

DRAFT

Oregon State Stewardship Coordinating Committee Meeting

June 24, 2019 - Oregon Dept. of Forestry

Members in Attendance/On Call:

Lena Tucker, SSCC Chair, ODF
Private Forests Chief
Jim James, OSWA (Jeremy Felty, Alt.)
Eric Hartstein, OWEB (on call)
Gary Jensen, OSWCC
Dan Logan, Landowner
Jim Johnson, OSU Extension
Taylor Murray, USDA (on call)
Rex Storm, OTFS/AOL
Kristin Kovalik, TPL (on call)
Andrew Owen, NRCS

ODF Staff:

Kyle Abraham, Deputy Chief
Josh Barnard, Field Support Mgr.
Susan Dominique, Admin. Support
Amy Singh, Forest Legacy Admin.
Jim Gersbach, Public Affairs
Nate Agalzoff, Incentives Coord.
Ryan Gordon, Family Forestlands
Coord.

Guests:

Absent:

Clint Bentz, Private Forestland
Owner
Karl Dalla Rosa, USFS S&P Forestry
Jon Weck, Landowner
Dick Courter, Consultant
Kelley Beamer, COLT
Rod Krahmer, ODFW
Nelson Mathews, TPL
Brad Siemens, USFS
Morgan Holen, OR Community Trees
CalLee Davenport, USF&W
Richard Corff (replacing Owen
Wozniak)
Seth Barnes, OFIC

Call to Order; Introductions and Public Comment

Tucker called the meeting to order and asked for roundtable introductions. Attendance is noted above. She asked for any public comment. None was offered.

ODF Updates

Tucker began highlighting the movement of Private Forest's staff within the last 9 months. Ryan Gordon did a stint as the interim Public Affairs Director starting last fall and just came back to us in May. Amy has kept us going on the Legacy work. Tucker announced that she had accepted the Deputy State Forester position with the Agency. With the official transition happening July 1st. Along with that Kyle Abraham has accepted the Private Forests Division Chief position, Lena left vacant. As the Division Chief of Private Forests is typically the Chair of this group, Kyle will assume that role, or he can delegate as he so chooses going forward.

Moving on to the legislative news and budgets Tucker reported that the Agency Budget passed the full Ways and Means last week. And then the Republicans left in protest over the Cap and Trade bill, which meant that any bills not signed died as there wasn't a quorum in the legislature to take action. So the ODF Agency Budget bill is in limbo until the Senate re-convenes or if that doesn't happen before sine or die on June 30th we would need a Special Session to move State Agency budgets forward. At the end of the session, without finishing the work a Continuing Resolutions Bill 5048 that was put into place authorizes State government to run through September at the same current service level as we had in this biennium. That resolution does not include our Fire Severity Special Purposes Appropriations so we are doing some work to figure out how to get the business of wildfire severity handled. The Harvest Tax bill is tied in with our Agency Budget Bill and so if our Agency Budget isn't worked out before January then basically the Harvest Tax (being set on a calendar year basis) will still have 2 quarters in the year under the last rate set. Abraham added there is some uncertainty since it is tied to the Agency Budget. Tucker noted that if a Special Session is called bills that did not get signed will have to be started all over again through the House and Senate.

That also includes agency budget bills. So even though our budget went through the full Ways and Means we'd have re-introduce it. During fire season! There are some other Natural Resource Agencies whose budgets did not get finalized either she thought DEQ and OWEB. Hartstein from OWEB concurred that their agency was in the same situation as Forestry.

Tucker observed that ODF will be busy again with fire season 2019 in combination finishing up the legislative session in some form. There is also the newly established Governor's Wildfire Council in play with the Suppression Sub-Committee scheduled to finalize their work and report back to the Governor at the end of September. ODF is staffing that sub-Committee with Travis Medema, Eastern Oregon Area Director. Mike Shaw was filling in as Acting EOA Director until Travis returns. Chad Davis is staffing the Mitigation Sub-committee. Our Agency will be continuing to be involved in staffing the Governor's Wildfire Council through the summer.

