Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)

Joint Meeting – NW Oregon and SW Oregon Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees

Meeting Minutes

Special Meeting
March 3, 2011
Springfield, Oregon

Committee Members Present:

Dale Cuyler, Shaun Harkins, Tally Patton, Randy Silbernagel, Dana Kjos, Steve McNulty, Bud Long, Dan Fugate, Ken Hendrick, Mike Barnes, Jon Stewart, Brian Schlaefli (Chair SW Committee), Chris Jarmer (Chair NW Committee)

ODF Staff Present:

Marganne Allen, Kevin Weeks, Brad Knotts, Kyle Williams, Marvin Vetter, Greg Wagenblast

Invited Guests/Presenters:

Jeff Light, Plum Creek Timber; Jeremy Groom, OSU; Arne Skaugset, OSU; Maryanne Reiter, Weyerhaeuser

Public Members Present:

Gary Springer (Board of Forestry, Starker Forests), Eric Geyer (Roseburg Resources), Rex Storm (Associated Oregon Loggers)

Pursuant to public notice made by news release with statewide distribution, a special joint committee meeting of the NW Oregon and SW Oregon Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees [an advisory body to the Oregon Board of Forestry with authority established in Oregon Revised Statute 527.650] was held on Thursday March 3, 2011 at the meeting room of the ODF South Cascade District Office, 3150 Main Street in Springfield, Oregon.

The purpose of the special meeting called at request of the Chair(s) was to hear update reports on the paired-watershed studies conducted by the Watershed Research Cooperative on the Trask River in northwest Oregon, Alsea River in western Oregon and Hinkle Creek in Douglas County. A report on the ODF Private Forests Riparian Function and Stream Temperature study (RipStream) was also on the agenda.

Chair Schlaefli called the meeting to order at 9:35. Introductions of committee members were made. A time was announced for public comment, and Chair Schlaefli requested a show of hands to indicate those who wished to comment. No public comment was received.

Chair Schlaefli provided a brief review of the agenda, and advised members that he would be providing a report about the Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees to the Board of

Forestry during the March 9 meeting of the Board. The Chair provided a brief overview of the purpose of the Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees and how the Committee advises the Board of Forestry.

Chair Jarmer provided a brief overview of current legislative activity. He further requested a show of hands to indicate committee members interested in reappointment. He noted that all committee members raised hands.

Marganne Allen provided an update on Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committee membership. All positions have expired, and ODF Area Directors will be directed to recruit new members, following the procedure indicated in the ODF Directive [ODF 6-1-3-001] regarding operations of the Committee. The Directive sets the following time line for recruitment:

- May 1 – a recommended list of reappointments for review and approval by ODF's Executive Team prepared.
- May 20 – recommendations for nominations are made.
- June 15 – Responses to reappointment letters are made by Area Directors and nominations are provided to Private Forests Division Chief.
- July 15 – Nomination information and biographical information due to Division Chief.
- Sept 2011 – Nominations are submitted by Division Chief to the Board of Forestry for adoption.

Chair Jarmer advised that Mark Trenholm will be unavailable for service on the Committee.

Presentations

Arne Skaugset (Oregon State University) provided an overview of the Watershed Research Cooperative (WRC) projects: Hinkle Creek, Alsea Watershed and Trask Watershed. The WRC was chartered in 2002 to obtain funding to conduct the Hinkle Creek research project, a paired-watershed study on 4800 acres in Douglas County. A paired-watershed is a study 'standing still over time' – featuring a control watershed compared to a treated watershed. The Alsea Watershed study repeats in part the original study conducted between 1959-1973. The current study focuses on management to current Forest Practices Act standards in the Needle Branch drainage with Flynn Creek acting again as the control. Trask is considered the most complex and ambititious of the three WRC projects. Trask is the only one with mixed ownership, with subject lands owned by: Weyerhaeuser, ODF and some BLM tracts in the area.

Research has concluded at Hinkle Creek and by Sept 30, 2011 the Hinkle Creek project will shut down. The land will revert back to the owner, Roseburg Resources, for use as wood production forest.

Tally Patton made a request that all the PowerPoint presentations could be made available to the Committee.

