

# **FOREST HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHARTER**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

Forest health conditions in Washington State have been in decline for decades and the consequences of such conditions have contributed to catastrophic and uncharacteristically severe wildfires. Wildfire risks have been high statewide, but are particularly acute in Eastern Washington. Additional pressures on our forests across the state include insects, disease, invasive species and human development. Forest conditions are further affected by climate change, past management practices, and a lack of adequate active management. The result has been the loss of valuable forest resources and forest ecosystems functions such as clean water, carbon sequestration, fish and wildlife habitat. Without significant intervention this trend will continue.

With this in mind, the 2017 Legislature passed Senate Bill 5546 (codified in part at RCW 76.06.200) establishing a forest health advisory committee to assist the department in the development and implementation of a method ‘to proactively and systematically address the forest health issues facing the state’.

## **II. NAME**

This Charter refers to the Forest Health Advisory Committee as “the Committee.”

## **III. AUTHORITY**

RCW 76.06.200(3)(b) creates a Forest Health Advisory Committee, passed into law during the legislative session of 2017.

The Commissioner of Public Lands, Washington State Department of Natural Resources chartered the Committee. The Commissioner serves as the state of Washington's lead for all forest health issues under RCW 76.06.150(1).

## **IV. MISSION**

Contribute to the improvement of forest health by providing guidance and advice to the Commissioner of Public Lands on forest health conditions and solutions thereby helping to make Washington forests, regardless of ownership, healthier and more resilient to damaging agents such as pests, disease, invasive species and catastrophic wildfire.

## V. VALUE STATEMENT

The Forest Health Advisory Committee, through collaborative leadership, with input from constituent groups, strives to continually improve and maintain the health of Washington's forests for current and future generations.

## VI. ORGANIZATION

The Chair and committee members represent key groups or constituent entities who are determined as appropriate and appointed by the Commissioner. In addition, the DNR will provide administrative support.

The Committee provides recommendations to and advises the Commissioner.

The Committee may create Project Task Groups and Technical Subcommittees as necessary in order to further explore, develop or address a specific issue or task. These Project Task Groups and Technical Subcommittees will sunset upon completion of their assignment or the project.

## VII. COMPOSITION

The Committee is composed of members representing specified groups or constituents defined in RCW 76.06.200(3)(b), or as appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Commissioner. The following positions comprise the Committee:

- A. The Committee Chair
  - As designated by the Commissioner.
- B. Committee Members: The committee may include, but is not limited to the following members, and all committee members serve within the authorities of their represented organizations. Representatives include:
  - A large landowner
  - A small forest landowner
  - A representative of wildland fire response organizations
  - A representative of milling and log transportation industries
  - A member of the forest collaboratives that may exist in the affected areas
  - A representative of highly affected communities and community preparedness organizations
  - Members of conservation groups
  - Other interested parties deemed appropriate by the commissioner
  - State, Local and Federal Agencies
  - Tribes
- C. Strategic Partners
  - The Commissioner may appoint additional members to the Committee when the Commissioner determines it is appropriate to assist in developing and implementing the Committee's mission.
  - Additional subject matter expertise may be utilized when it will further the Committee's knowledge or understanding of a specific topic.

## VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. Committee Chair

- Provides leadership for the Committee. Includes assigning the Committees' work, monitoring assignments, and scheduling meetings dates and locations.
- As needed, facilitate consultation between the Committee and relevant local, state and federal agencies and tribes and other interested parties.

### B. Committee Members

- Advise the Commissioner on matters relating to forest health conditions in the state.
- Keep apprised of trends and conditions influencing the health of Washington's forests.
- Identify and/or review recommendations for best management practices to improve or sustain forest health; facilitate development of the physical, economic and human infrastructure necessary to establish a sustainable, long-term forest health treatment program.
- Provide creative and proactive solutions to ensure long-term success of the Committee's mission; work to thoroughly understand the context and specifics of an issue and consider a range of alternatives when developing recommendations.
- Provide input and recommendations for the assessment and treatment framework developed pursuant to RCW 76.06.200, and the report by the Department described below.
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the treatments outlined in the department's Assessment and Treatment Framework.
- Assist with review of periodic revisions to the 20-year Forest Health Strategic Plan.
- Report Committee activities and dissemination information to constituents and represented organizations.
- Other duties related to forest health issues in the state as requested by the Commissioner.

### C. The Department

- By November 1 of each even-numbered year, the Commissioner (with Committee input) will provide a written report to the appropriate committees of the legislature and OFM on the department's progress in implementing the assessment and treatment framework contained in RCW 76.06.200 and relation to the department's 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan. The report will include:
  - Recommended barriers to be addressed and alternative strategies to more effectively implement the framework and achieve the treatment goals;
  - An analysis of necessary funding to develop and implement the framework and treatment recommendations in the following biennium;
  - Costs and outcomes of treatments carried out in the preceding biennium.
  - The current condition of Washington's forests. -The report will include any potential threats to forest landscapes and the nature, extent, and location of these threats, and recommend strategies to address them.
- Assist in the development and implementation of the assessment and treatment framework described in RCW 76.06.200, and as incorporated in the department's 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan.

- Keep members apprised of and identify opportunities to partner and/or work in concert with the following organizations and committees when in alignment:
  - WADNR Wildfire Advisory Committee
  - WA Prescribed Fire Council
  - WA Fire Adapted Community Learning Network
  - WADNR Community Forestry Council.

**IX. MEETINGS AND GUIDELINES**

**A. Meetings/Conference Calls**

- The Committee will meet at the call of the committee chair, but will typically meet quarterly.
- Efforts will be made to provide phone or video conferencing for the meeting.

**B. Operating Guidelines**

- The Committee serves under RCW 76.06.200(3)(b) and advises the Commissioner.
- The Committee will not be operational, set policy, or function as a political arm of the Department.
- The Department will provide Committee members a minimum of 15 days advance notice of meeting place, date, time, and agenda. All effort will be made to provide materials at least five days prior to the meeting.
- Summary notes of committee meetings will record attendance, Committee actions and work assignments.
- Summaries of previous meetings will be reviewed, amended (as necessary) and approved.
- Meeting preparation may require outside reading or research prior to the meeting.
- The Committee will endeavor to make recommendations through consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, a simple majority will rule.
- Each Committee member is selected for specific talents or credentials. Alternates may attend committee meetings, as the subject matter requires.
- If the attendance of a committee member is not possible, prior notification is appreciated.
- Committee members serve without compensation.
- The Chair will solicit recommendations to be included for consideration on the agenda of the next meeting.

**X. APPROVAL**

This Charter is effective as of the date of approval by the Commissioner of Public Lands

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 Hilary S. Franz  
 Commissioner of Public Lands

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 Date