly after the fires broke out in September, there was immediate coordination between FEMA and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). They stood up an information shop that formed the basis coordinating formal fire response and that then morphed into the recovery effort in mid-October or so. So shortly thereafter the State, with support from FEMA, started developing a State Recovery Plan specific to these wildfires. This wildfire disaster proved quite a bit different from other planned for natural disasters. A lot of the initial work was around addressing hazardous materials around homes and structures that burned. There was about 4500 structures burned in the fires. There are still a number of people who are in temporary living situations being supported by the Red Cross. FEMA is actively working to try to develop longer term solutions for them as they look at rebuilding. He explained that the State Recovery Plan has come together through a lot of executive level coordination through the Governor's Office and all of the primary State Agencies involved. The State has stood up seven different recovery functions and of those the one that ODF has been most closely associated and working with is the Natural and Cultural Resources Recovery Task Force that is being co-chaired by ODF, OWEB and DEQ. The Task Force has been focused on debris management, recreation, funding, tribal and cultural resources and also impact assessments.

- **ETART**

The Erosion Threat Assessment and Reduction Team (ETART) effort was made available through FEMA and that process enabled the State access to federal data and staff expertise from the Army Corp, Weather Service, and BLM who have experience with post-fire assessments on federal grounds. So it takes the federal BAER model, the Burned Area Emergency Response model and applies it to the entire fire footprint for the 4 major fires that burned on the west slope of the Cascades. So the Riverside, Beachie, Holiday and Archie. The ETART team brought in resource experts who organized field teams that consisted of State and Local agency partners. They essentially had to ground-troth the remotely sensed data. These were rapid assessments, emergency assessments. So the ETART teams collected a lot of GIS data which will be valuable for similar analysis in the future. The idea behind the entire effort was to build capacity within the State to be able to conduct a similar analysis in the future for other fires or potentially even the fires that were not included in this round of assessments. All final reports from the Team should be available by December 18th and the data will be housed in one location. There is an Assessment Sub-group under State Recovery Function 7 to try and create a master list to prioritize projects as there are limits to the resources that are available. Gordon shared that if you go to <http://wildfire.oregon.org> and there's a link at the top for Natural and Cultural Resources and that's the home of the SRF 7 task force he was referring to. That's where a lot of the ETART results will be posted and other details related to that group.

Gordon turned to the topic of landowner assistance but admittedly didn't have a lot of new information to share. He reiterated that the Emergency EQIP sign up is still available through the end of this month and the same is true for the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) sign up. On EFRP in particular, it was difficult to get as many landowners into that initial ask as we could. He was pretty confident that NRCS is envisioning having a regular EQIP signup around post-fire restoration probably in the spring of next year. To set that up they would be developing a Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS) that could be used as an additional mechanism to help some landowners that maybe didn't fit well into EFRP. They are still encouraging as many folks as possible to get signed up for assistance programs. In terms of the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) an NRCS program that has a window of 60 days post disaster. But in talking with the State lead for that program it may be possible to make a case to start that 60 day clock later than the first day of the fires. He reported some interest in a EWP signup but that program is challenging to navigate requiring a sponsor with 25% match and pretty significant long term commitment to projects in terms of follow-up to ensure that

specific goals are met. He looked into it thinking ODF might potentially be a statewide sponsor but it would have been a significant lift for the Department financially and from a capacity perspective. That program is available through NRCS.

The Agency did put a pretty significant ask into USFS State & Private Forestry for some funding to help across the board for this disaster. An ask for straight up funding for restoration work, capacity to support that work and also some specific funding related to seedling availability as well. He offered that if the ask were to come through it would be significant and a definite game-changer in terms of resources at our disposal directly for that work.

- **Seed and Seedling Availability**

Gordon shared his optimism based on the robust conversation Seed & Seedling cadre have been able to have. The group is made up of folks from ODF, USFS Region 6, and Glenn Ahrens has been engaged from the Extension side. Folks from industry and the nurseries and other NGOs as well. There are a number of different threads. Putting them in to three categories: One is an Emergency Response. Trying to get our hands on some seedlings now so we've got something available as soon as possible. The next is trying to create Organization and Structure around that forecasting long term about opportunities to connect those seedlings with landowners which means a cold storage and distribution network. So sort of looking at how that might take shape. And also hoping to Create a Model there that would live longer term on the west side.

