

Draft

Oregon State Stewardship Coordinating Committee

Minutes for February 27, 2018 - Oregon Dept. of Forestry, 2600 State Street, Salem, OR
Tillamook Room, Building C

Members in Attendance:

Jim James, OSWA
Jim Johnson, OSU Extension
Dick Courter
Gary Jensen, SWD
Clint Benson, Private
landowner
Owen Wozniak, Trust for
Public Lands
Kelley Beamer, COLT
CalLee Davenport, USF&W

ODF Staff:

Amy Singh, Forest Legacy Program
Thomas Whittington, Incentives Field Coord.
Josh Barnard, Field Support Manager
Susan Dominique, Admin. Support

Guests:

Claire Klock, Clackamas SWCD

Absent:

Morgan Holen, OR Community Trees
Clint Bentz, Private Forestland Owner
Rod Krahmer, ODFW
Karl Dalla Rosa, USFS
Jon Weck
Taylor Murray
Eric Hartstein
Scott Hayes
Dan Logan
Seth Barnes

14:00 Call to Order, Introductions, and Public Comment

Tucker called the meeting to order and called for roundtable introductions. There wasn't any public comment offered.

14:10 Review & Approval of November 2017 Meeting Minutes

All members had been given the draft November 2017 Minutes for review. Tucker asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes and noted that the November meeting was just informational mostly focused on the history of the Committee, USFS S&P Funding and the nexus with NRCS. There wasn't an official quorum present but minutes were taken for the sake of posterity.

Jim Johnson motioned for the minutes to be approved as presented.

14:15 ODF Updates – Private Forests Division – Lena Tucker, Private Forests Division Chief

Tucker began with current events. She reported that the staff were working towards an upcoming Board of Forestry meeting on March 7th as the Division has a plethora of topics on the Board's agenda. First and foremost is the final bit of information for the Board on the upcoming monitoring project. The Board will be considering a decision on Private Forest's monitoring priorities. The staff was to provide back Options to the Board, as well as their recommendations for monitoring projects or rule analysis in either Eastern Oregon or the Siskiyou geographic regions or both. After an extensive stakeholder outreach for the last year they came to the conclusion that basically it came down to a couple of options for the Board.

The first option is for them to stay the course with our original monitoring strategy which focuses on Compliance Monitoring and a robust overhaul of our Forest Practices Act Compliance Audit. The second to do a smaller change to what we are currently monitoring and spend more time and energy looking towards a Siskiyou Monitoring project.

Staff is planning to recommend that the Board go with starting a Siskiyou Monitoring Study. The options for monitoring question that will direct the process was framed up for them. A project would start with a Literature Review, which was one of the larger tasks the Board set into motion a little over a year ago.

Other topics from our Division in front of the Board will be a 2016 Compliance Audit Report as our September 2017 meeting was cut short during fire season. (And that's typically when we provide our normal monitoring updates to the Board of Forestry.) As well as updating on the other Monitoring projects in action. Mike Cloughesy is on the agenda from OFRI to share the new unveiling of the third edition of the Illustrated Guide to the Forest Practices Act. The BOF meeting will also celebrate and recognize the 2017 Operators of the Year.

The ODF&W, the Wildlife Commission did choose to up list the Marbled Murrelet. That decision will have repercussions for our State Forests Program as we are a State landowning Agency. At this time, the up listing has no direct effect on private landowners. However, the decision has been made and information about survival management guidelines has come forth. It's a point of information that our BOF has to be aware of. Our Board of Forestry is engaged in a rule analysis project for the Marbled Murrelet under the FPA. We are on the agenda for the Board of Forestry's April meeting to present the Technical Report for the Marbled Murrelet. She believed it would still be a ways out for getting into the meat of the rulemaking process. Staff have a lot of time to take a look at the research; do a Technical Review of the species and talk about different actions before the Board. She reiterated what Peter Daugherty had said earlier at the CFF meeting that the Department is looking for local grassroots solutions and landowner involvement. So members should anticipate any other pathways that the Board could consider instead of regulatory action. So she wants staff to engage with the landowner community on potential voluntary measures and other incentive programs such as Stewardship Agreements or Safe Harbor Agreements which will make for some interesting discussions over the next 24 months for that topic.

