

State Forests Advisory Committee: Fern Ridge Forest Management Project Greatest Permanent Value Survey

2020's Labor Day fires burned with high severity over much of the Shellburg Falls Recreation Area. ODF is creating a recovery plan that takes into account its legal mandate to produce social, economic, and environmental benefits to all Oregonians. This includes repairing and upgrading trails and infrastructure, preserving sensitive riparian areas, removing hazardous trees along roadways, and recreation infrastructure and a proposed 14-acre post-fire timber sale. ODF currently plans to submit this project for a 14-day public comment period prior to final approval of the sale.

Your answers will be compiled and published with your name as part of the October 29 SFAC meeting packet, and we will review the responses received at that time.

Please complete your survey no later than September 30, 2021. Thank you!

Email *

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What's your name?

Susan Knudsen Obermeyer

Trade-offs are inherent in balanced forest management.

ODF's obligation to produce social, economic & environmental benefits is established in Oregon Administrative Rule and is commonly known as the Greatest Permanent Value rule. To achieve this aim, ODF must consider numerous practical factors that often involve trade-offs. As an advisory committee with diverse views and a deep understanding of state forests, your input will help us shape the final draft proposal. Below are some of the specific questions our planners considered in drafting their initial proposal. You will have an opportunity to submit additional questions you feel staff should take into consideration.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, how could ODF provide social benefits to Oregonians, including safe public recreation and potential education/interpretation opportunities? *

Keep engaging the public. Share your story. Talk about your monitoring plan and how the information will be used. Talk about what will be harvested and why. Stress safety and that making the area safe will be the reason when the area will be opened. Talk about how the receipts will be used and the benefits to the county. This is a great story.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, how could ODF approach generating revenue for county partners and local taxing districts who provide public services? *

By engaging the public and partners that have interest in the area will go along way toward generating revenue. Seeking grants to accomplish some of the projects would increase the revenues back area. Also, the influx of groups and jobs bring revenue to businesses and local economy.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, what are the most important recovery efforts to improve environmental benefits in this area? *

Restoration, reforestation, and making it safe for the public will greatly improve recovery that will improve environmental benefits. Taking the time to engage interested public's will help them understand. Educate them in those benefits. This takes time but the results payoff in the long run. Also, taking the time to explain the benefits and the reason for speeding up the process will help with that understanding.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, what other factors should ODF consider in providing social, economic & environmental benefits to Oregonians? *

Engagement and education on this project will not only benefit this project but future projects. The team that put this project together have done a great job and will show even more when telling their story to interested public and partners. This will help provide those benefits to Oregonians.

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What's your name?

Mike McKibbin

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I think the Fern Ridge project will do a good job of opening up the Shellberg Falls recreation area doing a combination of selective harvests along roads and trails in conjunction with a small modified Clear Cut. This will serve the public well by showcasing how modern forest practices are used to quickly remove trees in a safe manner after a wildfire. I would recommend utilizing roadside or trailside information to explain to the public what was done in the year following the labor day fires in terms of forest restoration. Examples of clearcutting heavily damaged areas and partial cutting less severely damaged stands, different types of reforestation (traditional, aerial seeding, natural regeneration), etc. This is a great way and a great place to communicate this to the visitors in the area.

In addition, ODF should continue to open up hiking and biking trails in the area as soon as it is safe to do so.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, how could ODF approach generating revenue for county partners and local taxing districts who provide public services? *

Continue to do what you have been doing to get timer sales out and sold in the most severely burnt areas. ODF has done an excellent job in the Santiam district in 2021 getting volume out the door in a short period of time but more work needs to be done. Continue to look at the areas with the highest quality timber that can be moved the easiest when considering potential timber sales. The window of opportunity to sell this burnt timber is closing as the wood begins to deteriorate and demand from mills wanes.

This should also be considered in future potential HCA's. The board of forestry has not approved the Habitat Conservation Plan yet so please do not consider these areas off limits for harvests. If it makes sense to sell timber in these areas that will provide financial support to local taxing districts then please consider doing management in these areas.

