

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item No.:	6
Work Plan:	Forest Resources Division
Topic:	Board of Forestry Updates
Presentation Title:	Committee for Family Forestlands Annual Report
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SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide a report on the Committee for Family Forestlands (CFF), discuss progress on key issues, and make recommendations on policy topics affecting family forestland.

CONTEXT

The CFF, a standing committee of the Oregon Board of Forestry, provides advice to the Board of Forestry and the State Forester on methods to help improve the vitality of family forestlands, including improving owners' ability to manage and market their timber and other forest products. The Committee for Family Forestlands continues to evaluate the impact of policy and regulatory changes on family forestland owners.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Over the past year, the Committee focused on the objectives/issues identified in their 2024-2025 work plan. The annual report informs the Board of the committee's progress in addressing issues affecting family forestland (Attachment 1).

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee for Family Forestland recommends the Board accept the CFF annual report.

ATTACHMENT

- (1) Committee for Family Forestlands Annual Report to the Board Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Committee for Family Forestlands Annual Report to the Board

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

*Annual Report presented to the Board of Forestry September 03, 2025
By Wendy Gerlach, Chair, Committee for Family Forestlands*



The Committee for Family Forestlands (“CFF”) is a standing committee established by the Oregon Board of Forestry to assist and advise the State Forester and the Board on issues relevant to Oregon’s ~70,000 family forestland owners, including advice on the formulation of policy and potential effects of changes in forest policy on those lands. The CFF is supported by and works with the Oregon Department of Forestry (“ODF”) in fulfilling that role, while also serving as a liaison to the small forestland owner community.

The CFF has received many helpful briefings on key topics from ODF staff, particularly from the Private Forests Division, and thank Mike Kroon, Heather Henderson, and Miriam Miller in particular for outstanding support of the CFF.

The CFF thanks the Board and State Forester for their service to the state and its forests, and appreciates its awareness of contributions and needs of small forestland owners. A special thank-you goes to Ben Deumling for attending many of our meetings and acting as a connection to the Board. We hope that the Board will consider the CFF a resource to the Board and ODF in their work, and look forward to continued work together.

CFF 2024-2025 voting members:

Wendy Gerlach, Chair (Citizen at Large)
David Bugni (Northwest Oregon Family Forestland Owner)
Gary Jensen (Southern Oregon Family Forestland Owner)
Maurizio Valerio (Eastern Oregon Family Forestland Owner)
Kate McMichael (Landowner at Large)
Kaola Swanson, Vice-Chair (Conservation Community Representative)
Eric Kranzush (through 2024), followed by Jake Ryan (Industry Representative)

Kaola Swanson left the CFF this summer after six years of service as the CFF Conservation Community Representative. The CFF is investigating a successor and expects to have a recommendation to the Board by the end of 2025. Kaola has dedicated many hours to the CFF and provided valuable input, over the years, and we thank her for all her contributions.

CFF 2024-2025 ex-officio members:

The CFF benefits from the time and expertise of the CFF ex-officio members, and thanks them for their input. They are:

- Amanda Sullivan-Astor for Associated Oregon Loggers (AOL)
- Rick Zenn (through 2024), and Mike Cafferata (from July, 2025) for Oregon Small Woodlands Association (OSWA)
- Glenn Ahrens for Oregon State University (OSU) College of Forestry, OSU Extension Forestry and Natural Resources Program
- Julie Woodward for Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI)