Abraham included that OSWA and the Committee for Family Forestlands had created a legislative concept around allowance for a secondary forestland dwelling. The Committee spent a lot of time and effort with the language and getting support for the concept, developing sideboards and inviting input from 1000 Friends of Oregon. The CFF presented their effort to the Board in March and testified at a couple of sessions in front of the House and Senate. Quite a process, but the bill was passed and signed by the Governor. So counties can now authorize a second dwelling for a family member that is willing to take over the reins on forestland. This was seen an important component of generational succession, a need identified long ago for maintaining family forests.

Tucker announced that the Board is planning for a November two day science workshop. There has been a lot of requests for contemporary science and ODF is working with the PNW Research Station to inform the Board's work plan for the biennium. The workshop will largely focus on values and how values influence policy decisions. At the beginning of a new biennium, the Board will reset their two year work plan those discussions usually start in September and continue at the retreat in October. The Board will once again face Board turnover. Nils Christoffersen, Cindy Deacon-Williams' terms end in February. And by the end of 2020 I think it is Mike Rose and our Chair Tom Imeson. Tucker invited Andrew Owen to introduce himself as recently appointed as the new NRCS State Forester. He came from being the Deputy State Forester in Arizona with Forest Legacy and Forest Stewardship Program responsibilities. Tucker relayed her pleasure at having worked with Owen through the Forest Stewardship Modernization Project and NASF.

Landowner Assistance Program Updates

Gordon picked up on that agreeing that he saw Owen's appointment as really great for our statewide working relationship with NRCS. He surmised that one of the big themes they will be focusing on early is the State Forest Action Plan. The Plan documents ODF's actions and objectives, primarily with the Forest Service-State and Private Forestry, in terms of the application of the funding that we receive through the Forest Service. He sees it as an opportunity to take a broader look at all of our federal partnerships and put those pieces and programs together to accomplish larger landscape scale projects across public and private boundaries. He envisioned a lot of opportunities for the State Stewardship Coordinating Committee to provide input on the Plan.

He indicated he wanted to get back into these meetings to provide updates on all of the incentive programs and landowner assistance. Lena had mentioned the Forest Stewardship Modernization, the Forest Action Plan and the Governor's Wildfire Council. He recognized that there are a lot of different discussions about how we are working across the landscape which provides an opportunity to massage some things and pull them together. The point he wanted to emphasize is that we've got all these different ownerships and there are a lot of competing values and objectives across the landscape concerning management practices. He wants to see a way to tie all of those programs together to work at a landscape scale. ODF is really well-positioned to be in the middle of that conversation because of the connection with the private non-industrial as well as the industrial landowners and ODF's working relationship with our federal and local partners. Oregon has had 7 Joint Chiefs Projects that have brought in over \$13 million dollars of funding to the State. And not only do they allow us to be able to work across those public-private boundaries but the dollars that we bring in are extra dollars in addition to the regular allocations that we get. Same thing is true for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) that has brought in over \$60 million dollars in additional funding. ODF is going to partner in about 7 to 10 of those projects. And of course our statewide working agreement with NRCS which is now the primary way that we are able to provide both technical and financial assistance to non-industrial private forests (NIPF). He reminded members that Oregon has no dedicated State-funding for this work. So we rely in particularly on that

Agreement. The Federal Forest Restoration Program became a permanent program, permanently funded in the last session. It is providing support to forest collaboratives across Oregon but also through the Good Neighbor Authority allowing us to assist the Forest Service in planning and implementing timber sales on federal lands. So on the Forest Service side the Stewardship Modernization Project was necessary as that program has seen less and less funding over the last 10 years and is now at base level. This Modernization effort the Forest Service undergoing looking at ways to change the program to make it more attractive to Congress to try to get some more investment in it. We leverage those funds to provide license for all our Stewardship Foresters to engage in technical assistance. It's a small amount but we spread it across the State to provide base support for the technical assistance side and use some of those funds to provide cost-share to landowners that are interested in developing forest stewardship plans. We are looking at moving funds towards more focused investments, some specific geographic areas and specific resource concerns we identify that we want to address.

