

Work Plan: **Emerging Issues**

Primary Contact: **Chad Davis, P&P Program Director**

Date Approved:

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Purpose & Objective

The Partnership & Planning Program (P&P) serves the Board of Forestry, ODF Divisions, coordinates policy analysis and input to the Governor's Office and other state agencies, and partners with federal land management agencies to achieve cross-boundary restoration work. In 2017, ODF merged the former Resource Planning Program with the Partnership Development Program to combine these functions. Operationally, P&P functions as the administrative house for all grants from the US Forest Service and houses the Federal Forest Restoration Program which includes the project oversight for the implementation of the Good Neighbor Authority. As it relates to policy development, P&P houses agency expertise in forest ecology, forest economics, and economic development.

Current Issues and Focus

The Emerging Issues work plan is intended to allow the Board exploration of topics not yet ready for decision making or inclusion in one of the Division work plans. In this work plan, P&P staff will conduct background research on topics of interest to the Board, identify time lines for discussion, and provide the foundation for division work plan items or allow items to sunset if action will not be taken on the topic. As discussed with the Board at the 2017 October Retreat, three issues surfaced for further exploration and analysis work.

DIVISION TOPICS FOR THE BOARD OF FORESTRY 2018-2019

1. Ecosystem Services and Methodologies for Including in Policy Decision Making
2. Role of Forests in Carbon Policy and Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change
3. The Intersection of Land Use Policy and Outcomes with Maintaining Working Forests

ISSUE: Ecosystem Services and Methodologies for Including in Policy Decision Making

Overview

Ecosystem Services are a broad spectrum of benefits of our forest beyond timber production. However, timber-production is definitely an “ecosystem service.” For that reason, people will sometimes use the phrase “non-timber valuation.”

This emerging issue was first identified during the economic analysis conducted and presented to the Board for the riparian rule analysis. After some comments from stakeholders and members of the public, the Board requested more information on the potential to include ecosystem services in policy decision making. The interest in the issue was verified by the Board at the 2017 October retreat.

Purpose

The purpose of this work plan is to coordinate with experts in this area of study to inform the Board about what are Ecosystem Services – how do we define this ‘exactly’, to provide a foundation of how ecosystem services are currently being valued, and what research is being done in this area. P&P staff will coordinate with experts in this field to present to the Board in at least two presentations regarding this topic.

This topic is intended as an informational item for the Board. At initiation, the deliverables are not designed to provide the Board with recommendations on how ecosystem services should be valued by the agency. The exploration of this topic will allow the Board to continue its discussion in regards to its policymaking function and specifically to evaluate tradeoffs on complex issues that involve both economic and ecological effects.

Board Deliverables with Timelines

- 1) Presentation from applied economists regarding the background of “What are Ecosystem Services?” and how these have been valued/treated in past work
Timeline: Summer 2018
- 2) Presentation from applied economists on current research/methodologies for valuing Ecosystem Services.
Timeline: Fall 2018
- 3) TBD with Board following first two deliverables.

Outreach and Public Involvement

In part, this work plan is in response to public comment received during the economic analysis conducted and presented to the Board as part of the riparian rule analysis. Outreach and public involvement will be conducted as appropriate for any additional work the Board identifies in its discussion on the deliverables included in this workplan.

ISSUE: Role of Forests in Carbon Policy and Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change

Overview

During the 2017 October retreat, the Board identified the role of forests in carbon policy and climate adaptation as an emerging issue.

In the 2017 Legislative Session, a group of Legislators introduced a climate bill and have continued to hold work groups to design a “cap and invest” bill (SB1070). Along a similar timeframe, Governor Brown signaled her interest in Oregon taking proactive steps to address and prepare for impacts predicted from climate change, including her interest in working with her west coast gubernatorial colleagues on the west coast on the issue. Throughout the fall of 2017, Legislators held a series of workgroup meetings on four issue areas to discuss potential amendments to SB1070 ahead of the short 2018 Legislation Session.

In 2017, the Global Warming Commission convened a Forest Carbon Task Force to address the Commission’s legislative mandate (2007 HB3543) to “track and evaluate...the carbon sequestration potential of Oregon’s forests, alternative methods of forest management that can increase carbon sequestration and reduce the loss of carbon sequestration to wildfire, ..., and the extent to which carbon is stored in tree-based building materials.” After four meetings of the Task Force in 2017, the Governor’s Office requested that the Chair of the Commission present the work to the Board.