She reported that the Short Legislative session should be coming to a close at the end of this week. They have been fairly busy downtown having discussions mostly around the fire program and fire funding. They will go before the E-Board or the Ways and Means to solidify the rest of our funding from last year's fire season and don't anticipate any issues with that. Potentially they were hoping for some opportunities to gain back the eastside rate relief funding that was lost during the last legislative session. And add some additional funding for Sudden Oak Death treatments down in Southwestern Oregon.

Abraham wanted to add an update from the Logging Conference. And several folks from the Division participated in the Conference and gave presentations on pertinent topics. Lena presented. Josh Barnard, Jennifer Weikel, Paul Clements, and one of our Stewardship Foresters from Columbia City, John Klause also presented on the SSBT implementation.

Tucker then provided some quick updates from Ryan Gordon. This is typically the time of year where the Agency gets indication from our Federal partners, the USFS State & Private Program about the initial allocations for our 2018 grants that basically support our landowner assistance programs and our forest health program. As expected, the numbers are down anticipating the next round of funding. The Forest Stewardship Program actually took a pretty significant hit. But with careful internal management of funds, we always have a glide down path if funding starts fading so we can absorb the funding change for a little bit of time. Sometimes more funding comes back into play, especially as we get towards the end of their federal fiscal year. She expressed concern for the Stewardship program. Losing funding in that program obviously reduces the amount of cost-share funding available for Stewardship plans, cost-sharing in those and also contributions to our partners. By in

large, we try to use the funding for our Stewardship Foresters to allow them to do the one-on-one technical assistance in the field. But, the novel is not complete on federal appropriations so, we'll continue to update you as we get more information on it. We do and have spent time informing the Oregon delegation on the benefits of these USFS State & Private Programs for all Oregonians, especially landowners. They are working on a statewide response or Letter of Support for the Farm Bill programs as well.

Continuing, she reported that most members have probably heard that our NRCS Statewide Agreement has evolved to become our primary means of providing the Technical Assistance and information on financial assistance to private landowners. Thomas Whittington (present at the meeting) is going to be serving in the capacity as the NRCS State Conservation Forester! Misty Seaboldt, a wonderful member of this Committee moved on to a different opportunity with NRCS in Washington, which left her slot vacant. Due to the Federal hiring freezes, NRCS cannot fill that position. So, they looked at ODF and asked if we perhaps could find somebody to fit into that seat and work with their forestry programs till they have the ability to hire. So we see this as a huge opportunity to really solidify the partnership between ODF and NRCS. Thomas will have the 'inside scoop' and get to learn a little bit more about their policies and processes and procedures. They were keenly interested in Thomas' field experience and ability to go teach their NRCS folks in the field about forestry, forest management.

Tucker asked for an update on the Uniform Plan from Whittington. He shared that there is going to be a new website. A comprehensive place to go for all forest management tools and resources. The goal is to have the big launch at Clackamas Tree School. March 24th. The site is up and live but just not done.

<http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/forestplanning/> It was not quite finished on the day of the meeting but the majority of it is there and available. He went on to report that the Oregon Forest Management Guidance Template that we updated last year is all going to be there as well.

14:30 Federal Funding Updates / Forest Stewardship Program – Amy Singh

Singh: Thanks Lena. I'm going to give an update on budgeting for Forest Legacy from the Washington, D.C. office that Karl Dalla Rosa had forwarded on to me since they weren't going to be present today. And they...one of the themes that I'm feeling like we are experiencing every time we ramp up for another Call for Projects and it's the increasing uncertainty and unknowns as we look to seek new applications downplaying the existing unknowns from previous years. So, just to jog everybody's memory on where we are at, we're obviously still waiting on an '18 Budget. Forest Service will never able to officially present us with their list of projects that are in line to receive funding because the essential funding levels of Forest Legacy will zero out. So that did come up through come other avenues and the House and Senate markups are showing that that is unlikely to be the case but, traditionally when they when the Budget is released in February, it has a list of the ranked projects that are in line to receive funding and then with that level of funding would be then partners start to do some strategizing it and some crystal ball meetings about what that will look like at that funding level, and what it will be.

So for 2018 our main focus for that year was the Hood River Project. We have heard that it is on the list, that hasn't been officially released. That Project was ranked in at #9 for a total funding level of \$3.8 million dollars. And that's a large conservation easement project where we intend to essentially grab as many acres of the appraisal and funding level... somewhere in the 5000 to 10,000 acres estimate for what they are eventually... What was shared with me from on the budget, it is actually looking like there is a likelihood that when the Budget agreement is finally reached that funding levels for Forest Legacy may actually increase from what they were in 2017.

