

**Oregon Board of Forestry  
Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee Meeting  
January 7, 2008**

Oregon Department of Forestry  
2600 State Street  
Salem, OR

**Meeting Summary**

On January 7, 2008, the Federal Forestland Advisory Committee (FFAC) held a meeting at the Department of Forestry, Salem, Oregon. The primary objectives of the meeting were to:

- Begin exploring values relating to old growth and the consequences of values in dealing with old growth issues;
- Begin exploring old growth issues, and identifying potential approaches and solutions;
- Review FFAC progress; and
- Develop next steps for subgroups on the potential solutions documents.

The following summary was prepared by Department staff, revised by the facilitation team, and is subject to review and clarification by the FFAC members at the February 2008 meeting. The summary contains the following sections:

- Opening Remarks, Review of Meeting Objectives and Agenda
- Values and Attitudes Toward Old Growth
- Briefing on Old Growth
- Public Comment
- Discussion of Old Growth
- Status of Policy Recommendations: Natural Processes and Timber Harvest / Infrastructure
- Taking Stock of FFAC Progress
- Draft Meeting Summary Review
- Summary and Next Steps
- Attendees

**Opening Remarks, Review of Meeting Objectives and Agenda**

Steve Hobbs, Chair of the FFAC and the Board of Forestry, welcomed the Committee members and others attending the meeting, reviewed the proposed agenda and outlined the meeting objectives. Hobbs announced he would not seek reappointment to the Board of Forestry but indicated a desire to continue to serve on the FFAC if the Board approves his continued involvement. Following discussion the group agreed to send a Committee recommendation to the Board recommending Steve Hobbs continue serving as Chair of the FFAC.

## **Values and Attitudes Toward Old Growth**

Robert Fisher introduced an exercise to initiate the conversation among FFAC members about values and attitudes towards old growth. A series of statements were posited to represent the spectrum of options and beliefs along a “values continuum”. There were four components to the exercise. The first two presented a pair of statements assigned a non-value loaded color (orange and blue) and members were asked to indicate which color was more representative of their values. The third component posited a statement for agreement or disagreement, and the fourth component was a ranking exercise of eleven priorities. Each of the four components are described in further detail below and highlights of the resulting conversation are captured in bulleted form.

### Component 1 - Statement:

#### **Responsible stewardship of old growth means:**

**Orange:** leave old growth alone and set aside old growth forests on federal lands

**Blue:** actively managing and logging old growth forests on federal lands

#### *Comments Related to Exercise*

- Risk level of management grows exponentially when trees are big
- More management could increase amount of old growth
- There is a distinction between east- and west-side
- Northwest Forest Plan has not worked and will not work vs. it has only had 6 years to work before implementation was stopped
- There is something “primal” about a tree that resonates with people at a deep level
- The public tolerates harvesting of crops but not clearcutting of forests
- Must have trust in human management
- Tribal issues – old-growth is important culturally and spiritually for use in and support of the community
- To maintain sustainable ecosystems there must be many successional stages
- Statewide forest health – healthy, resilient forests
- Remember juniper issues
- A clear definition would help with management and to reduce controversy
- Absolute laws and prescriptions do not always result in intended effect (e.g., goal of no net loss to wetlands)

### Component 2 - Statement:

#### **Old growth represents:**

**Orange:** all things natural and wild and our connection to our past

**Blue:** important economic and social resource for Oregon communities

#### *Comments Related to Exercise*

- This dichotomy brings out different perspectives of the “social” leg of the sustainability stool (social – economic – environmental)
- It is difficult to separate because there is much inter-relation and inter-dependence
- Conditions are not static

- Risk from fire is growing exponentially

Component 3 – Statement for Agreement/Disagreement

**“Climate change, wildfire, invasive species and natural forest dynamics will have a greater impact on sustaining old growth forests than current extractive uses.”**