An inventory and description of projects already in effect in Oregon will help provide the Board with the current context for the state of development of forest carbon projects and requirements for verification.

Purpose

The purpose of this work plan is to introduce the Board to recent efforts by the Global Warming Commission to fulfill legislative mandates and to provide information on efforts at both the programmatic and project level in the state and on the west coast.

Board Deliverables with Timelines

- 1) Report from Oregon Global Warming Commission Task Force on forest carbon policy concepts. Winter/Spring 2018.
- 2) Presentation from recent and current research at Oregon State on carbon storage, flux and substitution in Oregon forests. Spring 2018.
- 3) Presentation on current carbon projects in Oregon. Summer 2018.
- 4) Overview of California’s climate mitigation program in forestry. Fall 2018.

Outreach and Public Involvement

Seek relevant participation from informed and interested agencies and organizations as needed through personal contacts and announcements.

ISSUE: The Intersection of Land Use Policy and Outcomes with Maintaining Working Forests

Overview

The Board has an established goal to “keep forests as forests.” Oregon’s unique land use system plays a significant role in helping to achieve this goal. ODF partners with the USFS Pacific Northwest Research Station to produce several reports which track forestland area changes across the state and region in an effort to evaluate and inform Oregon’s multi-tiered land use system to maintain working forests and other resource lands. Two reports provide meaningful perspective of land use change dynamics in Oregon and Washington, the Forests, Farms, and People report and the Land Use Change on Non-Federal Land in Oregon and Washington report. These reports are utilized internally and by agency and non-governmental partners to evaluate and inform policy and actions.

While the system of land use laws has demonstrated effectiveness at retaining continuity of resource lands, each legislative session yields a high proportion of land bills challenging the system in an effort to ease development and conversion restrictions. In the 2017 Session, one particular bill relating to land use exemptions in eastern Oregon counties with low populations gained significant traction and would have suspended many of the land use requirements across a large area of the state.

As the forest sector has changed over time, economic perceptions of forestland have evolved as well. Regions reliant on the sector are facing challenges to fund public services and there have been multiple projects to assess opportunities to increase development and diversify economies. In addition, recent economic drivers in the agricultural sector present opportunities to convert lower productive forestlands to other uses. In response several local governments have explored reevaluating land classifications in an effort to create land classifications amenable to development at the expense of resource lands. A component in this emerging dynamic is the absence of a quantifiable “forestland” definition in the land use system. At the 2017 October retreat, the Board identified the need to increase its depth of knowledge on the drivers and challenges within current land use policy and practice as they relate to maintaining working forests.

Purpose

The purpose of this work plan is to increase familiarity and understanding of the Board with respects to the state’s unique land use system and the current range of issues that intersect with the Board’s goal to “keep forests as forests.”

Board Deliverables with Timelines

- 1) Review the Land Use Change on Non-Federal Land Report. Fall 2018
- 2) Provide analysis from Douglas County case study to highlight intersection of current land use policy, Board’s goal and local government needs. Fall 2018.
- 3) Review Forest Farms and People Report and analysis. TBD pending data collection

Outreach and Public Involvement

Outreach and involvement will be advanced by seeking and inviting stakeholder engagement and participation. Distinct efforts will include other agencies including but not limited to Departments of Agriculture, Fish and Wildlife, Land Conservation and Development, federal partners, and NGOs.

Emerging Issues Work Plan	CY 2018 Board of Forestry Agenda						
	Jan	Mar	Apr	June	July	Sept	Nov
Ecosystem Services and Methods for Including in Policy Decision Making							
<i>Milestones</i>							
❖ Presentation on “What are Ecosystem Services?” and “How they have been valued/treated in past work”				X			
❖ Presentation on current research/methodologies for valuing Ecosystem Services							X
❖ TBD							
Role of Forests in Carbon Policy and Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change							
<i>Milestones</i>							
❖ Report from Oregon Global Warming Commission Task Force		X					
❖ Presentation from recent and current research at Oregon State on carbon storage, flux and substitution in Oregon forests			X				
❖ Presentation on current forest carbon projects in Oregon				X			
❖ Overview of California’s climate mitigation program in forestry							X
❖ TBD							
The Intersection of Land Use Policy and Outcomes with Maintaining Working Forests							
<i>Milestones</i>							
❖ Review the Land Use Change on Non-Federal Land Report						X	
❖ Provide analysis from Douglas County case study to highlight forestland definition							X
❖ Review Forest, Farms and People Report	TBD – likely Spring 2019						
❖ TBD							