2017 was just over \$52 million dollars. And that has to do with Land and Water Conservation Fund and mandatory funding and...it gets complicated if you don't follow it but it looks like they are raising the cap for '18 and '19. So that's...the Hood River Project is looking pretty likely that we will receive some funding when the Budget agreement is ultimately made. ...I think there are still a lot of unknowns but the signs are looking good. And for 2019, so we submitted two projects last year again the Hood River Project. And we did that as a Phase II and then we submitted the Arch Cape Project which was a new project last year. It's a requisition for the Arch Cape Water District. We got a call from the town and they met in January asking questions about funding. And what we would do if they were granted funding for the Hood River Project. That typically is a sign that they are high up on the list, they are wondering what that would look like? They didn't have any questions on the Arch Cape Project so does that mean that it didn't get funded? Potentially, it could mean that the ask is small enough that they didn't have any questions. They are usually asking questions around Phasing. So, we have two years of unknowns that we are still trying to get projects for and we are now ramping up to the 2020 cycle. So, historically we want to encourage the Committee to seek a blessing I guess, on doing a Call for Projects. The process for a Call for Projects does involve limited partners or organizations to submit a Letter of Interest, then share with the Committee those potential projects. And then the Committee those Letters of Interest to pick projects that we would receive a full application from. And then projects are then evaluated and project proponents come before the Committee and share with you the attributes of the project that they are seeking to get funded. And ultimately we can submit up to three projects for funding. So Hood River will need to apply. Arch Cape, if there is nothing that has shifted that I have been made aware of that would indicate that the project is no longer viable. And then I've also gotten calls from other potential interested parties. Some that were just looking for more information. And then some that have partnered with land use organizations or land conservation, partnering with essential applicants. There may be a little bit more..than on their project. So one of the things I have working on in the last couple of cycles is, trying to create an application process that melds as much as possible with the Forest Service process. Just to refresh people, the time and energy in that it is a really positive program and the application process can be pretty intense. We don't want people to spend their time so last year we did Letters of Interest starting to look a lot more like the ultimate application rather than just a letter that opens the project. And of course,... more like the Forest Service uses to ultimately score each project is what we are scoring on at the State level. So, with that said, I wanted to open it up for any comments or recommendations from your point of view having been a part of this process for many years. How we can continue to have a good competitive process that results in good projects and then is efficient and effective use of people's time. So if there are any thoughts or shifts that we should make when looking forward to 2020 I'd love to hear anything you have.

Tucker: Ideas? Thoughts for Amy on the process looking forward?

James: I have always appreciated...

Beamer: Amy this is Kelley from Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts. If I was following you correctly, I didn't hear any observations from your end. That you are suggesting or problems to change?

Singh: One of the biggest hurdles is that we do our process, I think we need to do our process much earlier and the Forest Service is starting to push their Call for Projects much later and it really is condensing our time frame. So I think the last two cycles, our deadlines ultimately, when the Forest Service finally issues their deadline, we have to change what our deadlines were. Because we were saying final products need to be coming from partners after the Forest Service deadline came about. So, one of the shifts I did last year that I'm going to do even more this year is to push the timelines earlier. And have them more in the summer and less in the fall. And the other thing that is on my radar is, we haven't got many check points with the Stewardship Committee to go through this process. And the last couple of times that we've gone through this process there was, so we didn't have enough people to have a quorum. We need recommendations and them to say go. And that's how we kind of manage all the check-ins that we do, is we'll come back to the Committee and we ask for the applicants.

Tucker: So, Jim James had a comment.

James: I'm just going to comment and you were asking for some input, and I appreciate the fact that somebody else does all the heavy lifting! And all we are required to do is do an evaluation. Which is all I feel capable of doing. So, from my perspective the way it's worked in the past, has worked well for me as a member of the Committee. And I don't see any reason to change that.

Beamer: And this is Kelley from COLT. I appreciate, its great to have you, Amy, as a leader in the process. And the most valuable part is the sharing from applicants when they come in and do a presentation. My memory is the only point that got sticky for us was trying to figure out if you have two strong proposals and that guessing game about how much should we recommend something going forward between the two projects. Its hard to prioritize, and which is the leading one. There's a lot of just taking a stab at trying to guess what's likely to be funded versus what really could be funded. But I don't think that is a timeline issue. I guess I would refer to you if there are suggestions you'd make that would make it easier for you and I would want to support that.

