

October 11, 2017 Board of Forestry Retreat

In attendance:

Board members:

Tom Insko
Sybil Ackerman Munson
Nils Christoffersen

Cindy Deacon Williams
Tom Imeson
Absent: *Mike Rose*

Salem Staff:

Peter Daugherty
Lena Tucker
Satish Upadhyay
Chad Davis
Jacqueline Carter
Marganne Allen
Doug Grafe
Liz Dent
Dave Lorenz
Nancy Hirsch
Johnathan Herman
Andy White
Justin Butteris
Mike Totey
Jenna Nelson

Public:

Ann Walker
Rex Storm
Clair Klock
Claire Withycombe
Ralph Sufersene
Mary Scurlock
Seth Barnes
Heath Curtiss
Bob Van Dyk
Doug Cooper
Heath Curtiss

Meeting called to order at 9:05am

State Forester Daugherty introduced the framework of the meeting, welcome, and roll call of those present.

Chair Imeson announced that no decisions will be made at the meeting although they had a quorum present.

The Board and Staff reviewed and talked about strategic thinking, what has been done so far, and looked forward to the next year of work. Delays due to the fire season was discussed.

Review of Board 2017 Self-Evaluation ([Attachment](#)):

All six board members took the self-evaluation, met each of the 15 criteria, and communicated their desire to increase communication, engagement, increased input, and outreach to stakeholders, especially for the next year.

To prep for next year, there was suggestions by the board to have staff develop, with stakeholders, the pre-work done for the board. Adding this to the agenda for September was brought up.

Agency strategic initiatives

State Forester Daugherty started the discussion on strategic initiatives and how, at the time, they have not been vetted with the full ET and are just a general overview.

The date of the retreat for next year was contemplated due to fire season, timing of legislative concepts in January, and budgets in March.

State Forests addressed their strategic plan. (Attachment)

State Forest Division Chief Dent stressed that the strategy switches from a reactive mode to proactive. She mentioned that they are currently in conversations on policy shifts with federal partners.

The Board directed Division Chief Dent that under component 2, second paragraph, they would like to add “improve financial viability and conservation benefits” and meet GPV. Division Chief Dent will add this in to the State Forest Strategic Plan.

A handout on Tillamook Forest Restoration Initiative was given out ([Attachment](#)) as a draft and a tentative evolving idea for a strategic initiative. This initiative is not included in the current work plan, due to the early stages of the idea.

The Board made a suggestion that State Forests make this initiative a little more broad and create a more holistic approach including the streams that are in that area. When developing strategies the Board wants Oregon Department of Forestry Staff to think bigger and include recreation, economic, and ecological aspects of the forest.

State Forester Daugherty mentioned that this need to invest in the forests and not have a separate revenue source is part of why they are exploring this idea.

Andy White spoke on the restoration piece of this project. Challenges they have ran into include limited success, due to the financial viability piece. They need to increase the pace and scale of the project to make it useful.

The Board asked how this plays into the Swiss Needle Cast situation. Staff replied that they are trying a few different methods that include Hemlock planting, fertilization, and Swiss Needle Cast resistant seedlings.

The Board discussed adaptive management and speeding up the results by tapping into partnerships to get things done sooner.

Private Forests addressed their strategic plan (Attachment)

The Private Forest division mentioned that they are looking into adding capacity in terms of foresters, by describing the importance of these positions helping with fire. They talked about how everyone has the skills and expertise to help in other divisions, which may become very helpful with the extreme fire season. They discussed the fire militia and talked of how to achieve a sustainable workforce including aspects of stress on the personnel during fire season.

Discussion focused on Landowner’s needs for wildfire prevention and invasive species management.

The Board asked the question on how to deal with the shift in management priorities in the landowner base and how to get engagement.

Private Forest Division Chief Tucker replied that adding capacity and reaching out to unengaged landowner that might be at risk will be a way to build that piece of the base.

The Board talked about promoting green infrastructure in rural Oregon.

