

Work Plan: **Fire Protection Division**

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Date Approved:

DIVISION OVERVIEW

Purpose & Objective

The Protection from Fire Division is the oldest (since 1911) and largest (397 FTE) program of the Department of Forestry. The authorizing statute for the Division is ORS 477.005 stating, “The preservation of the forests and the conservation of the forest resources through the prevention and suppression of forest fires hereby are declared to be the public policy of the State of Oregon”. The program’s mission is to protect Oregon forestlands from fire, through a complete and coordinated system with our cooperators, including fire prevention, suppression, investigation and cost collection. The overarching programmatic goal is to minimize acres burned, the cost of suppression and the value of loss to resources through aggressive wildland fire initial attack, secondary only to the protection of human life.

Current Issues and Focus

There are several policy issues affecting the Protection Division that warrants the Board’s attention this coming year. Maintaining a complete and coordinated protection system requires periodic review and revisions of policy ensuring a dynamic and sustainable program that encourages participation by stakeholders and cooperators. This plan outlines key policy work that the Board has already committed to and/or anticipates making decisions on through 2019.

DIVISION TOPICS FOR THE BOARD OF FORESTRY 2018-2019

1. Fire Program Review & Secretary of State (SOS) Audit Implementation and Workforce Planning
2. Smoke Management Review
3. Annual and Ongoing Topics

ISSUE: Fire Program Review & SOS Audit Implementation and Workforce Planning

Overview

Following the 2013-2015 fire seasons, two parallel review processes were initiated: Secretary of State Audit and the Fire Program Review. Both of these efforts are aligned to help continue a highly functioning wildfire protection system for Oregon into the future. The Department has fully embraced the findings and recommendations from both final reports. The 2017 fire season experience has reinforced the need for the agency to continue efforts on these recommendations.

- The SOS Performance Audit has offered a third-party review of the Agency's ability to sustain its multiple missions, where an increased demand for the fire protection effort has been required from the entire agency.
- The FPRC was coordinated with all agency partners through a transparent process including legislators, governor's office, forest landowners, and cooperators to reach for continuous improvement in Oregon's complete and coordinated fire protection system

Purpose

These reports have provided a roadmap for ongoing Fire Protection policy work regarding fire funding, achieving a sustainable workforce, and providing for wildfire prevention and mitigation. This item remains on the Board's work plan as an awareness item, maintaining the Protection Division's focus on: "Protecting Oregonians, our Forests and Communities from Wildfire" through implementation of the recommendations from the 2016 Fire Program Review and SOS performance audit.

Board Deliverables with Timelines

The Board will be updated and when appropriate, asked to approve any policy level work and/or significant agency action planned to address the recommendations of both the Secretary of State audit and the Fire Program Review Committee.

Outreach and Public Involvement

- Staff will work directly with internal and external partners and provide updates as necessary at meetings that include a broader range of landowners and stakeholders.
- Public comments may be accepted on topic at Board meetings.

ISSUE: Smoke Management Review

Overview

Since 1972, the Smoke Management Plan (SMP) has been administered by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to achieve two goals: “to improve the management of prescribed burning as a forest management and protection practice; and to minimize emissions from prescribed burning consistent with the air quality objectives of the federal Clean Air Act...” (ORS 477.552).

Purpose

The Smoke Management Review Committee is formed by ODF, in consultation with DEQ, and serves as an advisory committee to both agencies. The Committee is charged with advising the Agencies on improved implementation, policy changes or clarifications to better accomplish the SMP’s two goal goals.

Board Deliverables with Timelines

ODF and Department of Environmental Quality staff are striving to present results of the Smoke Management Program Review Committee’s efforts to the Board of Forestry in April 2018. It is anticipated that rule changes will be a component of the Agencies’ recommendation to the Board, which if supported, will initiate a rule making process that closes with a return to the Board for final rule change approval. The Agencies are striving to complete this work prior to the fall 2018 burn season.

Outreach and Public Involvement

The Smoke Management Review process is open to the public. Five public committee meetings will be held across the state, by the close of this process, in addition to two field tours on this topic at the 2017 /2018 joint Board of Forestry and Environmental Quality Commission meetings.

Outreach has included multiple press releases highlighting the topic including public invites to the committee’s meetings and field tours. The Committee has established a public web-link on ODF’s external web page, detailing the committee charter, membership and meeting details:
<http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Board/Pages/SmokeReviewCommittee.aspx>

Issue: Annual and Ongoing Topics

Overview

Approve Protection Budgets: As directed by statute, at the June Board of Forestry meeting, “The State Board of Forestry shall annually review the forest protection district and rangeland protection budgets, make any changes in the budgets that are proper and consistent with law, and pass final approval on all protection budgets and the prorated acreage rates therein.”

Association Letters: In each of the agreements with the non-operating forest protective associations, there is a requirement that each association will provide “...an annual letter from the Association to the Forester providing input on Department operations affecting the District or the Association (to be transmitted to all members of the Board)...” (State Forester letters).

Fire Season Reports: Staff will provide fire season reports annually, during the fire season.

Emergency Fire Cost Committee: As vacancies occur, the Board makes appointments to the Emergency Fire Cost Committee.

Forest Protection Association Agreements: Periodically, agreements are updated and Board approval of updated agreements are necessary under OAR 629-041-0100.

Rangeland Protection Association formation: Periodically, a request for a public hearing on the possible formation of a Rangeland Protection Association (RPA) will come before the Board for approval. Based on the outcome of the hearing, the Board may receive a request for approval on the formation of an RPA.

Purpose

Review and approve forest protection district and rangeland protection association budgets and the prorated acreage rates. Review annual State Forester letters from protection associations. Receive fire season reports from staff. Appoint, as necessary, a member to the Emergency Fire Cost Committee. Approve Forest Protection Association Agreements when updates are proposed. Approve Rangeland Protection Association public hearing requests and formations of new Associations.

Board Deliverables with Timelines

At each June Board meeting, the budgets for the forest protection districts and rangeland protection associations, and copies of the State Forester letters will be presented to the Board for consideration as directed in statute and the association agreements. Fire season reports will be presented to the Board annually from June through September and as requested. All other ongoing topics will be presented to the Board on an as-needed basis.

Outreach and Public Involvement

- Prior to the June Board meeting, the forest protection district budgets are developed through local budget committees made up of landowners, reviewed and discussed at the forest protective association meetings, and required to go through a public hearing at district and unit offices.
- Public comments may be accepted on all annual and ongoing topics at Board meetings.

Fire Protection Division Work Plan	CY 2018 Board of Forestry Agenda						
	Jan	Mar	Apr	June	July	Sept	Nov
Fire Program Review & Secretary of State Audit-Implementation							
<i>Milestones</i>							
❖ Provide updates to the Board-As needed							
Smoke Management Review							
<i>Milestones</i>							
❖ Direct the Department to begin Promulgation of Rule language				X			
❖ Consider Rule Approval						X	
Annual and Ongoing Topics							
<i>Milestones</i>							
❖ Approve Forest Protection District and Rangeland Protection Association Annual Budgets				X			
❖ Review Letters from FPA's to State Forester				X			
❖ Fire Season Reports				X	X	X	
❖ Appointment for Emergency Fire Cost Committee - (As Needed)	X						
❖ Approve Forest Protection Association Agreements - (As Needed)							
❖ Rangeland Protection Association Formation - (As Needed)							