

Work Plan:	Climate Change
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Date Approved:	March 4, 2020
Date Revised:	January 6, 2021

## **DIVISION NARRATIVE**

### **Purpose & Objective**

The Oregon Board of Forestry (Board) directed the Department to pursue a wide-array of issues relative to climate change and forest carbon. The issue-based work plan is coordinated by the Policy and Analysis Unit (PAU), and milestones outline the goals expressed by the Board.

### **Achievements**

#### *DOJ Carbon and climate Statutory Authority Analysis (2020)*

A request to Department of Justice (DOJ) for a legal analysis to inform the board of its statutory authority relative to forest carbon and climate interests, provided awareness and context for the extent to which board climate and carbon policy considerations can be made. This work was initiated in June as identified in the work plan and the memo was made available in November.

#### *Oregon Forest Ecosystem Carbon Report (2019-2020)*

The development of a forest carbon accounting framework for Oregon began with the first iteration of the Oregon Forest Ecosystem Carbon Report (FECR) in 2018. This work was developed in collaboration with the USFS Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA), provided estimates of the stocks and flux of carbon in Oregon's forests, and is compatible with California and Washington for regional analyses. This work will be updated regularly with the continuous remeasurement of FIA field plots and provides a mechanism for monitoring the rate of carbon sequestration in Oregon's forests that is fundamental to evaluating forest conditions and trends, effect of current forest practices, and potential policy options for forest carbon mitigation. Given the manner in which this report was developed, the report will be continually improve through ongoing data collection, regional participation, and regular review and updates.

#### *Oregon Harvested Wood Products Carbon and Oregon Sawmill Energy Report (2020-2021)*

The analysis in the Oregon Harvested Wood Products Report which is called for in the work plan along with the Sawmill Energy Report, provides the carbon-in-wood-products dimension of Oregon's forest carbon accounting framework. A significant portion of the flux in forest carbon occurs through removal and production of forest products, which can retain carbon for long periods of time. This report provides an evaluation of how much carbon is stored in wood products, in landfills, or has been emitted back to the atmosphere

and will be updated on a regular basis. The Sawmill Energy Report (initiated in 2019) is based on a survey of Oregon's sawmills and provides estimates of the energy use and production at those mills along with the amount of associated emissions. Like the Forest Ecosystem Carbon Report this report will continue iteratively as it was designed to utilize fixed data collection conducted by the USDA every three to four years and will be updated on a four to five year basis to reflect new data and improved methodologies.

Together with the Forest Ecosystem Carbon Report these reports provide

1. A framework for evaluating how Oregon's forests and wood products are contributing to carbon sequestration
2. A foundation of information for understanding the dynamics of the forest carbon, and baseline to compare effect of management practices or potential carbon mitigation policies.

*Enhanced forest change awareness, Changes in Forest Composition and model improvement stemming from ongoing work related to the carbon accounting framework (2020-2021)*

Stemming from ongoing work related to developing the carbon framework, climate change is predicted to cause changes the current geographic distribution of trees and other forest plants. We are currently collaborating with the USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis and Groom Analytics to use the remeasured FIA plots to evaluate how the distribution of forest species may be affected by changes in climate or other controlling factors. This project will result in a peer reviewed article published in a leading scientific journal and will be the first statistical analysis of the FIA remeasurement data to understand the effect of climate change on forest species geography.

*Temperate Forest Climate and Carbon MOU and Regional Collaboration (2019-2020)*

Forest Carbon and Climate Change are a shared interest not limited by borders. Neighboring states initiated an evaluation of forest carbon and flux and became aware of complementary interests and needs. States formalized a working and knowledge sharing relationship with the Temperate Forest Climate and Carbon MOU. The MOU and regional collaboration allows broader and more robust coordination and accountability relative to evaluation of forest carbon, flux, accounting, and mitigation interests, opportunities, and challenges.

**Current Issues and Focus**

*Establishment of Climate Change and Forest Carbon Strategic Goals*

Commensurate with the work plan item relating to the analysis of statutory authority, the plan entails a review and revision of Goal G in the Forestry Program for Oregon.