*Comments Related to Exercise*

- Human responses to perceived threat may pose a greater risk than letting those forces run their course
- Forests are dynamic and there is a lot of uncertainty
- We need to look forward for our children and grandchildren not backwards
- Because of human intervention we are well beyond range of natural variability – much science is needed to understand how to get back to that natural range
- Invasive species can have a very large impact
- Extractive signifies non-sustainable but is not necessarily representative of active management

Component 4 - Ranking Exercise

Committee members were asked to rank the following key priorities for developing and sustaining old growth characteristics and forests:

Aesthetic	Regulation of Hydrologic Processes
Carbon sequestration	Restore Watersheds
Ecosystem Management	Resource Extraction
Improve Forest Health	Spiritual
Maintain Soil and Nutrient Processes	Wildlife Habitat
Recreation	

*Comments Related to Exercise*

- The exercise brought out differences between combining and separating the objectives and priorities
- There may be a difference between individual and organizational preferences
- Old growth next to an urban area creates a very different management situation

**Briefing on Old Growth**

Dr. Tom Spies, Forest Ecologist in Pacific Northwest Research Station at Oregon State University, gave a presentation titled “Old-growth on Federal Lands.” The presentation is available on the Committee website and the outline of Dr. Spies’ talk is as follows:

1. Definitions
2. Processes that create, maintain and destroy old growth
3. Amounts of old growth
4. Target amount of older forests on federal lands
5. Efforts to reach the target
6. Threats to old growth
7. Determination of appropriate amounts of older forests

- a. Species based approaches
- b. Historical dynamics approaches
- c. Socio-political processes
8. Federal policies to change to deal with old growth
9. Barriers to implementation of current or new policies

Dr. Spies listed the following outcomes and surprises from the monitoring of effects of the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP), provided potential alternatives, and made a series of suggestions.

#### **Outcomes and Surprises:**

- Increase of older forest in 10 years
- Losses to wildfire, while large, still fell within overall expectations
- Losses to fire high in some areas
- Owl populations declined at higher rates than expected in parts of the range
- More timber harvested from reserves than from matrix

#### **Potential Alternatives:**

- Stay the course
- Redesign the NWFP to focus timber production on younger forests while protecting remaining old growth
- Make incremental/fragmentary changes in federal plans
- Create a goal for distributing successional stages through management

#### **Suggestions:**

- Definition should be broadly based in science and social perspectives
- Conserving biodiversity means recognizing variation, dynamics, scale and other forests in addition to older forests
- Rethink Reserves – especially in dry landscapes
- Think across landscapes in non-federal lands
- Rethink economic – ecosystem goods and services
- Reinvigorate adaptive management to adapt to change

#### **Public Comment**

*Dick Posekany*, Frank Lumber Co. and *Wayne Giesy*, small woodland owner, noted the importance of developing a simple, concise definition of old growth to facilitate good management and help reduce conflict. Mr. Posekany indicated that old timber and old growth have become interchangeable and that is misleading. Mr. Giesy recommended that FFAC develop an appropriate division of land reserved for environmental concerns and timber production so that everyone could put their energy into managing the land.

*Doug Heiken*, Oregon Wild, posited that because the economy depends on the ecosystem services provided by old growth, discussion of the topic is more than just a social issue. He encouraged the Committee not to attempt to create a permanent solution and instead

to focus on providing for the needs of the forests over the next 20-30 years. He indicated there should be more discussion of the barred owl because it occupies northern spotted owl habitat and additional space helps reduce competition between the two species. He also suggested more attention be paid to carbon retention and storage -- older, live trees store carbon and wood products are not necessarily carbon sinks because they can end up in landfills and off-gas. He also encouraged the Committee to address differences in old growth classifications as trees that move into the 21-inch class are very different from 200 year old forest structure.

**Tom Partin**, American Forest Resource Council, questioned the value of exercises to define old-growth. He stressed the importance of moving forward with the implementation of existing plans using available tools to bring management to overstocked and unhealthy timber lands. Mr. Partin described the growth, mortality, and removals on the eastside, especially in the iron triangle region of the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests. He noted that overgrowth and lack of management has created a catastrophic fire risk that can lead to numerous problems including the release of large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> and the destruction of important habitat. Mr. Partin provided a report that is available on the Committee website.

