

STAFF REPORT

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| Agenda Item No.: | 9 |
| Work Plan: | Private Forests |
| Topic: | Water Quality |
| Presentation Title: | Update on scoping riparian protection monitoring questions, methods, and timelines in eastern Oregon and Siskiyou geographic regions. |
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SUMMARY

This agenda item presents work completed since the July 2017 Board of Forestry (Board) meeting that addressed scoping of monitoring questions of eastern Oregon and Siskiyou riparian protections. Methods and timelines to address said questions was also requested. Described work includes the Department's methods and results for stakeholder input, as well as a draft decision framework and range of draft, example monitoring questions to help organize information for the Board's decisions.

CONTEXT

The Board's (Board) 2011 *Forestry Program for Oregon* supports an effective, science-based, and adaptive Oregon Forest Practices Act (FPA) as a cornerstone of forest resource protection on private lands in Oregon (Objective A.2). The discussion of Goal A recognizes that the FPA includes a set of best management practices designed to ensure that forest operations would meet state water quality standards adopted under the federal Clean Water Act. Similarly, the discussion of Goal D recognizes that the FPA is designed to protect soil and water resources, including aquatic and wildlife habitat (Objective D.6). The Board's guiding principles and philosophies includes a commitment to continuous learning, evaluating and appropriately adjusting forest management policies and programs based upon ongoing monitoring, assessment, and research (Value Statement 11).

BACKGROUND

The Board and the Department of Forestry are committed to using adaptive management in reviewing (and revising, if necessary) the Forest Practices Act using available science, monitoring and research. In November 2015, the Board of Forestry increased streamside protection standards in western Oregon. The Siskiyou geographic region was not included because of different vegetative and geologic conditions, and the Eastern Oregon regions were out of the scope of the science used in the review.

At the November 2016 meeting, the Board finalized the Private Forest Division's Monitoring Strategy. In conversing about the Strategy, the Board discussed the need to address riparian issues in the Siskiyou and Eastern Oregon regions. The Board directed the Department to:

- Develop potential monitoring questions regarding streamside protections in the Siskiyou and eastern Oregon regions;
- Estimate the timeline and resources to address questions for various methods of study; and,
- Work with stakeholders to inform the department and the Board.

The Board directed ODF to bring this information to the Board in July of 2017. However, due to staffing changes and potential reductions in funding, the Department did not have adequate resources to complete the work for the July 2017 Board meeting. At that meeting, staff presented an update of the work to date on: the project charter, stakeholder survey and comments, GIS analysis of stream type and size by geographic region, voluntary measures projects, harvest types, compilation of existing science, and study methods. The department also outlined a decision-making framework.

ANALYSIS

Department approach to Board direction

The Board directed ODF to work with stakeholders to propose one or more monitoring questions to review riparian protections in the eastern Oregon and Siskiyou geographic regions. To address the Board's direction, ODF developed a project charter that outlines this stakeholder work. ODF began with disentangling various components of the questions about which the Board will ultimately decide, including:

1. What are the topics to address in the monitoring question and why?
2. Where should the monitoring questions focus? This question includes the following elements:
 - a. Stream type(s) – Fish, Non-Fish, Domestic
 - b. Stream size(s) – Small, Medium, Large
 - c. Geographic regions – Siskiyou, Eastern Cascade, Blue Mountains
3. What methods and timelines will be used to answer the monitoring question?
 - a. What type of information (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles, status and trend data) should we use to assess the monitoring questions?

Informational Analyses

The department completed a suite of analyses to inform the Board's previously mentioned decisions.

Survey

The department conducted a survey of interested parties (Attachment 3). The high level results are summarized below (see Attachment 1 for detailed results):

- Eighty-four (84) people responded to the survey, representing diverse groups.
- Over half of respondents wanted their responses to apply to every geographic region. There was no clear priority from respondents regarding a geographic region to focus on.
- Water quality and healthy streamside forests were the highest priority issues on which to focus, with some respondents from most groups selecting each of these topics. Industrial Landowners focused more on healthy streamside forests, and Conservation groups

focused more on water quality. Stream temperature and riparian shade were the highest priority reasons for selecting these topics, with large wood and active streamside management second.

- Fish-bearing streams were selected as highest priority by most respondents. Domestic streams were the second highest priority.
- Medium sized streams were the highest priority, followed closely by small sized streams.
- The information types to inform any study conducted receiving the largest support (in terms of both total votes and fraction of each group) were (in descending order): peer-reviewed publications, fish habitat data, status and trend on fish populations, and Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds voluntary measures.

Written comments

In addition to the survey, the department received written comments from 8 entities and 3 Board advisory committees (Attachment 2). The results are summarized as:

- Three conservation-oriented groups wanted to focus on water quality, primarily stream temperature. Five landowner groups plus the three Board advisory committees wanted to ensure fish biology was addressed in the potential monitoring questions, and supported a more comprehensive approach rather than focusing on a particular monitoring parameter (e.g., stream temperature).
- The Siskiyou was selected as the primary focus by four groups (1 landowner, 2 conservation, and 1 Board committee), Eastern Oregon by one group (Board committee), all geographic regions by five groups (three landowners, one each of conservation and Board committee), and one landowner did not specify a geographic area of focus.
- Most groups did not specify any stream size on which to focus, other than two conservation groups that both wanted to focus on small and medium Fish streams. All groups focused on Fish streams, other than one conservation group that did not specify a stream type.
- Conservation groups thought that a RipStream¹-level approach regarding stream temperature was warranted. In contrast, landowner groups opted towards a paired-watershed approach.

Study methods

At the July 2017 Board meeting, the department outlined a coarse framework to understand the time required, number of staff needed, and confidence in results for studies with varying methods (July meeting, Attachment 1). In general, the higher the confidence in, and applicability of, a study, the more staff and time are required to complete it.

Decision framework/ example decision

To help the Board make the aforementioned decisions, we are compiling both the previously-discussed informational analyses, other pertinent considerations, and a framework to consider all information in making these decisions (Attachment 1).

¹ RipStream; Riparian Function and Stream Temperature - Effectiveness of Oregon Department of Forestry's Protection Rules and Strategies Riparian Function and Stream Temperature Study Approach. Oregon Department of Forestry, 2003. Available upon request.

Next steps

Over the coming months, the department will: 1) complete the analysis (informational summary); 2) refine the decision-making framework; and, 3) finish any additional work the Board might request to inform their decision-making process. Barring significant Board requests for additional information, we intend to bring this back to the Board for their decision in March 2018.

RECOMMENDATION

This agenda item is informational only.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Information for decision: analyses and decision-making framework
2. Written comments
3. Survey questions