

## Subcommittee on Federal Forests January 7, 2020

In Attendance		
Board Members	ODF Staff	Other
Nils Christoffersen Cindy Deacon Williams (Absent) Tom Imeson (Ex. Officio) Joe Justice	Jeff Burns Chad Davis Peter Daugherty Megan Ehnle Hilary Olivos-Rood	

Audio [Link](#) (One hour, 39 minutes, and 47 seconds; 25.2 MB) | Meeting Handouts [Link](#)

### **Meeting called to order at 5:23 p.m.**

Roll call completed by Board Chair Nils Christoffersen.

### **Agenda Item 1: Introduction and Minutes Review**

Minutes reviewed. Justice moved to approve minutes. Christoffersen seconded. Minutes approved.

Christoffersen summarized the objectives of the agenda, provided a brief summary of the options being considered to carry forward the work of the Governor’s Wildfire Response Council and the Shared Stewardship Agreement between the USDA and State of Oregon. Discussion followed.

- Laid out potential contingency plans and what role the Federal Forests subcommittee could fill in 2020 moving forward. Considered role if an advisory committee is formed by the Governor’s Office with mandate to provide advice for shared stewardship agreement or Governor’s Wildfire Response Council recommendations. Subcommittee could advocate for a role and Department representation on that committee, but that involvement may change the scope of the current Board subcommittee.
- Explored where a potential advisory committee would sit, if formed. Described how other states are operating in relation to the shared stewardship agreement, and considered if a committee would be convened by the Governor, as this is a statewide effort across many agencies. Discussed how the committee may best function, scope of advisory role, agency representation, composition possibilities, and potential goals. State Forester Daugherty noted more to come, as a meeting will be scheduled between US Forest Service, the Department, and Governor’s office.

### **Agenda Item 2: Overview of Council on Wildfire Response**

Davis reviewed a graph that illustrated the broad nature of shared stewardship, explained how it can interplay with the Federal Forest Restoration (FFR) or Good Neighborhood Authority (GNA) program, and summarized how these programs may contribute or incorporate elements of the Governor’s Council on Wildfire Response (GCWR) recommendations within their work.

- Explored the various connectors between the FFR and GNA program under shared stewardship. Discussed the perspectives and distinct characteristics of the connectors described. Ran through nexus scenarios such as wildfire risk mitigation, agency purviews of risk, and strategic approaches to sharing risk across the state.

- Discussed the 37 GCWR recommendations, unpacked the recommendations, and described the crosswalk with the Mitigation Committee Report. Davis explained the mitigation report is an expansion to the seven recommendation areas from the GCWR, but includes more depth, detail, and clarity.
- Davis reviewed his interpretation of the GWRC recommendations for mitigation cross walked with the mitigation subcommittee's recommendations. He highlighted five areas:
  - 1: Use quantified risk assessment (QRA) as the basis for prioritizing fuel treatments.
  - 2: Significant program expansion to reduce fuel loads on all forest lands.
  - 3: Increase fire and smoke tolerance.
  - 4: Identify and resolve long term barriers (referring to federal policy, administrative policy, or legislative policy).
  - 5: Develop governance structure around implementation of all of the recommendations.
- Suggested the use of QRA to frame prioritization for work and where to start as a Department. Highlighted how the Subcommittee has not fully discussed the role fire plays on the landscape, and reviewed the GCWR mitigation committee's take-a-ways on this topic. Discussed the origination and purpose behind the Subcommittee on Federal Forests, described how the subcommittee's focus changed as the Federal Forest Restoration program initiated, and how the focus may evolve to address the GCWR recommendations. Commented on fire's role to achieve favorable conditions on the landscape, and noted how the Protection Division will need to be part of the overall conversation. Stated what the Subcommittee chooses to focus on will inform who to engage with, reviewed the potential operational decisions about where the work could land within a division, and the policy work that may be pursued to support the work.
- Discussed how the participants of the GCWR interpreted the mitigation committee's recommendations, reviewed the recommendation categories, and highlighted where the Subcommittee could focus policymaking efforts in treatment activity. Commented on acres burned from wildfire, and how they correspond with treated acres. Remarkd on the Granite Gulch video, the strategies on the ground resourcing that fire, the value of the video to illustrate alternative treatment approaches, and community building it provided.
- Reviewed what may happen in the 2020 short session, the Board's role as the Department develops policy option package (POP) in relation to GCWR recommendations, and reviewed what policy areas the Board has already weighed in on, such as suppression on large fires, and policy areas in the GCWR recommendations the Subcommittee role could explore further, such as land use.
- Department has an image of not being onboard with prescribed burning treatments on ODF protected lands, and are held captive to ORS 477, but on federal lands this is not the case; the Department can be on board if the scenario, resources, and timing line up. Noted how the Department's response depends on whether a fire is unmanaged or managed, and how misaligned language can hinder coordination and policymaking efforts. Discussed how each interest group interprets the report's recommendations with their own perspectives and motives, so stressed the value of common language to align intentions.
- Reviewed the liability and risk the Department is willing to take on with prescribed burning or controlled burn efforts. Discussed burn plan compliance, range of implementation with existing conditions, and degree of certainty. Mentioned other western states issues with negligence and liability around burn management plans.

