

Oregon Board of Forestry April 27 FPFO Agenda Topic

Debrief evening community event: Reflections on resilience

On day one of the Board of Forestry Retreat, local ODF staff and partners organized a tour of the Minam wildlife area, early implementation of the Private Forest Accords along Whiskey Creek, and the east Moraine community forest. That evening a community social was held at the Wallowa Fairgrounds at which members of the community continued to lead presentations showcasing local initiatives, collaborations and leadership related to forest policy and management in Oregon. Board members and ODF Executive Team staff were invited to share their reflections:

- Much appreciation to everyone who helped organize and lead the tour and community event - it was a great opportunity to see and hear about efforts on the ground that are having a positive impact on forests in Oregon - and to see how policies directly impact and / or are being implemented on the ground.
- Positive regard for the collaborations and partnerships that have grown and thrive in this area. Overall tone of working together was refreshing.
- A note about this work being about people and relationships, as much as it is about forest ecology.
- Board member Joe Justice: gratitude and pride for the ability to showcase the proactive efforts to implement forest policies set by the Board.
- Special acknowledgement of the Nez Perce Tribe representative who has been an advisor for the development of the East Moraine community forest management plan (and to the Nez Perce Tribe for its stewardship role long preceding this plan); an appreciation for the framing offered about the human relationship with the forest as active, and humans' role in forest health is maintenance.

Retreat Overview and Frame for the Day: The retreat topic of the Forestry Program for Oregon was intended to bring the full Board and ODF Executive Team together to review and discuss the latest draft developed through the FPFO Subcommittee, and to advance the content within the Goals section with a particular focus on “resilient communities”.

FPFO Draft Overview

As a reminder, the FPFO Subcommittee (Ben Deumling, Joe Justice, Brenda McComb, Ryan Gordon, Mike Wilson, Ryan Greco and ODF technical staff) have been providing leadership to advance the FPFO. The Subcommittee, as stated on all their agendas and summary notes, is a “*collaborative work forum for Board and Agency leadership to*

advance efforts to jointly develop a modern Forestry Program for Oregon. The subcommittee will serve until completion of the FPFO, targeted for December 2023.

Board subcommittee members (Ben, Joe and Brenda) provided a quick overview of the FPFO draft - its organization and the components that had been developed over the past 6 months. ODF technical staff (Danny Norlander) provided an overview of climate smart forestry, a lens which the Board determined early on as foundation for the development of this strategy. ODF Executive member Mike Wilson provided a high level overview of the process and intentions behind the specific section on Organizational Excellence as an area that is focused exclusively on the Agency's role in advancing the vision and mission established through the FPFO. In addition, the group was reminded of intentions established to 'be bold' and to make the document user friendly - digestible to the public and implementable by the agency.

Goals Section

To engage the full Board and Executive Team on the topic of 'Resilient Communities' as a goal area, small groups were formed with the question posed: *How would you describe the role of forests in contributing to resilient communities in Oregon?*

Small Group Raw Notes:

(Group 1)

- Educated public on forest issues
- Connected narrative that tells place based stories
- Policy/regulatory certainty
- Public health benefits from urban forestry
- Strategies and actions reflective of place-based needs and innovations
- Opportunities for next generation (youth)
- Integrated landscape (forests, grasslands)
- Communities who are involved and engaged with forests and forestry - trust and ownership
- Retain local talent
- Economically viable - shown through lowered poverty rates
- Balance and stability - schools full of kids
- Stable infrastructure of forest sector economy
- Active role in federal forest restoration

(Group 2)

