

Committee for Family Forestlands
Minutes
December 16, 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:

Rex Storm	Craig Shinn
Roje Gootee	Susan Watkins
Sara Leiman	Scott Gray
Sarah Deumling	Jim James
Rick Barnes	

ODF Staff Present:

Peter Daugherty
Lena Tucker
Kevin Weeks

Guest Participants:

Gary Springer, BOF
Neil Schroder, OTFS
Joe Holmberg, OTFS
Josh Seeds, DEQ

A. Welcome and Review of Agenda – Agenda approved as-is.

1. Peter introduced the new Deputy Division Chief, Lena Tucker. Lena will replace Peter as Secretary (ex-officio) on the committee and Peter will fill the vacant Ex-officio position as the new Division Chief. Lena will be officially starting her new position as Deputy Division Chief this January.

B. Discussion and Approval of Meeting Minutes

1. Approved as amended on page 3:
 - Update stream temperature improvement data and language: “Before 1971 we were changing the temperature between 10° and 21°, so there has been significant improvement.”

C. Ongoing Topics Updates & Brief Updates

Peter Daugherty gave an overview of the recent hiring freeze, possible exemptions to fill critical positions, budget implementation plan, and plans for rebuilding of the Private Forests Program. Peter will follow up with the committee at the next meeting in January.

1. BOF small woodlands tour debrief. Craig Shinn congratulated Susan and all the committee members involved in planning the November BOF tour. Gary Springer, BOF member, also expressed his appreciation and that it was a “great tour!”
 - Susan summarized her notes from the tour and distributed a copy to everyone for discussion (see handouts). Committee members discussed tour highlights, side discussions, and other ideas not captured in the tour but may be pieces to take forward: land use issues; diversity of forestlands and ownership sizes/objectives; pole building permits; regulations; gifting strategies; generational transfer; taxes; estate planning.

- Susan will update her notes (white paper?) and give to OSWA for distribution to its members.
 - Craig Shinn suggested a future topic for the committee would be to look at all taxes and how they stack up.
 - Appreciation letters to tour hosts. Susan and Craig will write notes to hosts
2. Neil Schroeder presented information about the Small Woodlands Co-op, which emphasizes the importance of non-timber products to the forest economy and forest health. State law awards incentives (forest deferral) for growing and harvesting trees, which ODF interprets as requiring "working forests." CFF could consider ways to support co-ops.
 3. CFF will invite OFRI to present information regarding forest biomass at a future meeting.

D. DEQ Non-point Source Regulation and Permitting

1. Clean Water Act compliance – Josh Seeds, DEQ
 - 45 states do their own point source permitting for the Clean Water Act; DEQ has a collaborative stakeholder process for establishing TMDL thresholds in Oregon.
 - Discussed the concept of a ‘permit’ – DEQ is interested in pursuing a General Permit concept instead of a paperwork-heavy individual permit.
 - When a private forest landowner follows the BMPs established in the FPA, it is understood that you are in compliance with the Clean Water Act.
 - Permit is basically “These are the conditions to follow, you agree to the conditions and register with DEQ.” This serves the protocol of a permit.
 - ODF and DEQ are working closely on the topic. Oregon emphasizes incentives but lags in collecting data on road improvement and monitoring.
 - Bills have been introduced in Congress to restore silviculture rule. This would address road issues, but not the bigger issue of storm water management.
 - State and landowner commitment to water quality remains paramount. Beneficial outcome should be goal.

E. Working Lunch / Recognition

1. Craig Shinn presented Gary Springer with a plaque in recognition and appreciation for his six years of service on the CFF.

F. Eastern Oregon Issues – Roje Gootee

1. The region is half the state – water, carbon, open spaces, wildlife and high quality (but slower growing) timber -- yet we don’t address the large working ecosystem on a huge scale. Wolves want to move into eastern Oregon, they are an umbrella species that seek out thriving ecosystems. Wolves are an indicator species as to the health of eastern Oregon.
2. Different management objectives, different set of challenges, different reasons for buying forestlands. Owning land is much more complicated in eastern Oregon than some persons planned on. The culture transition in eastern Oregon has been so fast it hasn’t registered in forest policy or even within the community.

3. In the 14 years Roje has been there, now 50-60% of residents in the Ritter Valley are ex-urbanites. Many people run high-tech infrastructure businesses from their rural ranch. Major transition in the forest/ranching goals. You must have 160 acres for a landowner hunting tag, thus there is a minimum 162 acre requirement for building housing from Grant County – many landowners seek to go the route of declaring their land as agricultural instead of forestry due to classification assessments.
4. There is a bio-diverse fire-dependent ecosystem in eastern Oregon. We need the fire in our forests, but we need the right KIND of fire – liability, prescribed burns and their policy, fire protection assessments are disincentives for the strategic controlled use of fires.
5. Assessments -- The average is .10 cents per acre statewide but Roje pays \$1.81 per acre – highest insurance rate on her property. Juniper is major concern. Whole forest types are being lost to juniper invasion, eg, ponderosa pine. Other species drift due to fire suppression. More fir, less pine and larch.
6. Roje works with the Blue Mountain Forest Partners group on forest policy issues.
7. Eastern Oregon National Forests – loss of wood processing infrastructure; family forests can't keep mills going, so federal harvests are needed to sustain mills.
8. Agriculture vs. forest divide in eastern Oregon – growing concept of ‘agro-forestry’ lands where forests become a secondary priority. Engagement to the land of second generation not much a concern as the kids grow up on the ranch – imagine: What if 4-H offered Forestry as a program?
9. Emigres to the area are comfortable with the concept of hiring an expert source to consult with prior to making plans, but the pool of competent experts is not large.
10. The shifting land ownership creates an opportunity for eastern Oregon. Oregon promotes a good approach to voluntary good land stewardship.
11. There is interest in adding a landowner issues component to the Nov 2012 Board Tour in John Day. Craig Shinn will forward a list of eastern Oregon issues of focus to consider on the 2012 committee agenda. Thinking about a panel for January 2012 CFF meeting on eastern Oregon issues.
12. These problems are not new but at a crisis point where the health and productivity of all forestlands as well as the economic health of eastern Oregon communities are at risk.

G. Communication and Other Business

1. Planning forward
 - Topics to take up:
 - Ecological transfer in eastern Oregon ecosystem
 - Change in dynamic ownership goals
 - Family forests dependency on economy
 - Federal policy issues
 - Mike, Roje, Susan, Craig to organize a panel to discuss federal policy and eastside issues.
 - Fire funding and spotted owl update for Jan 18 meeting.

(CFF Minutes –continued)

2. Spring visit to Roje's property
3. Oregon Tree Farm as ex-officio member – Jim moved that CFF ask the Board of Forestry to add OTFS as an ex-officio member, but consideration was delayed to January.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m. Next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 18, 2012.