Owen responded that he sees the take-home that if everything is a priority, then there is no priority. The Forest Service will invest their money on no more than 50% of the State Plans. If there is work done outside those priority areas that would be considered State match. What they have also done was update the allocation formula used to pay for traditional stewardship plans to allow for landscape scale planning. The CIS or landscape scale plan will be built into the allocation formula as is and also into practice plans. Smaller plans may focus on just a fire treatment, or other specific treatments to expand the current toolbox to cover what wasn't covered before. Tucker thought the beneficial thing for Oregon with the re-design of that program is we can credit and leverage a lot of other work we are doing. The main driver of the efforts to re-design our Forest Stewardship Program was Congressional Appropriations Committee wanting to see more than number of stewardship plans. They wanted to actually see actionable items and outcomes on the ground. Everyone can talk about the benefits of one-on-one technical assistance where a forester whether it's from OSU or consulting forester or somebody walks in the woods with the landowner and talks about actions. Those are often the conversations that are the catalyst to move a landowner to some type of treatment for forest health, starting a management plan. It's a very hard thing to capture and report on the benefits of that. But ODF has promoted the value of that one-on-one technical assistance to actions on the land. So this opens the door to providing some metrics and things we can report on to show the value that the Stewardship Program. Gordon continued that they are seeing a broadening of what is viewed as an acceptable management plan. Now the conversation is open to landscape scale plans or also to what we've called in this conversation, practice plans. So anywhere on the spectrum from really detailed complete plans to a less detailed plan that focuses on a landowner's immediate needs and concerns. But either way is really focused on getting treatments where they are most needed right now.

Another update Gordon reported on was the pilot project ODF has with AFF to get work happening on the ground in eastern and southwest Oregon. NRCS dollars are funding this but coming through AFF allowing us to create, do a lot of planning up front and create some lighter weight plans in areas where we know we really want to focus NRCS investments. Getting those landowners in the queue and ready to go. In September 2018 those funds were finally obligated and the agreement was signed. Right now, the project only had a year of life so technically ends in September but we are working on a 3 year extension and add more funding to that as well. Traction has been slow, because we have to build capacity to help create those plans but I think this with a 3 year commitment Districts are going to be more enticed to bring some folks on and focus on those.

Johnson had some concern about the eastern Oregon one because in the southwest when they started they almost immediately ran into a work force capacity issue where they created interest but didn't have the capacity to do the site visits. He asked if the additional time and funding would remedy that. And recognizing that allowing for more inquires there will be more requests. Gordon answered that he saw the bottleneck at the District level where they seemed cautious about hiring additional foresters if the funding was brief in duration. So the extension of time would ease the worry of bringing on more staff. He knew there was a constant struggle in the southwest keeping up with demand but they are hoping to catch up.

So the other update was on the Farm Service Agency, **Emergency Forest Restoration Program** (EFRP). We continue to participate in that and help FSA with it. Right now there are active signups now in Jackson and Josephine Counties for any kind of fire impacts that folks suffered in 2017 or 2018. Then in Douglas County there is an active signup right now for drought damage and damage from the February snow and ice storms that we had. And I had an inquiry from an FSA Office in Lane County they are interested in joining in with that. There is also an active sign-up in Wasco County for folks impacted by last fire season. So that continues again to be a really important tool in the toolbox. NRCS can leverage EQIP dollars to help with post-fire restoration as well. The more of those EFRP funds we can pull in the more we keep NRCS funds freed up for other work. As far as the Federal Forest Restoration Program the primary pieces from his perspective is the support for the collaboratives working on the landscape and then even more importantly the use of the **Good Neighbor Authority** where we are able to use State resources to help layout and sell timber on federal lands. Between all of the opportunities we have to work with landowners on the private lands side of the fence and then the work that can be done with the Good Neighbor Authority there is a great sort of alignment there to put together our own kind of in-house joint chiefs projects. The Stewardship Modernization focuses on opportunities to work with NRCS to focus CISs (**Conservation Implementation Strategies**) in specific areas and specific landscapes, dealing with specific resource concerns. It seems to me to be a natural fit then to wrap in the Federal Forests Restoration Program and start looking at using the Good Neighbor Authority to put projects together on the public side of the fence. He sees a really nice opportunity there to tie everything together and believes that's the value of having the Forest Action Plan discussion open right now to really capture all of these programs and identify some of those priority areas on the landscape and formalize a process leveraging all our programs to put these projects together.

