



## EO Regional Forest Practice Committee Meeting Summary for May 22, 2025

### I. Roll Call

Committee Members Present		Committee Members Not Present
Bob Messinger, Chair	Bobby Douglas	Paul Jones
Todd Kurtz	Jeremy Grose	Elwayne Henderson
ODF Staff		Guests/Public
Kyle Abraham	Scott Swearingen	N/A
Hans Rudolf	Emily Martin	
Greg Erb	Jennifer Ward	
Jennifer Weikel	Nicole Stapp	
Emily Gregorio	Kirk Ausland	

### II. Chair Comments

- Chair Messinger called the meeting to order at 9:02am.
- A quorum was not established. It was determined that the meeting is only informational and there will be no official actions or decision-making.
- There were no comments on the agenda or previous minutes, no public comment, and no chair updates.

### III. Division and Agency Update – Kyle Abraham

- Kyle Abraham provided a division and agency update. The following information was noted:
  - Reviewed State Forester hiring progress and topline organizational chart – Kate Skinner is the Interim State Forester. 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. The legislative process has no deadline and if it passes, the State Forester would be treated like other agency heads with a governor reporting structure.
  - 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 29<sup>th</sup>
  - The revenue forecast was received and is projecting available resources down \$755M from what was predicted in February. The overall state budget for next year is more than the current budget despite projections.
  - Reviewed Forest Resources Division organizational chart changes – Federal Grants Unit moved to the Administrative Division and some units reorganized to create a new unit structure.

*Pursuant to public notice made by news release with statewide distribution, a committee meeting of the Eastern 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 22, 2025, hosted by the ODF Forest Resources Division*

- NRCS and other federal grants have uncertainty with signatures and renewals, so the agency is monitoring the situation closely. Also noted uncertainties with the Good Neighbor Authority.
- There are three committee vacancies that Gina Miner is working to fill.

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

- Jennifer Weikel and Nicole Stapp provided a presentation on the current state of the HCP and rulemaking. The following was noted:
  - No changes were made to the post-disturbance harvest rules and they are anticipated to be accepted at the June Board of Forestry meeting.
    - ACTION ITEM: Nicole Stapp to share link to public comment summary document.
  - There is no timeline to have tethered logging rules in place.
  - The ODF website has information on rulemaking.
  - Legislature set the bounds on the HCP to be within the PFA requirements, so the federal services are not able to ask above and beyond.
  - There is currently no take permitted – must work directly with the federal services to receive an individual permit.

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

#### VI. Compliance Monitoring Project Update – Emily Martin

- Emily Martin provided a presentation on compliance monitoring. The following was noted:
  - ACTION ITEM: Emily Martin to share link to reforestation study report.
  - Jeremy Grose stated that using flags as an indicator for stopping points with riparian buffer width measurements is not good because there is not always a spot exactly there to put a flag. He stated that using where the cut line ends is preferred.
  - The FPA requires the agency to use an external statistician.
  - Priorities and processes have been previously outlined in rule.
  - ODF works with a statistician to design the studies.

VII. Chair Messinger adjusted the agenda to take a 10-minute break.

#### VIII. Operator of the Year Program Revisions – Kirk Ausland

- Kirk Ausland 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 – Bobby Douglas volunteered to be the Eastern Oregon 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.
  - Todd Kurtz stated that more award options might make it more difficult to get nominees. Chair Messinger agreed with this statement and added that it may not need to be a yearly award.
  - Chair Messinger noted that the scoring card is not usually used due to subjectivity and that they are hardly ever comparing similar operations, adding that it makes the competition part difficult.

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

- Greg Erb reviewed the changes made to the All Streams Cross FPTG. The following was noted:
  - Guidance does not supersede rule, it is intended to add clarity.
  - Chair Messinger expressed interest in more engagement from the committee in the guidance review and a return to a workgroup style of review.
    - ACTION ITEM: Kyle Abraham to come up with a list of options for Chair Messinger to consider.
- Scott Swearingen reviewed the Forest Practice Technical Guidance 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:
  - A defined process flow and guidance is being developed along with an internal guidance that clearly defines roles and responsibilities. The flowchart will be posted to the ODF website once complete.
  - PFAPs can now be tracked in FERNS.
  - A technical review step has been added to help the foresters, but foresters still approve or deny the PFAPs.

X. Chair Messinger adjourned the meeting at 11:46am.