

Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes
June 25, 2014

In attendance: Vic Musselman, Phil Hess (by phone), Terry Jackson, Mark Hicks, Jeffrey Thomas, Boyd Wilson, Doug Hooks, Tami Miketa, Tammie Perreault (by phone), Marc Engel

Vic started the meeting by introducing Boyd Wilson, the new President of the Washington Farm Forestry Association. The Committee members then introduced themselves to Boyd.

Committee reviewed the SFLAC meeting notes from April 24, 2014. Vic mentioned that he likes the meeting notes in a bulleted format. They are easier to read and can be transcribed faster from the audio recorder.

Question came up if anyone heard about a new state committee working on fish passage. This is the Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board that was established through legislation this past session. This Board is chaired by a WDFW staff person and is composed of representatives of the WSDOT, cities, counties, the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, tribal governments, and the Department of Natural Resources. The Board is charged with identifying and expediting the removal of fish passage barriers, making recommendations about proposed funding mechanisms and methodologies, and ensuring that barrier removals are consistent with other state salmon recovery efforts. Chris Hanlon-Meyer is the representative for the Dept. of Natural Resources. This Board should not affect the FFFPP or its priorities as they are identified in statute, however, other fish passage activities may compliment, and may be coordinated with FFFPP projects.

Parking Passes – the Committee asked if parking passes can be scanned a few days before the meeting and emailed to the members. Tami will look in to this.

Presentation on Forest Stewardship Funding

Steve Gibbs, Manager of the Forest Stewardship Program discussed program funding.

- From 1990-2003 funding was 50% state and 50% federal.
- In 2003 all state funding stopped to the Forest Stewardship Program.
- Fortunately the Forest Service still provided funding for forest health and fire hazard reduction which supported Stewardship Foresters in Eastern WA. In 2009 state funding for the Forest Stewardship Program was completely eliminated along with funding for the majority of the Small Forest Landowner Office staff. No Forest Stewardship Foresters remained in western WA.
- Eastern WA has been funded through the Forest Service grants for forest health activities as well as through federal Competitive Grants which has kept staff afloat.
- In 2010, federal Forest Stewardship dollars helped fund one Stewardship Forester in western WA, along with funding through WSU Extension, and a small amount of funding from counties.
- In 2012, another western WA Stewardship Forester was hired from funding through the Forest and Fish Support Account.
- There is currently no state funding provided to the Forest Stewardship Program.
- This year's funding for the Forest Stewardship Program is down from an allotment of \$250,000 last year to an allotment of \$225,500 this year. There has been a steady decrease in funding each year from the Forest Service, with this year marking the

largest single decrease DNR has seen. This \$225,500 funds the Forest Stewardship Manager, the statewide Stewardship Wildlife Biologist, and a portion of the South Puget Sound/Southwest WA Stewardship forester. There is no federal Forest Stewardship Program funding in eastern WA.

Overview of Landowner Assistance/Forest Stewardship Program

Julie Sackett, SW WA Landowner Assistance Forester, discussed some of the concerns/issues facing small forest landowners. Julie covers 10 counties in SW WA. Julie averages 3 landowner visits per week and is booked out through September. There is a huge demand for her technical expertise. She is finding that

- About 80% of the landowners she visits have no background in forestry.
- Landowners want to be good stewards of their land.
- Typical need is to help with management plans but landowners have no information about what is needed and how to obtain this information.
- Julie typically spends about 3 hours on site, on average, with the landowner and then another 3 hours in the office with write-ups and recommendations.
- There is not enough support for what landowners need to manage their land.
- Most landowners are hands-on folks and want to do the work themselves.
- There are issues with counties and the land use classification. Each county is handling the designation differently. Counties are requiring that every acre be in active forestry and does not account for managing for diversity.
- The problem seems to be in the county assessor's interpretation of the land use classification requirements.
- Most landowner objectives are not for wood fiber and are not driven by financial benefit.
- Most landowner's objectives are for healthy sustainable forests, wildlife habitat, recreational activities, and aesthetic enjoyment.
- Julie explain that management plans are not static and objectives may change over time. It is a living document.
- Average acreage owned by landowners that Julie visits is between 20 and 40 acres.

The DNR stewardship foresters will make landowners aware that cultural issues may exist within the planning area. Landowners are made aware they can contact tribes during the pre-planning phase of their management plans.

Overview of the Urban & Community Forestry Program

Linden Lampman, Manager of the Urban & Community Forestry Program, gave an overview of her program.