### **Discussion of Old Growth**

The following is a categorization of major themes from the Committee discussion with Tom Spies and informed the public comment.

#### *Developing a Definition – Pros*

- Old growth is the root of much litigation and an operational definition could help develop ways to move beyond litigation to common ground
- Old growth has polarized communities and is fundamental to address when making ecosystem management recommendations from a systems perspective
- Old growth is an important component of healthy forests
- Old growth also is a social issue - and conversation about the topic is difficult
- Managers and policy makers need definitions to make decisions on the ground
- Oregon has a strong legacy of older forests and Oregon's old growth is of global significance and is therefore an important issue to address
- Defining old growth is an important component of being able to provide a sustainable timber supply from federal lands
- A definition can provide a third option for adaptive management between reserves and plantations
- The FFAC was charged with tackling the tough issues
- Defining old growth is no different than other topics the FFAC is addressing

#### *Developing a Definition – Cons*

- If the process is done poorly it can further polarize communities

- Old growth is a dynamic rather than static concept (understanding and physical location) – and is difficult to define
- Old growth also is a social issue - and conversation about the topic is difficult
- Society will never agree on a definition and it will change

#### *Existing Definitions*

- Generic USFS definition – “Old growth encompasses the latter stages of stand development that typically differ from earlier stages in a variety of characteristics, which may include tree size, accumulations of large dead woody material, number of canopy layers, species composition and ecosystem function”
- Process definitions – e.g., Oliver and Larson (1990)
- Structural definition – e.g., PNW Research Note 448 (1986)
- Three current ways to delineate old growth
  - Species approach
  - Historical dynamics approach
  - Socio-political approach

#### *Challenges to Defining Old Growth*

- Dynamics
- Legacy disturbance
- Regional differences
- Forest type differences
- Different species prefer different types of old growth (e.g., woodpecker and northern spotted owl)
- Amount of information
- Unpredictable influence of fire
- Definitions by size (dbh) can be misleading – a tree can grow to 30 inches in thirty years
- Disagreement over historical amount
- Potential for a patchwork of definitions
- Need a biological foundation that address variability
- Can be considered differently from each leg of the sustainability stool
  - Ecological
  - Economic
  - Social

#### *Criteria and Indicators*

- Invest for the greatest return/forest health improvement – East side and southern dry forest types recommended recognizing that growth rates are low and efforts are currently less economical
- Location considerations
  - East

- West
- Proximity to urban area
- Forest types
  - Douglas Fir/Hemlock and Spruce/Hemlock (Coastal)
  - Ponderosa Pine/Mixed Conifer (Eastern Cascades)
  - Mixed Conifer/Evergreen (SW Oregon)
- Elevation
- Historical fire patterns / Fire frequency return interval patterns
- Habitat types
- Classification issue – recognize difference between new old growth (just reaching dbh designation) vs. 200+ year habitat
- Understory management
- Management considerations:
  - Restoration/improvement of forest health
  - Old growth stand
  - Old growth as part of a larger stand
- Successional trajectories, which can be further refined by eco-region or community
- Areas where there is infrastructure
- Determine what to protect old growth against (e.g. loss from fire on the East side)

#### *Process Ideas for Developing a Definition*

- Three possible approaches to determine how much old growth is needed
  - Species approach
  - Historical dynamics approach
  - Socio-political approach
- Make list of previous efforts to define old growth and do comparative research on lessons learned
- Do not attempt to solve a dynamic problem permanently – focus on tangible actions and priorities that can be achieved in the next 30-40 years
- Set appropriate scale
  - Creation of province-wide plans create an opportunity
  - Recognition that watershed scale is where activities get done through contracts
  - Scale up from community at the district level to national forest to eco-region
- Bus Tour – Put 50 people in a bus and tour the state (different forest types) and come up with a definition for how much old growth is enough
- Work to develop clear/measurable criteria for each appropriate eco-region
- Define in the context of identifying what is desired on the forest landscape and how old growth fits in
- Possible alternatives (from Spies' presentation)
  - Stay the Northwest Forest Plan course
  - Redesign NWFP to focus on timber production in younger forests and plantations while protecting remaining old growth