Gordon then touched upon Shared Stewardship. So the Forest Service, in the last 20 to 30 years there has had this evolution of All Lands/Collaborative work/Landscape-scale Restoration. It's had a lot of different names evolving over time. The latest iteration of that is Shared Stewardship. There is a real cultural shift with an emphasis is on allowing States to help set some of the priorities for work that's done on federal ground. Potentially in August he thinks there will be a Shared Stewardship MOU between the Oregon and Forest Service. And that once again feeds into this larger opportunity to strategically make those investments on both sides of the fence.

Tucker reported staff's intention to begin conversations with this group as the Department moves to a larger strategy discussion on Oregon's Forest Action Plan. She shared that they are currently updating the assessments in the Plan from the 2015 update. This will be a total revision of the Plan for Oregon which is due June 2020. And so this group actually becomes a key player as we work through strategies and priorities in that discussion. She emphasized that it's an interesting time along with revising the Forest Action Plan for the State of Oregon, the State is entering into a Shared Stewardship Agreement with Forest Service and the Governor's Wildfire Council is looking for solutions to the larger level issue of wildfire in the landscape. Many efforts heading down parallel paths. At this point in time all parties are aware of the need to establish connections between those concepts and plans, which will become important as time goes on. Jensen inquired about monitoring and reporting of accomplishments as vital to the public trust and to provide accountability. What are the benefits of the actions that the State is taking? Are there metrics we can monitor over time? Budgeting in the costs for that ongoing monitoring effort needs to be accounted for. Gordon agreed that was really important. There are deliverables that are associated with all the grant funds that come in, so in terms of showing that these dollars were put to good work on the landscape we do document our efforts. There is a desire to do a better job spatially collecting data. That data can tell the story and it needs to reside in a single portal in which foresters and other engaged in this work can go and report electronically on the grant accomplishments in one system. Jensen added that in principle it's the funding and budgeted capacity to have the manpower to follow up, especially when there are multiple partners engaged in the work.

Tucker provided an example through the Forest Stewardship Program through Forest Service State & Private, one of the requirements there is to monitor the Plans. ODF can use the technical assistance money that we get through the Forest Service to do that. The Legacy Program also has a monitoring requirement on those projects into the future. The challenge for a larger level monitoring program is when you look at all of these individual federal grants that we get and the fact that the Agency does not get any General Fund or any other State funding for any of this. All of this work is leveraged through Federal funds for treatments, boots on the ground which is super, super important. But funding longer term monitoring is a challenge. Ryan concurred that there are ways we could be more efficient in how we track this work that we are doing. If collectively as an agency we can take our individual ways of reporting and move it into a broader spatial database we could actually see more of the effect of landscape scale restoration. Right now our Stewardship Foresters do have a database that they can report in. So we look at those activities and that influences our agency level reporting to the Feds. But providing data trends also needs a focused look at the bigger result on the landscapes. Abraham added that the State has performance measures around water quality that we report annually on to the legislature, we can't make a direct cause-and-effect but can point to the use of those practices in maintaining water quality for example.

Gordon wanted to leave members with the plan to provide feedback to the Forest Action Plan. Al Devos, in the Federal Initiatives Unit is leading the process as we continue to refine it.

BREAK

After the break Gordon, reverted back to committee business calling for a motion to approve the backlog of minutes (January, May and August). Hopefully at some point in the past everybody had been provided a copy. So perhaps we could just with a single Motion approve all those minutes. Jim James moved that the Minutes from the Jan/May/August meetings were approved as motioned.

Forest Legacy Program Update

Singh's update provided some figures on the Legacy Program accomplishments and fund state pointing out the active FLP projects and funding levels. East Moraine/Wallowa Lake for FY2016 \$3 million. East Moraine/Wallowa FY2017 \$900,000. FY 2018 Hood River Forest and Fish \$3,800,000 and \$2,200,000 in FY 2019. So \$9,900,000 is currently obligated in Oregon. For FY2020 Hood River Forests and Fish are ranked 11th for \$5,000,000 and Arch Cape Watershed is 21st with \$1,000,000. She received FY 2021 Letters of Interest from Hood River Forest and Fish (Conservation easement) for continuing Phases and then Arch Cape Watershed (Fee title); Spence Mountain (fee title) and China/Humbug Mountain (fee title).