Discussed how there needs to be a serious thoughtful policy conversation on acceptable risk to a state agency. Closed by referencing Dana Skelly graph that listed acres managed with various treatment types, and posed if this can be used as baseline for a narrative to explain risk of treatments on the Oregon landscape.

### **Agenda Item 3: Federal Forest Restoration and Good Neighbor Authority Update**

Davis provided handouts ([attachment](#)) on Federal Forest Restoration (FFR) program funding allocations, and Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) program recap. He mentioned that transparency of the FFR grant awarding process and who received awards is unclear, reviewed next steps in posting and updating this information as online public reference.

- Reviewed the type of grants funded by FFR in 2019, the number of awarded projects, and amount provided.
- Offered background on the GNA program, described the types of GNA agreements, and reviewed the GNA accomplishments to date. Provided examples to illustrate the variability in scope of work, skill sets needed, and projects planned. Reviewed the current uses of program revenue, outlined future projects with partner agencies, and described the regional projects in habitat restoration if revenue allows. Discussed the limitation of the GNA funding (e.g., recreation improvements) and how policy barriers exist from fulfilling aspects of the shared stewardship agreement. Commented on the GNA program comparison conducted between Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, noting how GNA applies differently in each region and under different state laws, which produces different outcomes.
- Discussed how GNA operational understanding, structure, and function differs among each state. Reviewed how the Department works across divisions and in cooperation with field offices to provide resources for GNA projects, noting the benefits of learning techniques being used on Federal lands to inform State Forest timber sales.
- Reflected on the Board's relationship to the current issues in front of the subcommittee, and what is needed for the subcommittee to adjust and respond to these issues. Considered a greater discussion at the Board level to revisit the subcommittee's purpose, role and work plan for future engagement with the Governor driven initiatives, like GCWR and Shared Stewardship agreement.

### **Agenda Item 4: Shared Stewardship Advisory Committee and role of Subcommittee**

Daugherty commented on the Department current strategic approach, noting limited operations to warrant policy guidance, and recommended shifting strategies to consider increasing scale and improving investments for a landscape scale impact. Discussed the need for policy guidance around Shared Stewardship, and how to implement the shared stewardship agreement.

- Considered potential new roles for the Subcommittee to explore.
  - 1) Broaden the QRA to incorporate the full suite of values and Subcommittee could weigh in on composition of the group who does the QRA update.
  - 2) Development of metrics for accountability and tracking for projected outcomes. Subcommittee could contribute to a policy-based workgroup initiated by the US Forest Service and Governor's office who could contribute to the metric development process.
  - 3) Design the monitoring program and develop outcome objectives. Subcommittee could contribute to a science and policy-based workgroup to gauge progress and create accountability.

- 4) Discussed the tension that exists in local decision-making of State-operated, but federally funded programs. Considered how a work group could outline a governance process that identifies when the state hands over work to local level, how outcomes are quantified and measured, and how to maintain accountability. Commented on a desire for development of a strategic communications plan to be worked on to engage stakeholders and public on a common issue to fulfill the objectives.
- 5) Discussed the feasibility of a Shared Stewardship Advisory committee or continuation of the GCWR, and the potential role for the Subcommittee.

### **Agenda Item 5: Public Comment**

No comment provided.

### **Agenda Item 6: Summary and Wrap Up**

Christoffersen provided a summary that highlighted what he heard from the Department. Commented on a communication plan around the shared stewardship agreement and how it tied into other Department work with considerable outcomes and state objectives.

- Discussed alternative representation options:
  - Bridge between the Board and shared stewardship advisory committee as a liaison. Willingness to continue the relationship with Governor's office.
  - Perhaps be given a piece of the council recommendation to complete and report out on. But this would expand the membership and role of the subcommittee to include members beyond the Board.
  - Consider being a member on the GCWR council if continued.

Imeson commented on the subcommittee role with the many moving parts and needs of the State. Posited what is the appropriate Board role as an interagency committee or council is developed on a high governance level. Stressed the importance of being transparent about any modifications of this Subcommittee's purpose and intentions.

Chair Christoffersen summarized the meeting:

- Reviewed GCWR report generally, and GCWR recommendations related to the function and original scope of the Subcommittee. Discussed the FFR and GNA program, and the broader mandate of shared stewardship. Recognized a need to review purpose and scope of the Subcommittee in respect to these issues, and requested further clarification from the Governor's office and US Forest Service (USFS), to bring forward thoughts on modification but continuation of the Subcommittee.
- Suggested to coordinate a meeting with the Governor's office and USFS, discuss how this all fits with the shared stewardship agreement.
- Asked that the group aim for the next subcommittee meeting, either virtually from mid to late March post legislative short session or in April.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.**

HR

*Meeting Minutes Approved at the July 22, 2020 Board of Forestry Meeting*