

**3.24.09 Meeting Summary
724 Columbia Street NW, Room 250, Olympia, WA**

**FOREST PRACTICES BOARD POLICY WORKING GROUP
WASHINGTON STATE NORTHERN SPOTTED OWL**

Members Present

Ken Berg	USFWS
Shawn Cantrell	Seattle Audubon
Mark Doumit	WFPA
Kevin Godbout	Weyerhaeuser
Don Halabisky	Sierra Club
Chris Lipton	Longview Timber
Bridget Moran	WDFW, FPB
Miguel Perez-Gibson	Audubon
Tom Robinson	WSAC
Paula Swedeen	Seattle Audubon
Chuck Turley	DNR

Absent

Robert Meier	Rayonier
Vic Musselman	WFFA

Also Present

Lois Schwennesen	Facilitator
Kara Whittaker	WFLC
Tim McBride	WFPA
Cindy Mitchell	WFPA
Carolyn Dobbs	Board Member
Larry Irwin	NCASI
John Ehrenreich	WFPA
Jennifer Cook	Schwennesen & Assoc.

This is a summary of the sixth meeting of the Forest Practices Board's Policy Working Group (Group).

Joint Letter to Congressional Delegation

The letter supporting funds targeted for biomass energy was signed for delivery to the delegation.

Riparian Open Space Bill

Vic Musselman (in absentia) asked Lois Schwennesen to share with the Group significant concerns on behalf of WFFA that the fee land acquisition option was removed from this bill. Because of the collective effort the Group members have spent on this bill, the WFFA adopted a neutral stance on the current language.

Renewable Fuels Standard

After brief discussion about limitations of the existing standard on biomass from Federal lands, the consensus was to table this issue due to the specific scope and constraints of the Group.

Open Meetings Rules

Martha Wehling (in absentia) clarified via Lois Schwennesen that email exchanges involving over six members become a formal discussion according to the Open Meetings Act. Until the Group finalizes the meeting summaries, drafts should be read and edited online via communications with Lois. Once distributed at the meetings, even as drafts, they become part of the public record.

Meeting Summaries

Meeting summaries for February 13 and March 6 were finalized and approved.

Telemetry Study Presentation

Dr. Larry Irwin (National Council for Air and Stream Improvement) briefed the Group on an ongoing Western Wildlife Telemetry project sponsored by Weyerhaeuser. The project is an

example of one of a variety of potential models for the Group to consider for testing and tracking the results of incentive tools. The project combined different categories of databases to yield highly specific interpolations of data and insights to the microhabitats that appeal to any given wildlife. Group members received a copy of the presentation.

Miguel Perez-Gibson asked Dr. Irwin what his recommendations for the Group would be. He encouraged to the Group to look into predator/prey dynamics with the northern spotted owl and the barred owl, and to consider enhancing the food supply in critical areas, perhaps by using variable density thinning and/or encouraging prey habitat growth along forest edges.

Forest Management Economics

The forest products caucus summarized the economic conditions, pressures and constraints that pertain to large and small scale working forest landowners. They described the financial impact of lengthening growth cycles and the variable reduction of asset value by restrictions on the percentage of land available for harvest. A preference was given for trading non-productive or protected lands for other more productive lands. Other financial incentive concepts were discussed such as permitting strategic harvesting of extremely high value, niche market trees within otherwise restricted areas. Group members received a copy of the full presentation.

During follow up discussion the Group asked to see the fixed and variable costs to forest managers listed in a rank order, to better understand which costs managers feel could be most usefully focused on to mitigate the financial impact of potential Group recommendations.

Payment for Ecosystem Services

Paula Swedeen made a presentation to the Group about what is meant by Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and described some examples of existing programs that are having a positive effect on their designated targets. Copies of this presentation were made available to the Group members.

During discussion the Group revisited the carbon market and its possible utility to the work of the Group. Ken Berg asked about how much per acre a \$30/ton carbon credit would translate to, to be addressed next meeting. The forest products caucus expressed an interest in accessing some of the benefits involved, but all parties agreed the market today was limited at best, and Paula Swedeen noted the benefits were about 3- 4 years out. The group will set aside this discussion for the time being but monitor further developments in the market and consider how PES might fit within the scope of the Charter of the Group.

Proposal for a Statewide Ranking Tool

Paula Swedeen described a science-based screening tool to identify and rank locations (“where”) that could most benefit by the attention of the Group before narrowing down the incentive tools (“how”) applicable to those locations. She laid out starting assumptions, proposed process, possible construction, and overall relationship to the goals of the Group. This tool would be a one-time effort, if funded by the DNR, to aid the Group in its charge to identify and incentivize strategic contributions of nonfederal lands for northern spotted owl conservation. It is not intended to override or compete with existing plans or assessments; to the contrary, a science team would be asked to apply existing information to screen locations. Group members received a copy of the presentation.

Discussion addressed the Group’s responsibility first to determine “what” would be screened for, a question currently being informed by scientist presentations to the Group and which could be assisted by discussions with a science panel. Discussion also addressed possible implications of

having this type of ranking study done. Forest products representatives expressed a desire that if the screen demonstrated that existing Spotted Owl Special Emphasis Areas (SOSEAs) no longer seemed viable for attention, some deregulation might be possible. Conservation representatives expressed that deregulating lands of low interest for applying incentives does not fit within the scope of the Group, and would not be the purpose of the proposed ranking tool. They expressed that although the tool may highlight lands with less critical contributions, demonstrating a “non-effective” status would be a more rigorous process than is envisioned by this one time, short term ranking proposal that could be accomplished in a couple of months.

This was an opening discussion about how to identify and rank nonfederal lands for strategic contributions and the discussion will be continued.

East/West Side Design Team Reports

These reports were rescheduled to the April 10 meeting.

Meeting Adjourned