Division Chief Tucker posed a rough draft idea of ways to incentivize landowners for going above and beyond the Forest Practices Act from a more holistic point of view.

The Board asked how stewardship agreements translate into benefits.

Division Chief Tucker replied that they will have capacity building in outreach and it would be worthwhile to develop a plan in outreach and fire prevention going forward.

The Board asked about penalties for conversions to marijuana grows.

Division Chief Tucker replied that there is a tool for stewardship foresters to use to address this land use change that can't be applied to the marijuana grows issue.

Fire Protection addressed their strategic plan: ([Attachment](#))

Fire Division Chief Grafe went over the program review and Secretary of State Audit.

California fires were highlighted, and current resources requested with the expectation of more to come, which provide an opportunity for Oregon Department of Forestry to reciprocate for the help they have received in the past. It was mentioned how just one day can change so many things when dealing with fires and a current ask to help with the hurricane efforts was discussed, but there has been no deployment yet.

Division Chief Grafe covered the six initiatives and how the work, for the most part, has been done. He indicated that the fire program review has been kept up to date, is a good guide on fire protection, and is relevant.

Fire program review discussed funding, sustaining capacity, and policy changes.

In order to have a sustainable organization the fire division focuses on four parts; prevention, early detection, rapid response (protection), and mitigation.

Division Chief Grafe discussed the need to restore funding for the east side rate relief.

Protection funding is based on landowner availability and they have a requirement by law to meet the protection needs. General fund is ask for above the base level finances, investments, and grants. He finished with the reminder that the complete and coordinated system is not just the fire division, but the entire agency.

State Forester Daugherty reminded the Board that as an agency, they need to be thinking about an agency initiative rather than just the division initiatives.

The Board brought up the strong incentive for prevention options, minimizing fire risk, and lowering fuel loads. Creating a more proactive approach. Policy around rural or Wildland Urban Interface building was discussed along with better building codes. They also stressed the need to reinforce the goals and objectives of the agency and the Board in all these topics.

Work Plans

Partnership and Planning Program Director, Chad Davis, addressed how strategic initiatives are looked at in conjunction with the Board work plans and their timeline.

Each division chief went over a summary of the work plans.

Chair Imeson asked them to address the holds showing on the work plans.

Division Chiefs explained that the holds are due to low work priority and too much work on their plates, other things may be taking a main focus right now.

The Board mentioned an interest in the Forest Practices Act rule policy review and nexus for land policy revision.

Another topic of high interest mentioned was the issue of unplanned conversion of lands and more support of fire prevention outreach.

Board work plans will be back in January for all divisions and approval in March.

One Board member brought up the Oregon agricultural heritage program for conservation easements for working farmlands and timber, which could become an opportunity. Division Chief Tucker is tracking this as an option and feels this could be tied into land use, land conversion.

Key issues, priorities, and scope were discussed by Staff and the Board and their different roles in figuring what those pieces are.

Emerging issues were talked about and a mention was made by the Board, of doing a better job linking and integrating those issues into policies.

Discussion on carbon and climate was addressed.

State Forester Peter Daugherty brought up senate bill 1070 carbon cap and invest program. He stated that they want to move this into the short session and that there is more standing carbon in forests than ten years ago. Distinct patterns have been seen by ownership management strategies. Decreasing catastrophic fires may provide increased carbon storage, but this information has not been analyzed.

Carbon and climate discussion touched on:

- Policy recommendations
- Carbon Targets
- Carbon Storage
- Keeping forests in forests
- Global Warming
- Reducing fire risk and creating forest resiliency and tie that into the climate change adaptation strategy.
- Where the State of Oregon stands on the carbon issues
- Federal Forest Restoration Plan and Good Neighbor Authority
- Budget dynamic of the State
- Constrained resources and capacity to address the issues

State Forest - Forest Management Plan (FMP) (Attachment)

State Forest Division Chief Dent talked about the Board operating at a higher level to provide direction for reframing FMP work. The second piece is go through the draft work plan.

