

**5.11.09 Meeting Summary
Room 172, 1111 Washington St. SE, Olympia, WA**

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

Members Present

Mark Doumit	WFPA
Kevin Godbout	Weyerhaeuser
Don Halabisky	Sierra Club
Chris Lipton	Longview Timber
Robert Meier	Rayonier
Vic Musselman	WFFA
Miguel Perez-Gibson	Audubon
Tom Robinson	WSAC
Paula Swedeen	Seattle Audubon
Chuck Turley	DNR
David Whipple	WDFPA

Absent

Ken Berg	USFWS
Shawn Cantrell	Seattle Audubon

Also Present

Lois Schwennesen	Facilitator
Martha Wehling	AGO
Cindy Mitchell	WFPA
Kara Whittaker	WFLC
Jennifer Cook	Schwennesen & Assoc.

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

Member updates

Paula Swedeen presented a short report driven by the question "would carbon credits ever pay enough to be worthwhile to landowners?" While there are different interpretations available to the formulas used, the presentation indicated that carbon credits would likely be sufficient to offset some of the transition costs, but not enough to compensate for a total halt to harvesting. Paula with the assistance of Cindy Mitchell will compile their work for distribution.

Chuck Turley stated that scheduling conflicts prevent him, Ken Berg, and David Whipple from meeting until June 9 to work up a detailed examination of scenarios in which regulatory streamlining could assist in Group goals. Vic Musselman objected that this demonstrated a lack of commitment to the process by the governmental caucus, and that not having any Group progress on this matter until the June 29 meeting would be too late. As a solution, the Group agreed to assist the government caucus by adding an additional meeting on June 12.

After minor adjustments, the meeting summaries for March 24, April 21, and April 28 were approved as final. Mark Doumit requested that the April 29 meeting summary include more detail about the concerns about a Charter revision and about the level of commitment on the part of the State. Chuck Turley clarified that there were two separate sets of concerns: the Charter amendment and State participation. By consensus the Group agreed to have Chuck ask the Board not to change the Charter.

Mark Doumit distributed a draft letter to Commissioner Goldmark and Lenny Young laying out the significant concerns he and Shawn Cantrell voiced about the current level of DNR participation, and requesting that Lenny Young rejoin the Group as an active member. Tom Robinson noted that due to recent restructuring at the DNR, the current representatives hold commensurate positions in the organization as the original designees, with the exception of the loss of Vicki Christianson, past chair of the Forest Practices Board (FPB). Tom added that since Lenny now holds a position with greater responsibilities than when the Charter was drafted, he

was unlikely to be available to rejoin as a full time member. The Group discussed its openness to having Lenny Young participate in a more limited way at key decision making points.

Lois Schwennesen accepted input from Miguel Perez-Gibson cautioning against presenting an overly optimistic report to the FPB.

What are the Goals of an Incentive Program

In order to further the ongoing discussion of what the goals are, Chuck Turley offered, on behalf of DNR, to convene a two day symposium to bring in experts in the different aspects of the northern spotted owl situation (scientific, economic, industrial, and others) to help better define the goals. After discussion, there was not enough support for the idea and it was tabled. Some felt the level of science briefings received to date was sufficient for a policy level Group, some felt a symposium was redundant to the Federal process, and some felt it would dilute the focus that was emerging on practical voluntary incentives that could attract willing landowners of strategic habitat. The Group agreed that the end result of their work should be a clearly understood set of recommendations to the Board that are not only based in science but can practically be implemented. Some also noted the smaller, quieter successes such as improved working relationships between the state, conservation groups, and landowners.

Paula Swedeen noted that the Group has a significant disagreement about the role of science in its work. She stated that the last time there was a lot of science done on northern spotted owls was 15 years ago. One of her key points is that there are gaps in the distribution on nonfederal lands. We need more habitat to shore up the overall habitat availability. Large landscapes are better for the owl. The Recovery Plan was written to accomplish the recovery of northern spotted owl population. The conservation caucus doesn't think that it was actually working – hence the litigation. The Recovery Plan is also now under revision and is not available to base our work on.

Kevin Godbout agreed there are different perspectives on the role of science. He will not support an open ended science project that would lead to another round of regulation or litigation, but is willing to consider specific scientific questions that existing science does not adequately answer. The easy answer is “more is better”, but opinions are irrelevant to what people are willing to do and how we're going to accomplish it. Defining “better” or “what is good” is speculation. The fundamental questions are: Are the agencies willing to streamline, are the industries willing to plan, and is conservation willing to fund?

Criteria for Strategic Lands

The Group considered a compiled list of the criteria supplied by the caucuses, noting a great deal of overlap. It appeared that with some clarification of terms the criteria could be turned into a basis for general agreement. Key terms needing further discussion would be “occupied (vs. unoccupied),” “for X years” referring to past sites, and “habitat.” The Group also discussed the possibility of amending SOSEA programs by altering the radius, the percentage of population, adjacent landscape, and other factors.

Definition of Public Resource

Tom Robinson stated that the Forest Practice Act defines “public resource” as “water quality and quantity, fish, wildlife, and public capital improvements.” Habitat is not considered a public resource, per se, which presents challenges to developing strategic recommendations from the criteria. Incentives directed at unoccupied habitat would have to be incentive or acquisition based, as regulatory solutions would not apply to habitat in the absence of wildlife.

West Side Tabletop Analysis

Robert Meier provided an analysis of the factors in play on Rayonier lands on the Olympic Peninsula. He discussed ways these lands could be enhanced to promote northern spotted owl conservation, such as strategic thinning and lengthening the retention period. He also laid out a variety of financial incentives that might encourage enhancements, divided into acquisition-based incentives and enhancement funding options.

East Side: Teanaway Discussion

Mark Doumit distributed a summary of the condition of forest lands in the Teanaway Valley, which are at imminent risk of catastrophic fire, and are struck by a spruce budworm infestation causing near total mortality. The Group discussed a site visit on June 29 or 30 and a desire to focus less on how these lands may have reached this point, but mostly on what possible incentives could the Group develop that could have helped prevent the problem on other lands and help with restoration and stabilization. Lois Schwennesen will coordinate with WFPA, DNR, and the US Forest Service to organize a visit with experts available.

Meeting Adjourned