Goal G reflects the Board's carbon and climate interests through the Forestry Program for Oregon. Revisiting this goal allows for the integration of new scientific information and contemporary values of the Board to guide the analysis of Departmental policies. This item was scheduled for the September 2020 meeting, which was abbreviated to just the

consent agenda and fire report, due the fire event that started on Labor Day. While staff work has progressed, this work has not occurred within the time frame identified in the plan due to staffing changes, pandemic driven challenges, and wildfire response. Despite the delays, this work will proceed as identified in the revised work plan.

*Executive Order 20-04 Directing State Agencies to Take Actions to Reduce and Regulate Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

The Governor's Executive order relating to agency actions and opportunities relating to carbon and climate has entailed a significant investment from what is an already limited staff, however the intersection between the Executive Order and the current Carbon and Climate Change work plan are largely consistent with existing work. While the initial work related to Executive Order (EO) is complete, other elements remain, notably support and participation in external work groups and reporting called for in the EO.

*ODF Carbon and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Plan.*

Beyond the initial work related to reporting called for in EO 20-04, the agency has been directed to "prepare a Climate Change Plan for Board of Forestry review that builds on the agency's executive order implementation report and reflects a broader strategy for establishing Oregon's leadership in climate-smart forestry and greater accountability toward achievement of goals." The development and implementation of this plan will require significant engagement with the Board and Agency Leadership.

*Alternative Management and Utilization Strategies and Carbon and Climate Considerations*

Beyond carbon accounting, the work plan calls for consideration and review of alternative management scenarios relative to forest carbon and climate impacts. This work is currently underway in coordination with the PNW research station and other partners including American Forests to simulate the effect of different forest management scenarios for carbon mitigation plans relative to current management practices. This study will provide perspective on how different forest approaches can affect alternative carbon outcomes throughout Oregon.

**Changes to Work Plan**

There are no significant changes to the work plan other than the ability to remain consistent with the initial work plan timelines. The reason for these stems from significant staffing changes, pandemic related challenges, and wildfire response. Nonetheless, all elements of the work plan continue to be addressed and are expected to be fulfilled.

The notable exception is inclusion of the Carbon Climate Change Plan initiated via EO 20-04. Development of the plan will continue to engage existing staff, the Board, and agency leadership. This change represents a substantial addition to what was constituted in the original work plan.

Climate Change and Forest Carbon Work Plan	2020					2021						2022		
	Apr	Jun	Jul	Sep	Nov	Jan	Mar	Apr	Jun	Jul	Sep	Nov	Jan	Mar
<b>Issue: Assess Statutory Authority</b>														
<i>Milestones</i>														
Identify primary questions of interest		d												
Request DOJ analysis			d											
Receive legal analysis and report					i									
<b>Issue: Establish Climate Change and Forest Carbon Strategic Goal</b>														
<i>Milestones</i>														
Review Goal G in Forestry Program for Oregon		d												
Determine public input for goal revision		d												
Conduct public input														
Board workshop to revise goal					i									
Establish new goal										TBD				
<b>Issue: Analyze Existing Policies to Achieve Outcomes in face of Climate Change</b>														
<i>Milestones</i>														
Establish sequence to conduct full analysis of statutes and administrative rules			d											
Identify priority for initial analysis			i	d										
Interim report on initial analysis							TBD							
Final report on initial analysis										TBD				
Initiate second priority analysis										TBD				
<b>Issue: Identify Gaps in Current Policy</b>														
<i>Milestones</i>														
To be determined following assessment of statutory authority and analysis of existing policies													i	

Climate Change and Forest Carbon Work Plan	2020					2021						2022		
	Apr	Jun	Jul	Sep	Nov	Jan	Mar	Apr	Jun	Jul	Sep	Nov	Jan	Mar
<b>Issue: Mitigation and Adaptation Efforts</b>														
<i>Milestones</i>														
Harvested Wood Products and Sawmill Energy Report				i	i									
Annual Update on Mitigation and Adaptation Efforts				i	i									
Scenario Planning Model Review								TBD						
Update on Scenario Planning with focus on Management and Utilization Strategies										i				
ODF Climate Change Carbon Plan								i						
To be determined														

**Matrix Key:**  
**TBD** – To be determined  
**i** – Informational item  
**d** – Preceding Decision item  
**D** – Final Decision item

**Color Key:**  
**Green** – Milestone Completed  
**Yellow** – Milestone Change  
**Magenta** – Milestone Tabled or Stopped