Ahrens continued that there is a timeline to increase capacity if all the nurseries are pulling. But emphasized they don't yet know what the actual capacity is of the forest seedling nurseries and how to increase supply. Those efforts are definitely proceeding in parallel with assessing just how many landowners and acres are affected so we can determine how many seedlings are actually needed for planting. He offered an estimate that 100 million trees are needed. A lot for large landowners but the ballpark estimate for small landowners is maybe 5 to 10 million trees and many don't have orders in yet. The Seed/Seedling Work Group has ODF working the ground to match up nursery space with need or identifying nursery space they can put in an order on behalf of the scheduled need. Ahrens was currently working a lot on the landowner outreach to discover the need and compiling a list.

Ahrens wanted to add he's been working with the Department of Forestry in getting the GIS data. The latest data is looking like somewhere in the range of 40,000 to 60,000 acres of family forest depending on how they are defined, that are in the fire footprint. And maybe half was severe burn, 50% or greater mortality of vegetation. The group agreed that if we can grow a half million trees right now there's no problem selling those to somebody. And we want to make that many more at a minimum available for landowners who are looking right now. It might be one or two years out before those are available. And then three to five years for the whole process if we succeed in building capacity or growing more. He thanked Ryan and also Jamie Knight, ODF Stewardship Forester in NE Oregon who turned out to be a rock star as far as somebody with experience, (the Private Forest Lands Network in NE Oregon) provides that kind of ability to jump in and ensure extra capacity for small landowners. Her effort on the east side is a successful model to set up on the west side.

Gordon picked up the discussion and reported that during the meeting Adam Coble and Region 6 Forest Service were told that Diane Haasey, USFS Western Region Seedling Technical Expert has been engaged in our seedling conversation. She is tied into the Trillion Trees Initiative which is an international initiative to try and plant a trillion trees globally. He didn't have all the details but clearly if we are going to come anywhere near that we have to increase our nursery capacity. That group was looking at opportunities to maybe pilot something in Oregon and try to leverage a little funding from that to help us out. I'll get an update from Adam and kind of see where that group landed as a potential path forward. In terms of current efforts, Jamie Knight has found some nursery space in Idaho and Montana and seedlings available Washington State. Another point of success is that J. Herbert Stone Nursery is willing to make space for about 100,000 seedlings available. A good start. He shared the good work being applied to this emergency and hoped they will be able to meet the need for this disaster and in addition have a good system in place on the west side to help us out in the future.

There are some continued challenges in the process regarding labor. Getting the crews, for industry it is simple part of doing business at the scale of what they are growing. Industry has developed relationships with contract labor and neighboring partners over time. Ahrens asked Vroman what his take was on the current capacity for labor. Vroman shared that they have always had participation with small woodland owners that are adjacent landowners and for example if they have excess seedlings they have a list of landowners that they sell seedlings to. He emphasized that the seedlings are

really the link and at least two years out. He admitted that it's going to get difficult with the amount of industrial land that has been consumed by the fires and the lack of labor that is coming in. There is competition for labor with agricultural market, vineyards, Christmas trees, etc. And immigration is starting to effect it as well. If we have the seedlings available we would encourage neighbors to use our contractors as well and we would just schedule it in if they are down in the area working for us. He was confident that industry would participate in that manner. But half days and full days are disappearing pretty quickly with the amount of work. Excess trees if you can find them will usually have a body of contract labor willing to plant them. Finding the excess trees is the big issue. But bed space as well. One of the challenges Ahrens saw was the profit margin in forest seedlings is so low it discourages a lot of nurseries to come in on a small scale. He offered that standing/existing nurseries like Herbert Stone and others that already know what they are doing and already are into high volume for them adding a half a million might be easier than working with new growers. Barnes added that another issue to consider is refrigeration infrastructure to store the seedlings.

