



**DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL
RESOURCES**

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MEMORANDUM

December 28, 2021

TO: TFW Policy Committee

FROM: Saboor Jawad, Adaptive Management Program Administrator *asj*

SUBJECT: CMER Review of SFLO Template Proposal Scientific Justification

In a memo dated 22 October 2021, the Adaptive Management Program Administrator (AMPA) and Co-Chairs of the Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Committee (CMER) delivered to Policy an update on CMER review of the Small Forest Landowner template proposal initiation scientific justification (SJ). The memo also stated that CMER determined the most appropriate next step was to deliver to Policy two position papers as the outcome of CMER review. The memo had referenced but not included a letter from a group of CMER members indicating their intent to disengage from the workgroup tasked with the review of the SJ. That letter is now attached to this memo.

The following important aspects of the SJ review by CMER remain noteworthy:

- 1- The SJ and supporting documents are non-CMER completed outside science documents. The Dispute Resolution process in CMER doesn't necessarily extend to non-CMER science or completed outside science. Forest Practices Board (FPB) Manual Section 22 guides the application of dispute resolution on any item of the Adaptive Management Program (AMP) that would stop an AMP project or recommendation from moving forward to the next step. The SJ didn't stop any CMER project or recommendation from moving forward. The Board Manual does, however, clarify that both Policy and the FPB can ask CMER to review outside science. No further clarity exists on what the review entails or if the review would be considered an AMP project.
- 2- The position papers that Policy received are not the final outcome of a dispute process in CMER. The dispute process was never completed in CMER because of the lack of process

clarity on completed outside science. Furthermore, CMER's Protocols and Standards Manual (PSM) doesn't currently have a set template for position papers. Instead, it emphasizes that a position paper should clearly articulate interpretation of issues, questions and positions. Policy has now received position papers that aren't necessarily discussing the same issues or focusing on the same review documents.

- 3- Policy requested CMER to answer the six questions from successful Policy/CMER interaction framework¹ for the SJ. The six questions are relevant mostly to CMER completed studies. This format doesn't appear to be helpful in reviewing non-CMER science or completed outside science.

These points are relevant for Policy to consider when determining whether Policy's original request to CMER was fulfilled. Further clarity on the role of completed outside science would be necessary to avoid seemingly unresolvable disputes in CMER. Additionally, a Policy discussion on framing appropriate review questions for CMER would also be extremely helpful in focusing CMER efforts.

Attachments:

- 1 – Notice of Intent to Discontinue Participation in the SFLO 6-Questions Working Group

¹ Forest Practices Board Manual Section 22 Appendix B Framework For Successful Policy/CMER Interaction and Table 1. Questions leading to a Policy adaptive management recommendation to the Forest Practices Board

8 July 2021

To: Harry Bell, Joe Murray, Jenny Knoth

Cc: Chris Mendoza, Eszter Munes

From: Todd Baldwin (Kalispel Tribe), Patrick Lizon (DOE), Debbie Kay (Suquamish Tribe), Ash Roorbach (NWIFC), Aimee McIntyre (WDFW)

Subject: Notice of Intent to Discontinue Participation in the SFLO 6-Questions Working Group

The above members of CMER and the Adaptive Management Program met on July 6th to discuss the progress made since Harry Bell (WFFA) invoked the Dispute Resolution Process in January 2021 on the 6-questions document for the SFLO Template Proposal Scientific Justification (SJ). Several topics were discussed including the CMER process, working group progress the Dispute, best available science, and the best avenue to move forward with the 6-questions document. Regretfully, this group concluded that all reasonable attempts to reach consensus on the document have been exhausted and that additional efforts will not be productive or result in consensus of the 6-questions document.

The CMER protocols and standards (P&S) that guide the development of CMER research provides a consistent and reliable set of guidelines for reaching consensus. However, the SJ did not follow our process, nor does it meet a similar process as non-CMER science (See CMER review of non-CMER science, 2013), which has created several stumbling blocks for successfully reaching consensus. The “Guided Decision Making Process” outlined in the P&S, which includes direction in Board Manual Section 22, was followed after Harry invoked Dispute Resolution on January 25th, 2021. Per these guidelines, members met to attempt to resolve the Dispute and agreed to a recommended direction made by one of the members. After almost 6-months, very little progress has been made towards that agreed to direction. This effort follows an additional 4-months of biweekly meetings attempting to reach agreement on the answers to 6-questions in response to TFW Policy’s initial request, which resulted in two separate versions of the answers to 6-questions and a memo highlighting major differences among CMER members.

From our perspective, the SJ does not meet CMER’s Best Available Science (BAS) standard and if the CMER process would have been followed from the start, what constitutes BAS would have been agreed on and adhered to prior to development of the SJ. Based on working group meetings up to this point, we decided that we are too far apart on what WFFA and the SJ believe is BAS, and what we think constitutes BAS to ever reach consensus.

We appreciate that the development of the SFLO Template Proposal represents a substantial effort and did our best to work collaboratively to develop a product upon which we could all agree. However, having reached this crossroad, we request advancing this letter to CMER and recommend returning to working on the memo, developed by the CMER co-chairs dated December 7th, 2020, that summarizes these differences. With input from CMER, the memo would inform Policy of the key issues that kept us from reaching consensus so they can determine the best path forward.

Sincerely,

Concerned Members of the AMP