James: Sometimes its difficult for all of us to get to Salem for a meeting. But I know we did a conference call one time and so I would suggest it sounds to me that we need more frequent meetings. Particularly, if the timeline changes and it could be a tight timeline to meet. But if you use conference calls that may be an effective way to get a quorum.

Singh: That's one of the things I do have down and we've talked about the meetings is that, just making it a shorter meeting where we are just reviewing what the letters are, what projects are coming in. That is probably most of our discussion that could easily be handled by a conference call rather than setting up a entire meeting just to work through that. And it doesn't meld well with regularly scheduled meetings.

James: My sense is the one that does need to meet face-to-face is when they make their presentation. But my sense is everything else could be handled over the phone.

Singh: Well, great if that process works for you and the activity that you guys are engaged in, that feels like the right amount, that's hopeful. So, do we need an official recommendation to do a

conference call, or do we want to talk about any cause for concern about holding an application cycle for 2020 projects and opening that up to seek new applicants?

Tucker: I think what I would look for is an affirmation from the group that are on the phone and in the room to having to go forth and release a Call for Applications and seek Letters of Interest unless you have objections to moving forward? Kind of a difficult part of the business for this Committee. Everybody in favor of sending Amy on her way to do good things?

Courter: Absolutely.

James: Yes.

Wozniak: Yes, definitely.

Singh: So I will go and do that request. Moving the topic forward, so, to meld into the next topic, let me know what works on the 2018 dates, based on what I thinking of the next check-in being around the end of May. My draft timeline that I would put forward would have Letters of Interest to ODF on May 15 and then May 30th could be a conference call. That may be close to a holiday,

Tucker: Memorial Day is the 28th.

James: That shouldn't preclude other days that week, should it?

Tucker: So you are suggesting maybe May 30th or 31st for a conference call? Is that what you are looking for?

Singh: That's what I am suggesting, yep. Of those that are present, do those days match up?

Wozniak: That works for me.

Beamer: This is Kelley, those days work for me.

Barnard: And to clarify, I heard a couple of questions here in the room, you would have some of that information. The Call for Projects due to you on the 15th and the meeting would be on the 30th? Is that correct?

Singh: Yep.

Jensen: Looking at Wednesday, May 30th in the morning or afternoon?

James: I like early morning calls. And then you can have the rest of your day for something else instead of waiting around for a call in the afternoon.

Tucker: Amy, does something around 9:00 work with your schedule?

Singh: Yes.

Tucker: So folks let's shoot for May 30th which is a Wednesday at 9:00 am for a conference call? And we'll get this information out to the group and on your calendars with a good conference

call number that works. I know this one worked! Can't guarantee it will work next time. Phones are funny that way. Amy, any other dates looking out there that you need to schedule? Or just getting through May okay for now?

Singh: Yeah, I'd like looking at the, from the meeting in which the applicants present to us, I'd like to get that date solidified so that I can share that with them. Just blocking that out on my calendar and have that date known. And like I mentioned before... my hope would be early August for that meeting? I don't know if there are any other OTAC or CFF meetings that we want to try to coincide with or just, this one does tend to be a longer meeting because each applicant comes to present. I want to limit them to a reasonable amount of time. But also we have to have some really good rich dialog where changes to the application come out of those discussions. But we might want to do that as a stand alone meeting.

Tucker: So we don't have any other meetings typically scheduled for August, so Amy, you are kind of wide open on that.

Singh: Alright, so the date that I have written down, how does the August 8th work for people?

(Members present agreed.)

Tucker: When the calendar is empty we get you hooked up! Why don't we shoot for 8/8/18? And we'll do an in-person meeting. Amy do you want to shoot for starting in the morning?

Singh: Yeah, I would say 10 or 11 depending on other topics. Then we could do all of the presentations after lunch or before lunch depending on how we do that? I think we usually started them at 10 or 10:30? We could also adjust that time depending on how many letters of interest we get in. I mentioned before we can...we can look at up to 6 in that process that we will take up to 6 for that full process which then we would hear from 6 applicants. If we only have 2, you know, it can be a quicker meeting, if 6 that might take us more time.

Tucker: Okay, so why don't we place a hold on our calendars for August 8th say, 10 to 3ish and obviously we will know more on the numbers of applicants once we have our May conference call and we can adjust accordingly.