- **Hood River Forest and Fish Project** was submitted by the Western Rivers Conservancy for a conservation easement to be held by ODF, with this a continuation of prior phases of the project. The appraisal is anticipated in the fall of 2019.
- **Arch Cape Watershed** was submitted by the Arch Cape Water District for a fee title held by the Water District. It was submitted but not funded in FY2019 and currently ranked 21st for FY2020 with 2100 acres. The community's objectives are not only to protect the watershed but to provide revenue as well. It is currently owned by EcoTrust.
- Another Letter was received from the Trust for Public Lands in partnership with the Klamath County and the Klamath Trails Association to acquire fee title of 7500 acres held by the County called **Spence Mountain**. The current owner is JWTR Oregon. She described the attributes named in the Letter: Hiking/biking over 20 miles of public access trails; fish habitat for endangered species; Scenic importance; Destination Resort potential and that it complements other protected lands. The preliminary appraisal was to be completed June 30th. And in agreement drafted with landowners; The Trust for Public Lands has committed to securing matching funds. The Forest Stewardship Plan was completed for the project area. They were a high number of relevant supporters from the USFW, USFS, ODF, Klamath County and other area initiatives and conservation groups.

- **China/Humbug Mountain Project** Letter of Interest submitted by The Conservation Fund for a fee title project encompassing 795 acres on the shores of Klamath Lake. It is adjacent to Humbug State Park and coastal beaches and communities and also the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. ODFW ranks this area as a Priority 2 for Species of Economic and Recreational importance with threatened nesting habitat for Marbled Murrelets, Northern Spotted Owl and Oregon Coastal Coho Salmon. It has a linkage priority for larger mammals as well. The Fund has engaged an appraisal for the land/timber value to inform the Legacy application and the Conservation Fund guarantees 25% cost share. The Fund has entered into a purchase and sale agreement with the current landowner due to close August 31st. But it could go back on the market at this time.

Singh asked members to consider these Letters and whether they should continue in the Legacy process by presenting to the Committee for their consideration nationally. Kristin Kovalik with Trust for Public Lands reported that the appraisal for **Spence Mountain** was to be completed today and is actually lower than the 'ask'. The mineral determination to be completed in August and the Stewardship Plan is complete. She further detailed out the partners involved. Tucker reminded members that any discussion must have a full quorum if contributing to a decision. Storm noted that before making a Committee recommendation there should be a deliberate discussion on the Letters of Interest. When there are public ownership issues or concerns, members need to be aware of advantages/disadvantages of taking away private ownership. Singh replied that this would establish some permanent protection to protect environmentally sensitive areas. If there was no threat of conversion? Storm took the stance of asking if private lands in general could be considered at risk, because private ownership is good for Oregon and members shouldn't create a negative message that all lands are better managed by the State. Tucker noted that the Blue Mountain Heritage Conservation Easement is a good example of keeping lands in family ownership. A conservation easement keeps the land in private ownership whereas Fee Title requests move lands from private to public ownership. Amy pointed out that threats are required background information required in applications, and the collective knowledge of this Committee is important to bring to these decisions. Storm added that the threat of conversion should be factored against Oregon's land use laws.

Community Forestry Program Updates

Singh shared that Oregon and Washington have had successful projects and there has been a bump up in funding but 2018 projects have not been funded yet. Arch Cape got funding awarded for the **Rainforest Reserve** and Klamath County SWCD ownership of the **Eagle Creek Community Forest**.

Schedule Next Meeting: Good of the Order

Gordon suggested they meet in late August but Amy wanted no later than mid-August as the Feds start their review September 20th. Tucker suggested the week of August 12th which will give the members' time to finalize their recommendation. And Singh will get presenters scheduled.

Meeting Adjourned.