Maryanne Reiter (Weyerhaeuser Co.) presented an overview about the Trask project. Research at Trask is scheduled to occur from 2008 until 2016, including the pre-harvest and post-harvest data collection periods. Road building is scheduled in 2011 with harvest during 2012. The Tillamook Burn fires had a tremendous effect on the 6000-acre Trask Watershed. Maryanne provided an overview of history, landscape, fish data from 2006, hydrology data and the geomorphic processes at work in the watershed. Jeremy Groom (Oregon State University) provided information about the road sediment study on the Trask project.

Maryanne continued her overview. Wildlife studies on the Trask project include invertebrate studies, migratory songbirds using US Geologic Survey funding, amphibian movement, and fish research; the budget is primarily funded by Weyerhaeuser and ODF. 2012 will serve as a pause year to permit timber harvest, and post-harvest studies are hoped to be funded during 2013-2016. Maryanne put out an offer for those who would like tours of the Trask study area to please contact her.

Chair Schlaefli recognized Jon Stewart and Rex Storm who joined the meeting in progress.

Arne Skaugset presented the Hinkle Creek case study. The Hinkle Creek area was logged in 1948; the watershed forest consists of primarily harvest regenerated Douglas-fir. Treatments in the study area occurred in 2001, 2005-6 and 2009. Arne quickly reviewed treatment statistics, stream flow data, sediment yield, and stream temperature data.

Arne provided a 'tour' of five data points along one stream reach and asked members to create a hypothesis regarding why stream temperatures changed over time. Arne showed August low flows of streams were higher following the two harvests that occurred within the reach, with flow almost doubling following the second harvest. No evidence emerged of any impacts from timber harvest to Pacific giant salamanders – harvest didn't push habitat conditions out of the acceptable range. Should be noted Pacific giant salamanders are a robust animal.

Fish data shows there was no significant die-off following harvests. No effects of upstream logging were detected on invertebrates or emerging insect measures. Two or three research papers are under development to report the findings.

Chair Schlaefli called for a break at 11:30. The meeting resumed at 11:37.

Jeff Light (Plum Creek Timber Co.) presented information about the Alsea Watershed study. The first Alsea study delivered information which was instrumental to the development of the 1971 Forest Practices Act.

Jeff noted there are five stories within the study:

- The work of the original Alsea study
- Hydrologic recovery of a watershed
- Current practices

- Detailed hydrologic process research
- Storm water delivery of herbicides

Needle Branch is a 160-acre study area. Research in the area started in 1959, looking at forestry effects on fish & water. Looking at stream data, data in 1967 showed a pronounced spike in stream temperatures a year after harvest, but by 1973 temperatures had reduced to nominal levels. Sediment response: heavy sedimentation occurred during the first 3 years after logging/burning but by early 1970s had returned to near calibration level. Fish response data - Juvenile coho showed no long term shifts in density beyond natural variation levels as a result of timber harvest. Trout numbers returned to near pre-harvest levels but older cutthroat have continued to decline post-harvest. In the control watershed [Flynn Creek], levels were fairly consistent but in Needle Branch, larger numbers of cutthroat were found post-harvest – data under analysis right now, no conclusions at this point. Additional data sampling is needed. One study tested the hypothesis that trees serve as 'straws' during the day then release water at night; post-harvest data says 'No'. Similar findings were found in the Trask and Hinkle Creek studies.

Herbicides were applied and studied in Needle Branch. In August 2010, six chemical agents were applied. About 1,200 water samples were collected and frozen for analysis; samples are being processed at an ongoing basis at National Council for Air and Stream Improvement. Next steps in Alsea: continue monitoring, second harvest in 2014 and woody-debris placement in first harvest area.

A question was asked on why fish population increased post-harvest. Jeff offered that increased stream flow led to more fish. Jeff noted that fish electronic tracking [PIT] tags were found in mink feces, indicating that mink and otter often treat a stream with abundant fish as a 'buffet line.' He offered that may factor into the fish population data.

Jeremy Groom provided a presentation about the ODF Private Forests Riparian Function and Stream Temperature study (RipStream). RipStream started in 2002; project study area is 33 sites (18 private land, 15 State Forest) on medium and small Type F [fish-bearing] streams. Main objective – evaluate the effectiveness of forest practices rules/strategies at protecting stream temperatures and promoting riparian structure. RipStream looks at a stream reach scale, not a paired watershed study, for two years pre-harvest and five years post-harvest. All sites have complete pre-harvest and five years post-harvest data for stream temperature, channel and shade. Riparian vegetation data collection pre-harvest through three years post-harvest is complete. One-third of sites have complete riparian data sets through 5-years post-harvest.