Singh: Great, so those are the two dates that are the two meetings that I wanted to get written down. Applicants will just need coordination between me and the applicants as they come through and as we know more what the Federal timelines when I have that information.

Tucker: Okay. Anything else, Amy, that you need from this group? Or other bits of information to share?

Singh: No, I think it covers everything I've got on my list. Unless anybody has any questions on the...

Wozniak: Amy, this is Owen Wozniak, this is actually totally off topic but I wanted to check in regarding the Community Forest Program. If you could give us, I wanted to remind myself of what the status of that is. And when the solicitations for that as well?

Singh: So that program is different from Forest Legacy in how they do funding and calls for projects. Forest Legacy they approve the projects before they know the funding level. And then they submit to Congress what the project list is. And then they know how many projects they are going to fund. The Community Forest Program gets written in for however many dollars will be allocated to that program for a given year and then the Forest Service completes that call for projects so they haven't announced anything related to '18 or '19 because we are not there yet. There's no budget just like Forest Legacy that program runs zeroed out and....anything will be put towards that program.

Wozniak: Okay thank you for that. So we have to wait on their progress before we know what might happen with that.

Singh: Yes, absolutely.

Tucker: Any other topics for this group? Questions? Comments? While we have some time together? If not, I can give you back some of the sunny afternoon! Alright.

Davenport: Sorry, I joined later so I didn't get much of the call earlier, so I just wanted to let you know I was here! Better late than later, I had another meeting I had to attend. Are there any upcoming dates set for Forest Legacy?

Tucker: So, the group decided getting together via a conference call on May 30th at 9:00 am that will be to review the Letters of Interest from applicants for the 2020 Legacy call for projects. And then a face-to-face meeting for August 8th around 10ish. And this will be face-to-face meeting here in Salem where the applicants will actually come and present their project proposals for the group. And we can adjust the timing, again depending on how many letters of interest we receive. So those are the two key dates for items of business for Legacy for this Committee.

Davenport: So just to recap, May 30th 9:00 call and August?

Tucker: August 8th. And we will get the dates and info out to the group via email and Outlook calendar invites if you use that. And if we don't have any other items of business, I am happy to give you back the rest of your afternoon. Thank you for those on the phone for hanging in there. Trying to make efficient use of everyone's time.

Adjourned.

Invite USFS representatives, if available, to join this conversation. Lena could also provide some perspective from her interactions with NASF and the discussions we've had stemming from the Forest Stewardship Program National Conference in New York.

The USFS State and Private Program released initial allocations for our 2018 grants that support forest health and landowner assistance programs. By and large the numbers are down, with a significant hit to the Forest Stewardship Program. Because of the way we manage these funds internally, we have the opportunity to ramp down, but the reductions will impact our ability to provide cost share to landowners and support other partner efforts. As Congress works through various appropriations, it is possible additional funds will come. Internally, ODF continues efforts to inform the Oregon delegation about the value of these programs for Oregonians. We also continue efforts related to the Farm Bill.

The NRCS Statewide Agreement continues to evolve as our primary means of providing both technical and financial assistance to NIPF landowners. Through that Agreement, Thomas Whittington will be serving in a developmental capacity as the NRCS State Conservation Forester. This is a great opportunity for us to help support NRCS and build the partnership around forestry assistance.

A very active group, led by Thomas Whittington and Lauren Grand, has continued work on the Uniform Plan. Of greatest note, they've launched an updated Website for the Oregon Forest Management Planning System that should be fully functional by the Clackamas Tree School on March 24.

14:45 Forest Legacy Program Updates & 2020 Call for Applications – Timelines

Amy will lead this discussion.

15:10 2018 SSCC Meeting Dates

Again, I think the Forest Legacy Program should drive the meeting dates, as that's the Committee's core business. We can look for opportunities to align with CFF or OTAC, as appropriate. In respect of the group's time, my preference would be to keep the SSCC meetings brief and try to schedule them in concert with other meetings/events of interest. Perhaps we try to schedule a joint CFF-SSCC meeting in the fall?

15:20

Other Topics?

Are there any other topics that need to be discussed today? Are there any topics the Committee would like to learn more about at future meetings? Final thoughts about scheduling and overlap with OTAC of CFF?

15:30

Adjourn

Reminder about the next meeting date!