Gordon wrapped up the discussion sharing that he has been exploring ways to mitigate labor shortages for the J. Herbert Stone Nursery. Potentially a cooperative agreement between ODF and the Forest Service down around Stone where seasonal fire workers might be able to provide some labor between November and April for them to help supplement their operations and it would also potentially create the opportunity for some of our seasonal fire crews to work year-round. He wasn't clear on the chances but hopefully we can actually make it happen similar to the Fire & Ice Agreement with ODOT. Gordon wanted to mention that capacity is definitely a challenge, collective capacity around all landowner assistance, around the seedling issue everything associated with recovery. One of his efforts is to work with the Partnership for Forestry Education to identify the places where we could really use additional assistance. One item there is capacity to coordinate the seedling effort providing assistance to landowners even those looking at cost-share programs we are going to need help developing and implementing forest management plans for them. He continues to look at the potential for some kind of public/private partnership to fill some of those needs. Ahrens added that there is a crossover between the public assistance and the private consulting and this effort should not take away any work from consultants. They have put the call out to the Society of American Foresters (SAF) for volunteers and we have a list of a few dozen, a couple of dozen anyway that said they would be willing but as they are professional foresters, they want to know where to volunteer and where they can offer their consultant services? As there is more on-the-ground work that needs to be done than people to do it and if there is money, like EQIP or EFRP and that can actually pay for services then maybe we are putting professionals to work as part of this landowner assistance down the road.

There was a question on climate change adaptations to consider when planting and species composition. Ahrens affirmed that there has been studies on genetic variation and seed zone distributions. But it's not clear yet.

7. SB 1602 Update

Barnard began that things are really starting to kick into gear with the implementation of Senate Bill 1602. The Salmon, Steelhead and Bull Trout Rules will be effective in the Siskiyou Georegion on January first 2021 along with the new Helicopter Pesticide Application Buffers. Trainings (which overlapped with the meeting) are being recorded and will be posted on ODF's external website once they are done. The other big piece of work is they have gotten ruling on the FERNS modifications we need to make and have started the contractor's process working through what they call the 'discovery phase' to reconcile what SB1602 actually means in terms of the system modification and the official schedule for that part of the project. The Project Team is working away on that.

There was an announcement yesterday put out by the Governor's Office regarding the MOU between Conservation and Industry. They had selected the facilitator for that process and they were getting set to move forward with meetings after the first of the year. As ODF was not a party to the MOU there was interest in what ODF's role would be moving forward. As any engagement would be from the Executive level they anticipate providing information when asked.

8. Partner Updates

Felty shared that Jim James has planned to retire from the Director's position at OSWA but will stay on for one month overlap with the new Director (in recruitment) OSWA is expecting that James will be hired back as a contractor to finish out the work on the MOU group. He will probably continue past the session next year or so.

Gerlach announced that she is moving on from the Pacific Forest Trust by to her law practice which has involved conservation easements and carbon offset work and recreational access. She is looking forward to remaining on the Committee.

Ahrens updated members on the new OSU Fire Extension Program and the story map that the OSU fire folks have put out. (Dominique to distribute the link.) . He reported that they did hire the four new Regional Specialists last summer that are all on board as of this fall. Daniel Leavell is the Statewide Fire Extension Specialist and Carrie Berger is our Fire Program Manager. More good news to report is we have been approved to hire the next two, so we will have six Regional Fire Specialists on the list. That's great to add capacity at this time. OSU will be rolling out a whole lot of fire preparedness education this coming spring with all of our partners to help folks in different parts of the state. He has been working with Jeremy and Jim James at OSWA on this outreach to the landowner list of those more or less 1000 landowners that we have identified that were within the fire perimeters up and down the state, so that we can make sure we have every chance to get them connected with assistance.

Clair Klock, guest suggested creation of a fire burn-over plan for homeowners helping them survive in place when evacuation efforts aren't adequate. Ahrens offered to see that considered for those extreme situations. Gordon agreed to share with the SR 7 folks in terms of overall response. As they looked at lessons learned, in a lot of instances, debris across roads is also a challenge for egress for folks during these situations.

The Chair verified that the next CFF meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, January 13th over ZOOM. Barnes adjourned the meeting.