State Forester Daugherty talked about a three prong approach for financial viability and the attempt to meet the twin goals of conservation and timber production. He mentioned the challenges of structure based management and how that does not work consistently across the forest.

The Board struggled with the notion that active forestry management can never increase conservation outcomes. They feel the need to look at what conservation outcomes should be prioritized and the need for caution about this dynamic and how to create improvement across the board including defining conservation and adequate harvest levels. Timber harvest level is easy to define, the conservation side of it is the difficult part to define.

The Board voiced concern about working at the high level and they don't feel that it works, instead they would like to discuss what direction they want to head. High level did not seem to work and didn't become productive last time.

Some Board Members don't think it is impossible to do both conservation and economics but probably won't 100 percent accomplish both, but improve more of each, focusing on maximizing future options for the Threatened and Endangered Species to delist them rather than making forests unavailable to them.

State Forester Daugherty talked about financial viability, habitat for threatened and endangered species, constraints due to this, the habitat conservation plan and the Safe Harbor Agreement.

Division Chief Dent mentioned that there are some challenges managing without a Habitat Conservation Plan. We are proud of what we do with Greatest Permanent Value and we fully acknowledge and support threatened and endangered species, but how do we define conservation and financial viability and how are we going to get there? Answering this question will help the Board bring them solutions and move this process forward.

The Board said they are looking for consensus on how to move forward since they have worked on the State Forest issue through many years. They are stuck on the landscape level, and there is concern that this tiers up the big picture concepts. They want to look at it on the ground level though, to push this into a specific direction and create what evaluation criteria they are utilizing. They mentioned the tradeoffs and how they compare along with how they might we measure these dual goals.

Discussion between Board and Staff incurred on high policy level decisions vs planning at a ground level and the need to have Oregon Department of Forestry staff bring this to the Board in a way that can help them make the decision and guide the work.

The Board talked about picking any of these areas, to articulate objectives and then move from there. Timber sales were discussed and how general fund should be looked at, and if they can develop a financial model that works with that structure to reach conservation goals.

State Forester Daugherty brought up the idea of using benchmarks to move the process forward as they address general overarching issues.

State Forests Division Chief Dent replied that time is an issue since the plan has been in place since 2001. A systematic approach is the way they want to look at it going forward, utilizing methodical steps before they move through to the next step. Then after approval of the work plan the department can look at what policy level they want to work through. They can bring an example and work that through with the Board then define all the pieces of the plan. They will then work on policy side boards and detail, bring a draft plan and make adjustments as needed. Once that is done it goes out and back for final approval.

Currently there is an application in for a federal grant to fund the Habitat Conservation Plan project, but they haven't heard back yet.

One Board member summarized that it seemed that in November they need to get Board consensus on goals, objectives, and guidelines. Secondly they need to talk about the issues, then look at what the criteria is, identify the elements of the plan, and the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and that has to be laid out how that will link with the Forest Management Plan.

Chief Dent cautioned around timing indicating that they will walk through everything in January more carefully and adjust accordingly.

Public Comment:

Bob Van Dyk gave public testimony. He mentioned the need for compromise, a new tacked is needed, find balance, create incremental improvements in the margins and create the Habitat Conservation Plan as needed. He mentioned that Oregon Department of Forestry is doing a good job of minimizing costs, and creating public investments and that may take time. .

Doug Cooper gave public testimony. He talked about financial viability and increases in conservation outcomes and how these are both possible. He feels that there has not been a good measurement on conservation metrics for evaluating outcomes. He wanted to talk about what needs to be done on the ground and see some accountability and metrics for both financial viability and conservation outcomes.

Clair Flock gave public testimony. He mentioned how having a viable timber system is important. He is concerned on the pressure for State and Federal Forest for cornfield style management and would like the State to make more erosion control measures. He spoke of the conservation value of having a sports fishing industry and addressing forests to help support that piece. He commented that thinning hasn't responded to the Swiss needle cast, and pre-commercial thinning can be used to help mitigate that issue. Defensible space is another thing he brought attention to, and the teaching of defensible space as key, especially right at the end of the fires season. He believes the forest cannot support the population as it is now.