- The Urban & Community Forestry Program (UCFP) receives its funds from the U.S. Forest Service through the Farm Bill.]
- The mission of UCFP is to connect with communities and municipalities to assist in the development of safe urban forests through workshops, educational events, technical assistance, and through developing urban forestry programs.
- UCFP provides leadership to help communities with strategic planning for community forests and is administered through Tree City USA for Washington.
- UCFP does not work with private landowners.

The tribes believe there is a definite overlap of tribal lands in urban areas and would like to know more how tribes can be more involved in urban forestry. DNR SFLO will contact Joenne McGerr, DNR Tribal Relations Manager.

Process for Identifying SFLAC Projects

The SFLAC reviewed 76.13.110 which defines the role of the SFLAC:

RCW 76.13.110 states:

An advisory committee is established to assist the small forest landowner office in developing policy and recommending rules to the forest practices board. The advisory committee shall consist of seven members, including a representative from the department of ecology, the department of fish and wildlife, and a tribal representative. Four additional committee members shall be small forest landowners who shall be appointed by the commissioner of public lands from a list of candidates submitted by the board of directors of the Washington farm forestry association or its successor organization. The association shall submit more than one candidate for each position. The commissioner shall designate two of the initial small forest landowner appointees to serve five-year terms and the other two small forest landowner appointees to serve four-year terms. Thereafter, appointees shall serve for a term of four years. The small forest landowner office shall review draft rules or rule concepts with the committee prior to recommending such rules to the forest practices board.

Before each SFLAC meeting, there will be a discussion between the SFLAC chair and the SFLO Manager to set the agenda for the next SFLAC meeting.

Develop Plan for Assessing Impacts on SFL's of New FPA Forms, Instructions, & DNR Guidance Memo on Unstable Landforms

- The SFLAC would like more information on the new FPA Form, the new Instructions, and the Guidance Memo on unstable landforms.
- It was noted that DNR did conduct outreach on these new documents to all caucuses.
- The SFLAC would like to invite members of the Forest Practices Operations Team to come to the next SFLAC meeting to give a presentation to the committee that is similar to the presentations the Operations Team has given at TFW Meetings statewide.
- The SFLAC would like to see the new information pertinent to landowners in both eastern and western Washington.

Response to SFLAC Memo on Recommendations to Improve Compliance of Forest Practices Applications Utilizing the 20-acre Exempt Rule.

The SFLAC received a letter from Marc Engel in response to the SFLAC letter on recommendations to improve compliance of Forest Practices Applications utilizing the 20-acre exempt rule. The Forest Practices leadership team (Marc Engel, Chris Hanlon-Meyer, and Donelle Mahan) will meet and discuss these recommendations and prepare a formal response to the SFLAC from Chris Hanlon-Meyer. The SFLAC felt this was a good example of how the committee can be a productive influence on Forest Practices issues.

Working Forests and Conversion

Andy Hayes, Policy Advisor for DNR, came to the SFLAC to discuss the issue of working forests and the threat of conversion. The DNR Policy group has been working on the issue of conversion of working forests, its causes, and how to change those dynamics.

- Where are opportunities for policy changes, both within DNR and elsewhere, to help decrease for forestland conversion rate?
- Is the economic and regulatory environment encouraging landowners to continue to maintain their land in forestry?

- Some collective thoughts regarding this issue:
 - Tax structure for landowners – will changing the tax structure help landowner stay in forestry?
 - Is the Growth Management Act encouraging lands to stay in forestry?
 - What ecosystem markets that may be available to provide incentives to landowners to stay in forestry?
 - Are there state funding opportunities or other incentives that can be of use?
- Currently, there is no state agency that is a leader in protecting forestland.
- This issue is one of the governor’s “Results Washington” goals – to protect working lands – both farm and timber.

Next Steps:

DNR is interested in gathering information from folks in the timber community, land trusts, counties and other entities and would like to create a coalition of these folks to help determine if there are issues or opportunities we can agree on regarding this issue and move them forward. It is anticipated this group can be formed by the end of this summer with at least one small forest landowner represented in this group.

Tammie Perreault, Ken Miller, and Phil Hess are very interested in being part of this group and would like to provide their input in any way needed.

The SFLAC suggests that Andy address this issue directly to forest landowners, WFFA members, Farm Bureau, WFPA and other entities involved in forestland, and not necessarily directly to the SFLAC. Andy will reach out to individual SFLAC members who have expressed an interest in this topic instead of the SFLAC as a group.

Meeting adjourned

Next SFLAC meeting will be on August 20, 2014 from 12:00 to 4:00 at the NRB in room 461.