I realize that this answer may be outside the scope of the question a bit but I want the district to keep up the good work they have been doing...This is a success story that you should be proud of.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, what are the most important recovery efforts to improve environmental benefits in this area? *

Removing dead and dying trees from the landscape to prevent future fires, potential beetle infestations, and many acres of dead and dying/hazardous trees. New stand establishment through rigorous reforestation efforts will also be critical in maintaining healthy soils and reducing potential landslides on barren unstable slopes. Natural regeneration and Aerial seeding will be a big help to re-establish young stands.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, what other factors should ODF consider in providing social, economic & environmental benefits to Oregonians? *

The Fern Ridge project includes forest management, recreational considerations, visual consideration, hazard tree removal, biological considerations, forest regeneration considerations and continued monitoring. On a small scale, this will be a great example of what ODF has to balance when considering Greatest Permanent Value. I cannot see any other factors that need to be considered as long as the story is explained well to future visitors to the area.

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What's your name?

Margaret Magruder

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Remove danger trees and downed trees for safer access and fire management.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, how could ODF approach generating revenue for county partners and local taxing districts who provide public services? *

Increased harvest of both damaged trees and harvestable trees.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, what are the most important recovery efforts to improve environmental benefits in this area? *

Reforestation and limiting underbrush to curb fire spread.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, what other factors should ODF consider in providing social, economic & environmental benefits to Oregonians? *

Expand public hunting and fishing opportunities.

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What's your name?

Leslie Shaw

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My first pick would be hunting opportunities, followed by hiking. Kiosks showing the quick forest recovery, pictures of pre burn and after burn.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, how could ODF approach generating revenue for county partners and local taxing districts who provide public services? *

Harvest harvest harvest. Since this might be challenging, I am not really sure. I really don't want to see more off road trails or bike tracks. Will look forward to see other answers.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, what are the most important recovery efforts to improve environmental benefits in this area? *

The photos show this project is already on the move and looking very good. Removing the burnt trees, replacing the culverts and replanting will continue such great work in progress.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, what other factors should ODF consider in providing social, economic & environmental benefits to Oregonians? *

Hunting and fishing. Hope you can show fairly quickly that the Ariel seeding paid off.

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What's your name?

Amanda Astor

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Social benefits are achieved through the production of wood products, healthy forests, viable operator and milling infrastructure and maintained roads/trails. All of this can be realized through commercial timber operations which help pay for non-commercial fuel treatment, removal of hazards that are no longer merchantable, creation and maintenance of roads, trails, interpretive signs, etc.

These fiscally responsible projects help to maintain the necessary infrastructure to accomplish the suite of forest ecosystem goals that foresters, conservationists and the public want to see realized.

The Washington Department of Natural Resources states in their 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan that, "The loss of milling infrastructure has made it more difficult to treat forestlands—a reliable and consistent supply of forest products is critical in attracting private investment and supporting rural economic development."

The state needs to make money to spend money.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, how could ODF approach generating revenue for county partners and local taxing districts who provide public services? *

Maximize profits so that beneficiaries are made whole and additional most costly projects can be completed.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, what are the most important recovery efforts to improve environmental benefits in this area? *

Ensure adequate road drainage. Disconnect ditches and drain water onto the forest floor. Clear all culverts and ensure adequate sizing and design. Removal all hazards that are merchantable and/or would pose a threat to operators or the public. Doing this now, when there is still monetary value is critical. We also need to ensure we appropriately stock stands post treatment to ensure we get a thriving forest after harvest.

Specific to the Fern Ridge forest project, what other factors should ODF consider in providing social, economic & environmental benefits to Oregonians? *

We should also have signs discussing climate change, biogenic carbon emissions from wildfires, benefits of building with wood and substitution factors when using mass timber instead of steel and concrete. New research also shows that deadwood releases massive amounts of carbon into the atmosphere. People need to know the tradeoff made with a management decision to do nothing...

<https://scitechdaily.com/deadwood-releasing-10-9-gigatons-of-carbon-every-year-more-than-all-fossil-fuel-emissions-combined/>

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