

# Committee for Family Forestlands

## Minutes

### June 30, 2011

A meeting of the Committee for Family Forestlands (CFF) was held in the Santiam Room at the Oregon Department of Forestry's Salem compound.

*Committee Members Present:*

Susan Watkins	Jim James
Roje Gootee	Brad Withrow-Robinson
Mike Cloughesy	Sara Leiman
Rick Barnes	Rex Storm
Sarah Deumling	

*ODF Staff Present:*

Peter Daugherty  
Jim Cathcart  
Doug Decker

*Guests:*

Misty Seiboldt

#### **A. Review of Agenda**

1. "Ties to the Land" added under G. Communication.

#### **B. Discussion and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

1. Minutes approved as presented.

#### **C. Ongoing Topics Updates**

1. Forest Cluster – Letter to BOF approved. Peter will include in BOF package.
2. Legislative Update:
  - Extension budget came out better than Governor Recommended Budget. The \$8 million reduction will lead to structural changes in administration of Extension. The two largest counties do not have Extension.
  - ODF budget approved by both the House and Senate. Peter briefly described the outcomes in preparation for Item F on the agenda.
  - Inheritance tax bill passed, but not as strong as OSWA would like (\$1 million exempted).
  - Natural Resource Tax Credit – If inheritors continue to manage as natural resources for five years, they will qualify for a tax credit. OSWA will be getting more details out.
  - Farm plate bill failed.
  - Firewood bill passed.
  - Pole building never got a hearing.
  - Indicated support for Wildfire Reduction Act.
3. Annual Meeting (OSWA) Update:
  - Sara represented CFF at meeting and discussed CFF role.
  - OTFS – OSWA signed an MOU to share administrative resources.

- Tour at Harry Merlo’s tree farm very good. Rick Wagner and Jamie Knight did an excellent job with Harry and the tour.
  - Doug Decker’s appearance was extremely valuable—Huge for OSWA.
  - CFF needs to get space on the agenda at next OSWA annual meeting.
4. SOD Funding and Activities (Rick Barnes):
    - Impact of quarantine.
    - Any tanoak within one mile of infested site needs to be piled and burned.
    - Any log with bark cannot be moved out of the quarantine.
    - Rick recommends CFF ask BOF to pay attention to SOD and its impact on landowners.
  5. Forest Biomass – Postponed. Letter provided in the packet of meeting materials was not current.
  6. State Forester (Doug Decker) visit and comments:
    - Doug attended the OSWA Annual Meeting and shared his thoughts and enthusiasm for the event with the Committee. He thoroughly enjoyed the visit to Merlo’s Tree Farm; bringing to life the importance of restoring Private Forests funding.
    - General Fund - State agency leads/stakeholder group played a key role in the budget outcome. Continue arguing the need for General Fund but also keep other ideas in play.
    - Committee expressed kudos to Doug, Peter, Private Forests Staff, and Executive Team on developing the budget package and articulating landowner concerns and needs.

**D. NRCS Programs Discussion – Guest Speaker: Misty Seboldt, State Forester, Oregon Natural Resource Conservation Service, serves as the technical lead on forestry matters.**

1. Budget Overview - Loss of Resource Conservation District and staff. Able to address cuts through retirements and reassignments.
2. Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) – Big project in oak woodlands restoration on private forestlands. Landowners will sign-up for funds; southern Oregon and northern California.
3. Healthy Forest Reserve – Northern Spotted Owl
  - Five contracts closed. Buy certain rights on enrolled lands. Harvest restrictions and habitat development.
  - Two projects pending (\$900,000) for 300-400 acres. Buying the rights to the land plus the restoration activities. Restoration costs are high; \$500,000 on 250 acres.
  - Only permanent conservation easements were funded. They ranked the highest.
  - Safe Harbor provides landowner regulatory relief from additional owls subject to the allowable harvest levels established under the conservation.
  - NRCS is partnering with ODF to use ODF Forest Practices Stewardship Agreements as the Implementing Mechanism for Safe Harbor Agreements
4. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- No acreage cap.
- Production cap – forestland has to be *actively managed*:
  - To be considered “actively managed” must provide name and address. Listing of past activity. List of planned activity. Record of capital expenditure.
- Non-forest commodities must meet minimum production/value generation.
- All funds go to resource concerns (soil, water, air, plants, animals, human, energy). Energy is a new resource concern; opportunities for energy efficiencies.
- Huge increase in forestry contracts. Conservation Activity Plans (CAPS) are similar to a Forest Stewardship Plan:
  - 54 CAPS funded in Columbia County; 6 or 7 technical services providers (foresters) to write these plans.
- NRCS requires “job sheets” (prescriptions for conducting the practices) for each practice. The objective is to roll the CAP into an EQIP cost-share contract. State Historic Preservation Officer Report still a required step (activity/planning). Cost borne by the landowner through Technical Service Provider (TSP). NRCS bears the responsibility of threatened and endangered consultation; species list, etc.
- Cost-sharable activities:
  - Pre-commercial thinning
  - Slash treatment from thinning
  - Biomass removal (lower cost-share if the biomass is sold)
  - Pruning
  - Fire/fuel breaks
  - Roads and culverts
  - Pest management (boomers, invasives, bark beetles)
- Cost-share is flat rate for the activity. Rates are set with a goal of covering 50% of the cost.
- Implementation strategies:
  - County priorities are set by the local working group and local partners (SWCD, ODF, foresters, and others). Public is welcome at public hearings, but “voting members” make the final priorities. Peter is pushing for ODF District Foresters to get involved in these work groups.
- For more information on EQIP, visit the Oregon NRCS [web page](#). [State Technical Committee, Local and Basin Work Group Meeting Schedule](#).
  - ACTION: (Brad) Connect NRCS to the OSWA newsletter. Need pieces about the NRCS process and how it works.**
- Question: (Sara Leiman) If landowners get very specific about their schedule of practices, are they obligated to implement? Will they get penalized for not doing that? Decertified?
  - A: (Jim James) Tree Farm - No.
  - A: (Misty) No. Non-regulatory. But, if enter a contract to get cost-share for the practice, it must be done to get the money. Even contracts have a lot of flexibility to incorporate mid-course corrections or to get out of the contract.

