



NW Regional Forest Practice Committee Meeting Summary for May 16, 2025

I. Roll Call

Committee Members Present		Committee Members Not Present
Mike Barnes, Chair Randy Silbernagel Candace Bonner	Aaron Zweber Dave Wells	Eric Kranzush
ODF Staff		Guests/Public
Scott Swearingen Sarah Siefken Adam Coble Jennifer Weikel Jennifer Ward Emily Martin	Greg Wagenblast Nicole Stapp Mike Thompson Greg Erb Emily Gregorio	N/A

II. Chair Comments

- Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 9:00am.
- A quorum was established.
- There were no comments on the agenda or previous minutes and no public comment.
- Chair Barnes provided a committee update, stating that there are 3 vacancies on the committee and the districts are working to fill them.

III. Division and Agency Update – Scott Swearingen

- Scott Swearingen provided a division and agency update. The following information was noted:
 - Reviewed topline organizational chart – Kate Skinner as Interim State Forester and Tim Holschbach as Interim Deputy State Forester.
 - Reviewed Forest Resources Division organizational chart changes – Federal Grants Unit moved to the Administrative Division, 20-Year Plan work moved into the division (Nathan Beckman), the Seed Orchard manager position is filled, and some units reorganized to create a new unit structure.
 - Reviewed State Forester hiring progress – the desired attributes and details of the position are being finalized, recruitment is intended to start in June; the proposed legislature to move the selection process to the governor is still within the legislative process.
 - Wildfire Funding bill is in review, the hazard map repeal passed the floor unanimously, the Forest Product Harvest Tax bill is on hold, and the last day of session is June 29th.

Pursuant to public notice made by news release with statewide distribution, a committee meeting of the Northwest Oregon Regional Forest Practice Committee [an advisory body to the Oregon Board of Forestry with authority established in Oregon Revised Statute 527.650] was held on May 16, 2025, hosted by the ODF Forest Resources Division

- The revenue forecast was received and is projecting available resources down \$755M from what was predicted in February.
- Reviewed streamflow permanence progress – ODF, ODFW, and the PFA authors determined the existing models to not be accurate enough for regulatory purposes, nothing to be in place by July 1, 2025, but a model is still being worked on.
 - Chair Barnes stated that he would like a model, adding that the model would have been a good starting point for small woodland owners as they may not have the resources to do it themselves. Scott Swearingen responded that ODF staff may help. Adam Coble added that a model will be in place; ODF is working to clearly define what is needed from a model and find one that fits with a matching contractor to complete it.
- Several federal partners are undergoing changes, so new or modified grants and agreements are not being signed locally and are instead going to the federal level for review and signature. Contingency plans are being made to get funding in the meantime. NRCS has been the biggest area of impact as there is currently no signed and updated agreement, so no funding yet – NRCS staff under Small Forestland Owner Incentives and Assistance unit in Forest Resources Division are impacted.
- Stream mapping is currently up to date with a new statewide stream map to go out by the end of May on the ODF website, and FERNS is continuously updated separately.
- Reforestation training was done across the state with good attendance.
- A division all staff meeting was held at the beginning of May.

IV. Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Update – Jennifer Weikel & Nicole Stapp

- Jennifer Weikel and Nicole Stapp provided a presentation on the current state of the HCP and rulemaking. The following was noted:
 - Chair Barnes stated that the committee wants to be engaged in rulemaking, noting the advisory role of the committee, and asked where committee comments align within the rulemaking process. Nicole Stapp stated that committee comments cannot be considered after the public comment period, but that there are some different options.
 - ACTION ITEM: Chair Barnes and Kyle Abraham to discuss when to engage the committee during rulemaking.

V. Chair Barnes adjusted the agenda to move to the next update item.

VI. Compliance Monitoring Project Update – Sarah Siefken and Emily Martin

- Sarah Siefken and Emily Martin provided a presentation on compliance monitoring. The following was noted:
 - Data is being analyzed based on statistician recommendations.
 - There are no current plans to revisit the reforestation study unless the Board directs the agency to.
 - Reforestation study was completed 7 years after harvest.

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VII. Operator of the Year Program Revisions – Greg Wagenblast

- Greg Wagenblast discussed the opportunity for changes to the existing Operator of the Year directive, the option to add an additional award program, and the process that will be used for completing the changes as previously discussed in the October 2024 meeting. The following was noted:
 - The goal is to have a draft policy for final review and edits in spring of 2026 so that it can be used in 2027.
 - A working group will be created with a representative from each regional committee, stewardship foresters, and field managers – Randy Silbernagel volunteered to be the Northwest Regional Forest Practice Committee representative for the working group.
 - Reviewed the Fish and Wildlife Steward Award – Forest Lands, a joint award with ODF and ODFW to recognize landowners, as an option for nominees that do not fit into the Operator of the Year guidelines.
 - Chair Barnes stated that he does not want to use this award because it has not been consistently used over the years and does not want a second award process.
 - Randy Silbernagel stated that he does not want to use this award and wants to adjust the Operator of the Year award instead.
 - Reviewed existing Operator of the Year program.
 - Chair Barnes stated that the phrase “consistently exceeds” has held people back from nominating because they feel they are doing good as they always do instead of “exceeding”. Additionally, he asked that the criteria be reviewed to avoid people self-selecting out while still meeting the intent of the award.
 - Randy Silbernagel and Chair Barnes stated that the grading criteria are working, but that the subjectivity causes some confusion.
 - The following options were suggested for changes to the number of nominations accepted to assist in the timeliness of tours:
 - a. Greg Wagenblast suggested having each committee member review the nominees and rank them to get a top number.
 - b. Scott Swearingen suggested limiting the options to only 1 submission per district.
 - c. Randy Silbernagel suggested changing the tour to only have some committee members at each site rather than all committee members at all sites.

VIII. Chair Barnes adjusted the agenda to complete the other agenda items before lunch.

IX. All Streams Crossing Technical Guidance (FPTG) Review & Technical Guidance Update – Scott Swearingen and Greg Erb

- Scott Swearingen reviewed the FPTG update schedule. Finalized guidance is posted to the external ODF website.
- Scott Swearingen provided an update on the Plan for Alternate Practice (PFAP) process. The following was noted:

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- A defined process flow and guidance is being developed along with an internal guidance that clearly defines roles and responsibilities.
- PFAPs can now be tracked in FERNs to see which rule it is associated with.
- A technical review step has been added to help the foresters, but foresters still approve or deny the PFAPs.
- When a PFAP is being created there is communication with the agency beforehand to help develop a plan that can be approved. If the forester denies a PFAP they provide a reason why.
- Greg Erb reviewed the changes made to the All Streams Cross FPTG. The following was noted:
 - Dave Wells asked to add safety to life and property into emergency repair.
 - Dewatering requirement is new to rule, fords were more common in eastern Oregon previously.
 - Candace Bonner stated she believes the rule change is good from a turbidity perspective.
 - The goal is to have the FPTG finalized by end of May or early June and posted onto the external ODF website.

X. Chair Barnes adjourned the meeting at 12:15pm.