Basic findings from the study regarding Department of Environmental Quality numeric and protecting cold water (PCW) temperature standards – on the question were streams temperatures raised about 16 or 18 C (numeric standards)? Not really; that occurred in only 2 of 33 sites. Question: Were streams warmed by more than > 0.3 degree (PCW standard)? – In some cases, yes, on private land sites but not State Forest streams. The study design (before-after-control-impact) helped to distinguish between warming associated with treatment effects

versus background noise. Private sites have about a 40 percent probability of exceeded the 0.3 degree PCW standard. State Forest sites were indistinguishable from background exceedance rates (~5% probability).

Conclusions – Regarding the regulatory Numeric Criteria standard – looks OK. The Percent Cold Water (PCW) in general there was a 40% probability of exceeding the PCW standard at least once on private lands. Private forest sites had an average temperature increase of 0.7 degree C, and ranged in observed changes from -1 degree to more than 2 degrees C. What factors affected shade: Greater basal area was associated with higher shade levels. An unexpected finding was an association between taller trees and lower shade levels. This outcome may have been affected by the December 2007 storm and blowdown.

Next steps for RipStream: complete and publish current analyses, next analysis is five years post-harvest with available data – asking questions such as did temperature patterns remain, did shade recover, a more detailed examination of vegetation and shade. Communicate those findings.

One concern posed by Jeremy Groom is how broad landscape regulatory conclusions could be drawn from this one study given the DEQ parameters. No consensus on how to interpret and what you do with this data. Many subjective or regulatory scope questions emerge from this.

A research paper on the PCW standard finding has been issued and two other research papers are in production. A grant from the EPA will assist with providing analysis of the five year post-harvest data.

Chair Schlaefli asked about what would be communicated to the Board in September 2011 about the project. Jeremy responded that preliminary findings would be shared in the Board report. Chair Schlaefli expressed concerns over prelimary findings being presented in a regulatory setting where early conclusions could be used to drive a policy decision.

Some discussion occurred on if preliminary findings should be publically released. Tally Patton expressed a concern that the report in September should focus on 'here's what we know right now' and not delve in to other issues. Jeremy Groom advised that clear data does show that a decrease in forest shade on private sites, changes in basal area and tree height figures in to stream temperatures, with a caution that the data is only there immediately post harvest and not long-term post-harvest. Having data for five years post-harvest would tell a richer story for research.

Dan Fugate asked if both the private land and State Forest sites were sampled at the same times, noting that drought years would figure in. Jeremy noted that all studies were started consistently in 2002 and 2003. Marganne Allen said that there were some variations – surrounding harvests, for instance, but sampling overlap covered that concern. Pre-harvest data is complete, and three-year post-harvest data is complete. Only 10 sites have received a full five-year post-harvest study.

Chair Jarmer noted that a key message could be drawn that 16 percent of the time, warming will occur on private lands. Some discussion occurred regarding the nature and applicability of the DEQ water standard.

Chair Schlaefli discussed concerns that the Forest Practices Act could be moving towards revision soon from potential legislative interests and bills being heard in the 2011 Legislature. The Chair reviewed the statutory scope of the Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees and its role. Chair expressed his appreciation for the presentations and providing education about watershed issues to the committee members.

Chair Jarmer requested to call a date for another meeting. He let members of the NW Oregon Committee know to expect a June meeting, dates for which would be sent out as a Doodle poll soon. There was discussion on if the Regional committees should meet together. Chair Schlaefli expressed an interest to have the NW Oregon and SW Oregon Committees meet jointly until further notice. Chair Jarmer requests if you know you do not want to be reappointed, contact Brian, Chris or Marganne.

Gary Springer expressed his thanks for the Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees doing their important work. Bud Long expressed concerns over the field stewardship forester staff cuts at ODF, and how industrial landowners may be made vulnerable by not having ODF staff in the woods.

Chair Schlaefli entertained a call for any new business of the committee(s). There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.

/s/
Kevin Weeks
Committee Assistant
Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees

March 11, 2011