Heath Curtiss gave public testimony on threatened and endangered species and how cost is the limit to the amount of habitat. He asked about what the policy tradeoffs will be for management of the available habitat and producing the rest of the lands without habitat for the threatened and endangered species. He strongly recommended to the Board to weigh costs.

Dave Ivanoff gave public testimony that he has been involved in discussion in these forests for 23 years. He had deep reservations at the time on structure based management. He stressed importance that the Board understand the economic, social, and environmental consequences and that includes what the forest is capable of and how it can be managed to improve productivity. He believes that loss of infrastructure is a big issue and this will significantly affect the forest health. He thinks Oregon Department of Forestry has the ability to meet both these goals, and a conservation fund could be put into place to specifically benefit conservation outcomes. He encouraged the Board to try to listen to everyone's perspectives and presented the 70/30 plan as a good example of where the Board could move forward.

Protection - Fires Season Discussion

State Forester Daugherty introduced the topic by explaining how fire season resources were stretched tight this year, with all hands on deck, and it was hard on Oregon Department of Forestry staff. It created a challenge in terms of what we ask of staff and it is unsustainable. The Oregon Department of Forestry was down staff coming into this fire season. This fire season was characterized by many engagements on federal lands. He stressed that the Department of Forestry is not a sustainable fire organization. The

Governor and Legislators were fully engaged this season. A fire caucus has been created and there will be a discussion at the next legislative session on this topic. There is also an engagement in the carbon cap and investment discussion. Talk of investing in fire to improve storage and a fire recovery council was created, this is a continuing conversation for recovery. He talked of strengthening relationships with landowners, improving cooperative agreements, and framing up the climate change topics including a carbon protection system. This gives the message that maintaining forest carbon storage means keeping forests safe from fire.

The Board shared that society needs to do more to engage with or embrace the reality of what they are facing. In regard to federal forest policy the Board saw the budget and personnel get swallowed whole by the fire season. Engaging ahead of time was mentioned as key. They hope that the climate piece can help increase resilience to have staff and funding on the off season and still maintain some of the benefits the other parts of the agency have to offer. The fire program is not sustainable over time, and that means the same for our other departments as well.

The Board asked where our time is best spent in regard to federal policy, where is the risk factor greatest, and how do they work with shifting resource allocation and response to prevention work. There may be opportunities on how can the state and board help with that dialogue. They talked about fires off federal land, their severe size and how to manage them. Chair Imeson touched on resiliency and prevention as a key in that conversation.

The Board agreed that a proactive approach would be best utilizing fire science and policy. Also making accurate scientific evidence available to the public, to create public backing. Fire behavior was discussed and recent events in California, specifically the fire in Santa Rosa.

Education and implementation of fuels reduction treatments were mentioned as a solution from Board members.

Additional topics discussed by Protection Fire Division Chief Grafe:

- Federal fire caucus,
- government initiative on recovery,
- and the cap and invest conversation.

State Forester Daugherty mentioned that the FFR Committee has been a great asset.

The Board discussed creating clarity in resources, cost, and values in regards to sustainability as an agency.

Public comment:

Rex Storm representing small woodland owners gave public testimony. He was concerned that there is a problem on the federal private forestland interface in Oregon. He sees the Oregon Department of Forestry as bearing a higher risk due to the greater acreage of burns on federal land. He thinks the Board has a role in these forest policy issues and the management of National Forest.

Seth Barnes gave public testimony. He thanked the Oregon Department of Forestry and commended them on their work on fire season and their continued partnership with OFIC. He talked about the logging market and incentivizing more harvesting of trees on federal lands to help minimize wildfires. He also mentioned how climate change is a component and something to be looking at using forestry as a tool to help manage its affects.

The Board finished by discussing the importance to create a unified voice and to consolidate a statement when engaging with Federal partners.

Adjourned 15:30