- Policy

- Counterpoint: uncertainty about the future of our forests - on all sides - combined with contentious public battles that divide people = lowered mental health and wellness, lowered community cohesion statewide, reduced community resiliency
- USFS natural resources = \$20 billion mitigation, improve forest health, improve public safety, ODF - income opportunity by managing these projects. Oregon logging - 4 billion. 5.3 million acres at risk.
- Local place based, bottom up solutions key to fixing forest policy.
- Are all voices equal? Oregonians are being impacted very differently based on their location, livelihood and proximity to federal and/or state forests. Not playground. Need predictable/stable policy. Place-based solutions understanding regional differences. Active management to mitigate wildfire threat.
- Rural/urban divide. It is very real. Voices yesterday, county commissioner this morning. Our role in better forest policy going forward influences this divide. Need to amplify those voices most impacted by forest economics and policies.
- Forest policy is directly tied to economic health and safety timber communities. Bottom-up, place based solutions always better than top down. ODF has different voices and messages (need to explore). Angry constituents right now impacting ODF - county, their incomes, their budgets, their livelihoods
- Economics
 - Jobs from active forest management; mitigation and adaptation
 - Family stability from economic and health benefits of forests
 - High harvest = local taxes, employment; concerns logging employment - hard to find people to work in the woods. Can a lost/minimal industry come back?
 - Diverse forest - based economy; not reliant on one sector or niche
 - Local employment log to market, milling, into local products/housing. + Carbon benefit
 - Cheap Indonesian plywood at local lumberyard
 - Resilient strategies is dependent on health infrastructure; healthy economically and environmentally communities
 - Forest-related revenues contribute to state and local economies and help pay for critical gov services = local social resiliency (forest products, rec, etc.)
 - Stable and evolving economic infrastructure which supports forest management work

- Industry - capital moving out of state; investment southern US, 70% of forests not available for production/harvest, active vs. no management is real unresolved issue
- ODF economic health = budget, state lands revenue, fire costs, counties unhappy, debts
- Engagement and Collaboration
 - Sense of 'ownership', commitment to adapting, changes overtime
 - Long term features, growth, decadence
 - Diversity of management strategies means diversity of community involvement. Fed: camping hiking, state: old growth, education, reserve. County: non-motorized bike trails. Private: hunting
 - Forests are managed collaboratively across ownerships to provide a sustainable balance of ecosystem services
 - Community feels a relationship to forests - mutual support between the people and forests, people recognize full suite of benefits - ecosystem services
 - Community members are engaged in forest planning and operations for all uses
 - Invested, community engagement, diversity, multiple use, balance, education
 - Proactive engagement of agencies, community leaders, tribes, user groups etc. on forest management issues
- Forest benefits
 - Receiving numerous benefits from healthy forests
 - Healthy forests = recognition of forest benefits, forest systems
 - Surrounded by healthy, sustainable forests capable of providing multiple benefits - FP, clean water, jobs, rec, clean air, carbon sequestration, wildlife, habitat, cultural plants; urban forest - mitigate climate change, connection to nature - personal health, access, safe access, recreation, cultural opp
 - Resilient forests and watersheds will provide healthy outcomes - economically, environmentally, socially
 - Resiliency surge - we are behind the curve, overwhelming number of acres and watersheds need treatment
 - In an era of increasing rate and intensity of disturbance events (climate change), surge our best management tools to address resiliency
 - More wildfire resilient communities (key disturbance events)
 - Limited fire risk due to healthy managed forests
 - Clean water, cleaner air and carbon sequestration from forests = more resilient communities statewide that can both better adapt to climate

change challenges and to the changes associated with growing population and associated resource demands

- Human interaction with forests, forest management, forest evolution, protection, restoration
- Recreational value: hunting, fishing, bike trails, camping, old growth stands
- Healthy, accessible forests provide people with connection to nature - improved individual resiliency which contributes to more resilient communities
- Support healthy forest in and around the community
- Urban canopies mitigate climate change impacts that disproportionately hit underserved communities improving the overall community resilience and the health of its residents
- Access = to forests for recreation, culture, education and appreciation; hiking through safe 'mosaic' of forest ecotypes and representative age classes especially post-fire; kayaking on challenging diverse water and stream systems fed by healthy watersheds; safe access to forests = people feel safe, risk to forest from people are minimized and mitigated
- Innovation and Change
 - Investing in high school and community college programs that focus on forestry
 - Embracing new technology and supporting pilot projects or non-traditional forest industries
 - Creating forum for developing new ideas and technology in forest sector
 - Communities that promote and support science-based education and discourse about forests
 - Alert- communities that monitor changes in forest and make actions to adapt
 - Forests are not simply seen as a place of extraction - in terms of economic or other benefits
 - New mindset needed: 60 mills lost; 60% county shell xxx (maybe more), role in helping to revitalize this sector, waste products, specialty products; no further damage; stability spiral and help rebuild these economies; 40 years of downward spiral
- Landscape Resilience
 - In landscape with increasing wildfire returns, appropriately, using / building diverse reforestation approaches to meet challenges
 - Keep/intentionally connecting with the science and knowledge of fire science with the challenges of overall forest management. (The rate of disturbance informs urgency of management)

