

**11.17.09 Meeting Summary
Weyerhaeuser Headquarters, Federal Way**

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

Members Present

Shawn Cantrell	Seattle Audubon
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	WDFW

Also Present

Lois Schwennesen	Schwennesen & Assoc.
Cindy Mitchell	WFPA
Martha Wehling	Attorney General's Office
Kara Whittaker	WFLC
Maryka Paquette	Schwennesen & Assoc.
Darren Cramer (via phone)	DNR

Absent

Ken Berg	USFWS
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Updates and Work Plan

Darin Cramer explained that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) didn't sponsor the Group's pilot project proposal for forest thinning and owl habitat on November 10 because he wanted a more detailed project plan to ensure success, transparency and good public process. Darin will work with Paula Swedeen, Chuck Turley and Chris Lipton to develop more detail and report back to the Group. Shawn Cantrell expressed disappointment that the pilot project proposal had this falter as the Group took precautions to ensure the criteria were met and was not warned that DNR wasn't fully on board with the Board taking action at that meeting.

Paula Swedeen reported on funding sources in federal programs and the Equip program, which has a rolling application. Bob Meier will provide names of contacts.

Kevin Godbout shared an article about successful land exchanges on the west side and discussed the value of, and need to pursue, multiple partnerships. Tom Robinson observed that the cost estimate in this land exchange was based on development value, not a static value.

Miguel Perez-Gibson reported on a USFWS conference on management of owls on federal property. Miguel noted the importance of platform nesting sites on the east side as well as cavity nesting. Other findings included: Where owls reentered fire zones they found prey and increased in population; Post-harvest remnants need not be burned because they create prey habitat. Chris Lipton confirmed that this practice helps build the food chain. He also cautioned that the historical prevalence of ponderosa pine in the east deters owls, which he would like to address in the east side pilot project.

David Whipple encouraged coordination with the Recovery Plan Dry Forest Working Group on fire risk and owl recovery modeling. The Group's east side thinning pilot project may inform the modeling and vice-versa. Miguel added the Forest Service is also interested. Chris will include federal coordination in the project design. Paula reported on tribal outreach and will set up a conference call to get them more involved.

Paula Swedeen spoke of salmon habitat funding programs that may be able to piggyback owl recovery work. If target areas coincide and the argument for owl conservation will benefit salmon, some funds could be available. Vic Musselman introduced the Maine Wood Legacy as an example of “piggyback” groups forming a coalition.

Implementation of Consensus Recommendations to the Forest Practices Board

The Group discussed whether there was a need to amend the Forest Practices Act to provide for Forest Practices Board (Board) support of incentives funding and activities.

Tom Robinson argued against piling more work on the Board. Vic Musselman agreed the Group should use its authority and keep the Board in the loop. Bob Meier advocated leveraging the participation of NGOs and land trusts to expand funding sources and investors. He felt that administration at the government level supports the people doing the work on the ground who can best determine how to stimulate an owl recovery marketplace. Tom Robinson suggested a focus group of involved parties to scout future funds prior to drafting a legislative initiative.

Paula Swedeen shared her recommendation to the Governor’s Office that the Board use incentives to help meet their resource protection goals and monitor progress prior to passing new rules. She suggested the Board establish resource protection goals, and accountability measures. Resource goals linked to administrative incentives can help monitor progress and streamline communications between partners.

Mark Doumit noted the Board’s dual responsibility to protect public resources and maintain the viability of the forest products industry. A partnership is needed to continue creating incentives and managing regulation, on a parallel track with incentives funding efforts. Kevin Godbout agreed and suggested amending the Forest Practices Act to include funding in its scope.

Tom suggested the Board could be asked to give supervisory control to the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) or an NGO that will have more staff to focus on the work. Wherever funding distribution is housed, representatives of the stakeholders would need to be a part of the assessment and funding process. The job ahead is to frame enforcement of the implementation strategy developed by the Group, and sustain its mission. Vic added that a subgroup would need to be empowered through legislative underpinning or through the governor’s office. Paula will look into the model of Maine Wood Group. Bob will share information on the Pacific Salmon Group.

Miguel Perez-Gibson supported looking at RCO, an existing agency that already handles funding. He agreed with Mark that the Board’s mandate already covers the issues at hand, but expressed concern that the Board only meets four times a year. He strongly discouraged expanding the Board’s mission through legislative action, as that may open doors for influencing the language of the Forest Practices Act by others outside of the Group.

Mark Doumit voiced the need to halt or slow new regulation in this economy. Kevin Godbout added the positive side of the economic problems: The cut in production opens the stage for creativity so the time to act is now. The Group has set a new direction and must ensure its work creates added value which could be done through legislation. The Board needs the option to provide economic recognition to landowners through incentive measures that will encourage landowners to participate. Mark stated that the Board currently may have authority to approve financial assistance to achieve a goal on the ground, but does not have the priority and legislation that may assist in providing this direction.

The differences between Group members regarding the need to amend the Board's mission will be discussed by a subgroup including Mark, Miguel, and Chuck Turley. Chuck will bring the ideas set forth above to DNR to determine if the Department feels legislation related to the Board is needed. If possible the subgroup will develop a proposal to present to the Group at the next meeting. Kevin suggested involving other stakeholders at the UW Forest Forum, a group successful at bringing diverse stakeholders together, and promoting this Group's agenda at their upcoming meeting.

System to Identify High Priority Lands

The system for determining priority lands was discussed by the members and concerns were raised about its utility and effectiveness given the multi-dimensional, site-by-site evaluations that will be applied when determining participation in the projects. Bob Meier recalled that Section 6 funding has its own prioritizations, so inclusion of further criteria in this system might deter landowners from participating. However, as the system may be instructional in the initial outreach to landowners and funding sources, it may be retained as a conceptual, informational document available to successor groups working on this matter.

Paula Swedeen expressed the need for state agencies to be active in achieving Section 6 funding. David Whipple was concerned about his agency's ability to implement a plan considering the work needed and costs involved with site-by-site negotiations. Miguel Perez-Gibson stated this is a reasonable concern to include in the final report.

Non Consensus Recommendations

Lois Schwennesen reviewed the areas of consensus the Group has reached and the steps towards implementation of these recommendations the Group has outlined. As there are a number of approaches recommended by various caucuses that did not reach the level of consensus, Lois asked that any individuals or caucuses who wish to include non-consensus recommendations to the Board in the final report distribute specific language to the members by December 1. She will distribute these recommendations to all Group members to think through before the next meeting, at which time the advantages and disadvantages of the recommendations will be discussed, as required by the Group's charter.

Meeting Adjourned