2024-2025 CFF Activities, Accomplishments, and Recommendations

- Fire—Awareness, Prevention, Fighting, Funding.
Wildfire issues are an ongoing concern and priority of the CFF. In 2024, the CFF identified public messaging about wildfire as a topic of interest, and suggested more data-based, modernized messaging. In consequence, the CFF heard from Kristen Babbs of Keep Oregon Green about their work on public communications about wildfire. The CFF shared its thoughts on the issue, including the need for more fact-sharing with the public about the causes of wildfire, such as that equipment fires, mainly cars, are currently the leading cause of fire. The CFF has noted the role rural fire districts play in local fire management, and the importance of their being equipped to effectively protect their communities. HB 3349, enacted in the 2025 legislative session, addresses this issue by allowing ODF to provide equipment to rural districts. The CFF has supported the SB 762 Landscape Resiliency grant program and its continued funding, which can assist with fire mitigation and recovery.
- Fire—Post-Fire Recovery. The CFF has consistently focused on the challenges Small Forestland Owners (“SFOs”) face in recovering from wildfire. SFOs must meet reforestation and other obligations while suffering timber loss and other economic impacts. The SFO office can play a role in supporting SFOs in understanding post-fire obligations and helping them understand how to meet expenses of doing so, including possible grant funds.
- Reforestation. Reforestation—both post-harvest and post-disturbance—is a major concern and will be a particular focus of the CFF in the coming year. There is concern among groups such as OSWA and Oregon Tree Farm System (OTFS) over the results of the recent reforestation compliance monitoring report. The CFF will seek to find ways to support SFOs in understanding and meeting reforestation requirements.
- Private Forest Accord—Post-Disturbance Harvest Rules. Consistent with its focus on fire and fire recovery, the CFF has agreed on the importance of these rules, and CFF members in their private capacity commented on the proposed rules. This is an area where ODF and the Board can play a positive role by supporting the crafting of place-based management prescriptions, working with individual SFOs, that are rooted in desired outcomes and the best path to reach them.
- Private Forest Accord SFISH.
The CFF followed the growth of the Accord’s SFISH grant program, and was briefed on the projects funded and the selection process. Erik Kranzush of the CFF assisted with application review, and CFF member assistance with grant applications is expected to continue. The CFF notes the ongoing funding of the SFISH program as an important incentive for SFOs under the Accord.
- Private Forest Accord Stream Rules/Classification. The CFF discussed the stream classification rules on several occasions, and emphasizes the importance of communications to landowners about new classifications, of reliable mapping of streams as a compliance resource, and of clear guidelines about perennality and other classification criteria (and access to survey data). Ground-truthing what is on the maps, and straightforward processes to deal with incorrect modeling, is critical to landowners. CFF is happy to work with ODF on making this happen.
- Small Forestland Owner Office.
The CFF has consistently emphasized the need for coordinated provision of information about resources available to SFOs. ODF’s buildout of the SFO Office is consistent with this need. CFF discussion identified the need for leadership by the SFO Office in coordinating various organizations in their support for SFOs and in providing access to information and resources. CFF members have talked about the fact that many SFOs are as yet unengaged with ODF, or groups such as OSWA, OTFS, or OSU Extension, and that the SFO Office could be a leader in coordinating outreach to SFOs. The CFF met with ODF staff about how the SFO Office and public affairs staff plan to reach out to SFOs, and CFF provided feedback.
- Infrastructure—Mills and Transportation Costs.

SFOs, especially those in eastern Oregon, face particular challenges due to the lack of local mills. The CFF has noted numerous mill closures and discussed the relationship of log prices and transportation prices. SFOs are statistically known to manage forestland for numerous benefits, including timber, habitat, and water, but as it was noted in one CFF meeting, “If there is no value to timber, funding stewardship becomes difficult.” Gordon Culbertson spoke to the CFF about mill infrastructure, log pricing, and economics of bringing logs to market.

- SFOs, Stewardship Economy, and New Revenue Sources.

The CFF discussed various aspects of forest economics, including revenue streams from timber, biochar, carbon offset credits, and conservation actions (such as conservation easements). The CFF discussed the possibility of allowing local use of local timber, and certification challenges. Legislation passed in the 2025 legislative session (SB 1061), which establishes a pilot local-certification program, is a step toward removing the barrier that certification requirements may pose to locally sourcing timber products. Nils Christofferson of Wallowa Resources spoke to the CFF about “Stewardship Economy” and how rural areas, including SFO ownerships, can pursue stewardship that links to traditional and nontraditional revenue streams.

- SFO Resources for Mapping, Unified Management Plans, and More.