(Group 3)

- What outcomes do we want to see?
 - Recognizing diversity of state
 - Community health and robust economy
 - Appropriate scale/forest role (forests not the only contributing factor to resilient communities)
 - Dynamic/changing environment
 - “Forests contribute to communities adapting in the face of change”

Comments/questions and themes: The group discussed, briefly, their takeaways from the small group work. Common themes were identified which the Subcommittee will take into consideration for evolving the next iteration of the draft FPFO. These included

- How can we take a place based approach in applying our policies and strategies?
- How should or can we influence federal forest policy?
- How do our policies handle the tension of needs for stability, adaptability and change?
- What is our value/principle and role related to community engagement on forest policy? What strategies should be included in our FPFO around this?
- Do we need to develop a more explicit policy or role for ODF and the Board around public education on forest and forestry issues?
- What is the impact of our statewide forest policies on perceptions of urban/rural divide? How can we set policies and strategies that support connecting, rather than dividing, the communities we serve?

Wrap Up + Closing Comments, Next Steps

- *Goals confirmed* - The Board members of the FPFO Subcommittee asked the rest of the group to confirm or provide suggestions for changes to the suite of Goals that were included in the current draft of the FPFO. The subcommittee had worked iteratively on these and felt they needed confirmation that these were generally an inclusive and appropriate set of goals to include in the document at this point in order to proceed. The goals are: **Maintaining biodiversity and promoting functional and dynamic ecosystems. Climate leadership. Resilient communities. Organizational excellence.** Feedback from the rest of the Board and ODF Executive leadership indicated that the goal headings were generally good at this iteration, with some comments -
 - Based on the discussions we had today, we may need to reframe or expand some of these.

- The goal titles in the past have been a key source of reference when referring to the FPFO - keep this in mind as we proceed.
- Consider changing Climate leadership to Natural Resources leadership?
- Add USFS as partners.
- Tribal and cultural lens should stand alone.
- Principles should include something about the way in which we engage and collaborate.
- *FPFO Subcommittee next steps* - the subcommittee meets next on May 17 and will review the inputs on Resilient Communities and other aspects of the day's discussion to determine how best to incorporate the work and carry the draft to the next review and discussion of the full Board and ET. (June 7-8). An updated draft will be shared prior to the next meeting.
- *Rename the FPFO?* The Subcommittee has touched on the potential for changing the title of the Forestry Program for Oregon. One suggestion from today was to rename it - "Healthy Forests, Healthy Trees: A Plan for Oregon". The Subcommittee will take this topic up at their next meeting.
- *FPFO Process Plan* - the facilitator shared the 2023 process plan and timeline for developing the FPFO. Of note:
 - The document itself will remain porous and iterative until the end of the year, but key pieces will be reviewed and the subcommittee will seek general alignment or confirmation of different components of the document at various stages in order to get easier approval on the product at the end.
 - There will be a parallel process of community engagement that will serve to inform the values section of this document and for which the Board and ET will want to incorporate into the final product to be reflective of these inputs.
 - A more formal public input process (TBD) will occur once the draft is nearly complete - likely in early 2024.
 - The Department will be responsible for developing a transparent tracking system to enable metric setting, monitoring and adaptation of the strategies and actions within the FPFO over time.

In closing, the State Forester and Board Chair thanked everyone for their work in these important discussions. The Facilitator thanked everyone and committed to carrying the conversations and ideas forward through the FPFO Subcommittee process.

With that, the meeting was adjourned.