## **E. Working Lunch**

1. Annual Report to BOF – review and discussion
  - Critical role of active forest management
  - Susan will incorporate comments and send revised report to Peter by Tuesday, July 6.

## **F. Private Forests Budget Implementation Plan Re-Evaluation and Rebuilding**

1. The Private Forests budget included restoration of resources and two budget notes requiring the department to:
  - Contract out the compliance audit (independent contractor) - \$250-300,000/year, with a reporting time frame of the Ways and Means next regular session.
  - Contract with an independent third-party to assess and make recommendations on cost savings, efficiency, and cost avoidances, with 1-year time frame and verbal indication that early results would be better.
2. Three key tasks for implementation are:
  - Phasing in resources to rebuild capacity:
    - Recognize legislative concern regarding efficiency/effectiveness..
    - Free up resources for contracting out program services (\$700,000/biennium).
    - Recognize need for immediate capacity needs while allowing flexibility in the future
    - Distinguish between sub-programs (i.e., forest health, forest practices, effectiveness monitoring).
  - Contract out compliance audit:
    - Need to add capacity to carry out this task. Recruit for the NRS4 effectiveness monitoring coordinator using existing vacant NRS 4 Compliance Audit Specialist.
    - Add training coordinator, NRS 3 new position (possibly hire retiree as temp to get position up to speed).
    - Need to define external review team to review plan and develop request for proposals (RFP) (see 2002 BMP report for past team). This review team should include representatives from certification systems.
    - Use 2002 BMP design, with focus on the audit aspect to come up with rapid initial design for RFP. Allow for continuous improvement over time. Focus on harvest operations and associated road construction/reconstruction (limit scope of rules audited).
  - Contract with an independent third-party for efficiency analysis of Forest Practices administration:
    - Scope: Narrow, Forest Practices administration only – both field administration and technical specialists’ needs.
    - Use a pilot project for FBII implementation; Barbara Benda will serve as project manager.
    - Use DAS approved Lean business processing provider.
3. Discussion points:
  - 30 field foresters are insufficient to meet minimum service standards. Rebuilding field forester positions will begin immediately but in 3 phases.

- Phase I - Already started (12 positions). Working through layoff recall lists. Possibly have positions starting July 1. Further analysis is needed to identify needs and determine “where” addition field foresters will be located. Workload will be a major contributor.
- Phase II – 7-10 positions based on workload and efficiency analysis.
- Phase III – Hire foresters or invest in equipment and technological improvements, redesign business processes.
- Discussed requiring specialized skill for stewardship foresters to meet District and resource needs; for example, have one SF with wildlife or riparian background. ODF is having an internal discussion now about specialized needs in field foresters.
- ODF will start the process for evaluating which technical specialists are needed to support field foresters. Defining critical needs and priorities will be a part of discussions about how we rebuild and re-evaluate the program.
- More conversation/analysis is needed into how we deliver services focused solely on family forestland owners, what/who qualifies as family forestland services, and how we pay for those services.
- Conversations are just starting and critical decisions will be made over the next 6 months. Committee members are welcome to provide input and will be kept informed of developments in the process.

## **G. Communication & Other Business**

1. CFF volunteer (either Sarah or Roje) will attend OSWA Board meeting in Salem, September 30.
2. CFF Membership Update (Sara and Sarah)– Scott Gray of Stimpson Lumber has agreed to join CFF subject to the BOF’s approval.
3. Fall Schedule:
  - Eastern Oregon outing to Roje’s ranch and neighborhood suggested.
  - Involvement in the Board’s November tour and discussion regarding small forests.  
–**ACTION: Committee members to email each other thoughts, issues, problems, highlights, advantages, objectives, etc.**
  - Future topics of interest:
    - rebuilding Private Forests Program update
    - tax structure discussions with Satish
    - forest health update - invasives and other “forests pests”
    - continue practice of inviting Board members to CFF meetings
4. Ties to the Land (Brad)
  - T3L received a State ([Federal?](#)) Private Forestry grant to conduct succession planning and education around the state. Working closely with OSWA on approaches.
  - Austin Family Business Program (Ties to the Land partner) has a new director who has suggested adding an annual Family Business Award category for family forestland owners who are working on succession planning practices. Nominations for this year’s award will need to be submitted by the end of July. For more information contact Mary Siscock or Brad.

**ADJOURN – Next meeting is scheduled for August 31**