- Make incremental/fragmentary changes in federal plans
- Create goal for distribution of successional stages instead of allocating landscape into reserves and production units

#### *Other Suggestions*

- Address juniper in the definition
- Encourage continued technological investment
- Expand use of LIDAR – laser altimetry to map mixed conifer forest types and structural characteristics

#### **Status of Policy Recommendations:**

#### **Natural Processes and Timber Harvest / Infrastructure**

The subgroups are continuing to meet and draft products are under development for review and discussion by FFAC.

#### **Taking Stock of FFAC Progress**

Steve Hobbs reminded the FFAC that a draft product must be available for the joint meeting with the Board of Forestry at the June 3, 2008 meeting and recommended the establishment of a Synthesis Subcommittee . The purpose of this group would be to develop an outline or draft report framework, synthesize the draft recommendations, attempt to prioritize the problems, and develop a draft overall strategy for implementation. Work would occur between the monthly FFAC meetings and be presented to the FFAC for review and discussion.

The FFAC agreed to form a Synthesis Subcommittee chaired by Steve Hobbs. He will report back at the February meeting. The subcommittee was encouraged to focus on a few key recommendations, and articulate all recommendations in the proposed document.

#### **Review of Draft Meeting Summaries**

The November 2007 and December 2007 meeting summaries were approved with no revisions.

#### **Summary and Next Steps**

The remaining FFAC meetings are as follows:

- Friday, February 1 - 8:30 a.m.
- Monday, March 10
- Friday, April 4

- Tuesday, June 3
  - Morning - Committee Meeting
  - Afternoon - Joint Meeting with Board of Forestry

Committee members reminded each other of the importance of seeking to understand the diversity of opinions particularly related to the old growth issue in order engage in a rich discussion. It was suggested that invited speakers continue to be selected who are able to engage in broad discussion.

### **Attendees**

**Committee Members:** Chair Steve Hobbs, Ralph Bloemers, Allyn Ford, Chuck Graham, Steve Grasty, Russ Hoeflich, Annabelle Jaramillo, Bill Kluting, R. Wade Mosby, Tim Vredenburg, and Ken Williamson

**Staff:** Rod Krahmer, ODF&W; Lisa Freedman, USFS; Mike Haske, BLM; Bob Progulske F&W; Ted Lorensen, David Morman, Kevin Birch, Jeri Chase, Cathy Clem and Gayle Birch, ODF

**Facilitation Team:** Robert Fisher and Rob Williams

**Presenter:** Tom Spies, PNW Station, OSU

**Public:** Chris Friend, ODF; M. Peskovich, Capital Press; Dick Posekany, Frank Lumber; Wayne Giesy, landowner; Keith Baldwin, ODF; Doug Heiken, Oregon Wild; Josh Seeds, DEQ; Chad Allen, ODF; Ian Yar, ODF; James Sinks; Tom Partin, AFRC; Rick Brown, Defenders of Wildlife; Mel Chase, Public Lands Foundation; Rex Storm, AOC; and Chris Jarmer, OFIC

**Note:** *All written material and presentation provided to the Committee and referred to in this meeting summary are available on the Committee's website at:*  
[www.oregon.gov/ODF/BOARD/FFAC.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/BOARD/FFAC.shtml)

### **Attachments**

- Values and Attitudes Toward Old Growth (Robert Fisher)
- Old-growth on Federal Lands, PowerPoint Presentation (Tom Spies)
- Testimony (Tom Partin, American Forest Resource Council)
- Handout – Old Growth Thoughts (Steve Grasty)