CFF was briefed by Jake Barker of the OSU Extension about the Landmapper software program. Landmapper is a free online resource that provides spatial information and mapping tools for forest management. It is a collaborative project of Ecotrust and the Partnership for Forestry Education (particularly OFRI, OTFS, and OSU Extension). Ecotrust and the Partnership are also working on a Unified Management Planning tool, intended to provide landowners with a simpler way to create management plans that meet requirements of various agencies and organizations. The feasibility of management plans, and complexity of overlapping requirements, is an issue that the CFF has flagged in the past, and will continue to monitor.

- Avoided Conversion and Ownership Succession Issues.

CFF’s reports have consistently identified, as a priority, avoiding conversion of forestlands to other uses. One approach to this issue, as discussed above, is to support the economic viability of small forestlands, including providing management resources, access to mill infrastructure, economic incentives and relief, and varied revenue streams. SFOs also need access to seedlings and skilled workforce (and CFF has consistently been involved with these issues). This year, CFF heard from OSU’s Lauren Grand about their Ties to the Land Program, aimed at informing landowners about ownership succession strategies and mechanisms. CFF also heard from landowner Jeff Gersh about possible ways to transfer land (such as transfer to a land trust specializing in forest management) when successor family ownership isn’t possible.

2025-2026 Upcoming Activities and Priorities

Issues important to small forest landowners remain largely the same over the years, and have been reviewed above and in prior CFF reports. They include the Private Forest Accord (new rules, SFO Office, incentives), technical assistance to landowners, stewardship forester availability, wildfire issues, economic viability (seedlings, markets, workforce, infrastructure), and climate change. The CFF expects to continue its focus on these issues in the coming year. Some specific areas of expected focus, consistent with CFF’s general priorities and building on the activities described above, include:

- Private Forest Accord. Implementation of the Private Forest Accord is a priority for the CFF, including development of an effective Small Forestland Owner Assistance Office and strong landowner incentive programs (including SFISH program funding, and tax credit for riparian management beyond minimum option). As information becomes available about the success of these programs (including the collection

of data about the impact of the Accord) the CFF would like to consider and advise on which programs are successful, which are not, and what might need to be adjusted. For instance, the SFO tax credit option is apparently not being highly utilized, and the CFF would like to investigate why this is so. The CFF has also expressed a desire to learn more about the Adaptive Management Program. The CFF has appreciated its meetings with SFO Office leadership, and looks forward to continuing to provide input about the SFO Office.

- SFO Reforestation Activities. The CFF expects further engage on issues related to SFO reforestation compliance (as described above), especially how to support and encourage successful reforestation efforts.
- Board of Forestry Vision and Strategic Plan. As ODF develops a strategic plan, with specific goals and actions consistent with the Board's Vision document, CFF would like to be involved in making sure that the plan takes SFOs into account and is sensitive to their role and management objectives. Board decisions have an impact on SFOs, and that impact should be assessed and be considered in developing the strategic plan.
- Climate Smart Forestry. The Board Vision refers to climate smart forestry; the CFF would like to follow what that looks like for SFOs, and to track ODF's Climate Change and Carbon Plan generally.
- CFF is available to help the Board arrange tours of SFO property tours, and suggests that such tours would be useful to the Board in building trust with the SFO community—members of which can feel left out of policy conversations and undermined in their efforts to actively manage their forests.

CONCLUSION

The CFF is grateful for the opportunity to engage with the Board and ODF on issues important to small forestland owners. This year's activities have included providing advice (for example, on SFO Office activities and outreach), and receiving information through presentations and ODF briefings that allow the CFF and members to engage in an informed way with the small forestland owner community. A frequent comment at our meetings is "now that we know this, how do we turn this knowledge into action?" We can do so through our work with the Board, and community partners, to support programs and practices that will contribute to successful small forestlands. As the CFF charter says, small forestland owners make essential contributions to Oregon's vitality, "including timber availability and the protection and enhancement of watersheds and fish and wildlife habitat." As the Board and ODF build out the Vision, further develop the Accord and SFO Office, and address ongoing issues such as fire resilience, the CFF stands by to assist and act as a bridge to local communities.

Thank you, Chair Kelly and Board Members, for your service to the State, and for the opportunity to present this report.