



**DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

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MEMORANDUM

July 26, 2017

TO: Forest Practices Board

FROM: Donelle Mahan, Forest Practices Assistant Division Manager, Operations
Forest Practices Division

SUBJECT: Board Manual Section 16 Implementation

Board Member Swedeen, at the May 2017 Forest Practices Board meeting requested an update at the August 2017 Board meeting on the adequacy of the content contained in Board Manual Section 16, which was approved May 2016. She wanted to know how the manual is being implemented and whether clearer instructions are needed.

Per Board Member Swedeen's request, I contacted Washington Forest Protection Association's Doug Hooks and Washington Farms and Forests Association's Steve Barnowe-Meyer to acquire the information from their members as well as the landowner company's qualified experts (QE) or consulting qualified experts. I have also provided information per DNR's QEs per the May 2017 Forest Practices Board presentation on implementation of Board Manual Section 16 which Board Member Stanley requested at the February 2016 board meeting.

Washington Forest Protection Association

Landowner Qualified Experts:

- The QEs felt like the board manual was an improvement. They appreciated the clarity in terminology that occurred between the original and final Board Manual. It reads much better as well.
- Two QEs believe the required additional information per the board manual language would increase their liability and discontinued offering this service.
- Some QEs believe requests for information by DNR which do not apply to their specific proposal adds additional unnecessary costs.
- Two QEs mentioned some of the additional information requests could be explained by a lack of DNR experience; new staff.
- A lot of variability in what is considered near or adjacent (around).
- A lot of the quests for information have been quantitative.

Landowners:

- Landowners are working through the strains of the new information fairly well.
- Timeliness in the review of additional information requested by DNR in the 30-day FPA approval timeframe is difficult to meet. Perhaps there should be some kind of consideration for extending the time period for decisions when additional information is needed, so the forced withdrawal or disapproval is not necessary.

- FP foresters seem to have lost all discretion on making the final decision.
- There seems to be hypersensitivity to the landslide hazard zonation (LHZ) maps.

Washington Farm Forestry Association

Small Forest landowners:

- Small forest landowners (SFL) have very little understanding of the content and details within Board Manual 16.
- The term "around" (as in 'potentially unstable slopes or landforms in or around planned operations area') needs clarification.
- Technical assistance to SFLs envisioned in Forests and Fish for unstable steep slope delineation needs to be fully funded / reinstated.
- Unstable slopes aren't a big issue with SFLs overall.
- "The avoidance strategy used by industry doesn't work for SFLs."

DNR:

Qualified Experts

- Overall implementation of Board Manual Section 16 is working well with landowners.
 - There have been questions regarding in or around.
 - How much a private forester can do vs. hiring a licensed engineering geologist?
- Many landowners implement harvest plans which avoid operation in or around potentially unstable slopes.

The Forest Practices Division Operations Section and Policy and Services section are taking all the provided comments into consideration and will provide additional clarification through training, Regional Timber, Fish and Wildlife meetings, small forest landowner field days and coached planning, and updating the on-line version of the Forest Practices Illustrated.

Prior to receipt of these comments, the Forest Practices program understood the small forest landowners were having difficulty understanding unstable slopes concepts. As part of our revised Forest Practices Illustrated, we added a section which explains unstable slopes in layperson terms.