

~Draft~
Committee for Family Forestlands
Minutes
May 22, 2008

A meeting of the Committee for Family Forestlands (CFF) was held Bill Arsenault's Paradise Creek Ranch outside of Elkton.

Committee members present:

Gary Springer	Ned Livingston
Bill Arsenault	Rex Storm
Mike Cloughesy	

Committee members absent:

Greg Miller	Craig Shinn
Sarah Deumling	Brad Withrow-Robinson

Staff present:

Peter Daugherty	Julie Welp
Kevin Weeks	

Guests present:

Joan Arsenault	Marilyn Livingston
Rick Barnes	

Agenda Items:

1. Field Tour of Ranch
2. Review and Approval of Minutes
3. OSWA Annual Meeting
4. Phipps Nursery
5. Role of Private Forests Program
6. CFF Communications and OFRI Special Report
7. CFF Vacancies
8. Recognition of Bill Arsenault

Field tour

The committee chose to hold this meeting at Bill Arsenault's Paradise Creek Ranch. Bill took the group on a tour of the riparian areas and forestland, pointing out the various changes and improvements he's made over the years.

Meeting

Peter updated the committee on due dates to present various topics to the Board of Forestry. He also provided the group with the updated worksheet for symposium issues. The worksheet will be used for discussion topics at future CFF meetings. Peter suggested including conservation easements on the agenda for the June meeting.

Approve minutes from March 27, 2008

The minutes were approved as written.

OSWA Annual Meeting

Peter filled the committee in on OSWA's annual meeting last month. He attended the Green Belt Land Trust presentation at the meeting. There does seem to be interest among family forestland owners regarding easements. Unfortunately, it's difficult to find an organization to work with forestland owners. The Green Belt Land Trust focuses mainly on wetlands, on areas right around Corvallis, and special habitats. The Pacific Forest Trust only does large easements, the Trust for Public lands is only a broker and doesn't hold easements, The Nature Conservancy is limited to large or specific habitats. Family forestlands, because of their size, tend to fall through the cracks in terms of finding service providers for easements.

The carbon issue was also discussed at the OSWA meeting. OSWA is working with the American Forest Foundation to launch a carbon credit pilot project. At the moment, there is a difference of opinion regarding funding. The CFF also talked a little about OSWA's Howdy Neighbor tours.

Phipps Nursery

The discussion turned to the status of the sale Phipps nursery. On June 1, the account balance will be transferred to the Private Forests Program. Only one offer was received on the nursery; it was \$500,000 less than expected. Right now, we're looking at other possible options. Weyerhaeuser and Kentigh have agreed to step in and grow more seedlings to fill in any gaps left from Phipps' closure.

Role of Private Forests Program

The agency's budget for the next biennium has been discussed in previous meetings, along with the role of the Private Forests Program and the enforcement of the Forest Practices Act with less staff. How can the department continue to carry out its statutory requirements with less money and less people? One issue that needs to be focused on is training and education for the stewardship foresters so they can do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. Even with the training and education, we still won't be able to meet some of our statutory obligations due to lack of funding for more staff. Peter updated the committee on the program's budget requests. If we don't ask for what we need, we're not going to get it. The first part of the program option package (POP) is for sustainable forestry, and residential and wildland/urban interface areas. The request is for 5 new positions, 6 FTE, spread out around the state to help cities to adopt their own rules. Also, they would be the lead people on land-use changes. The second part of the POP is sustaining family forestlands. The request is to add back the capacity we've lost over the years to deal with family forestland owners. We want to be to provide one-on-one priority-based assistance, deliver incentives, implement the Oregon Plan, and administer the FPA. We should also have the capacity to help the certification process for tree farms. We are asking for eight new stewardship foresters to deal specifically with family forestland owners. We also need a policy analysis, federal grants coordinator, and office specialist. We need to enhance our compliance and effectiveness monitoring program by adding five new positions.

We need to stress the importance of these requests. We can no longer provide more services than what is statutorily required with the number of staff we have now.

Every biennium, when we are drawing up the program budget, we are asked to also include the possibility of a 10% cut. This time, however, we were also asked to plan for the possibility of the Private Forests Program taking a 10% cut for the entire agency. This will essentially decimate the program. We need to make it very clear to the landowners, policy makers, and the governor how this would affect our ability to serve family forestland owners or protect the 4.3 million acres they own. This message needs to be delivered to the legislature, but it's not very effective coming from just the department and small woodland owners. Some of our partners, such as conservation organizations, or the Trust for Public Lands, or perhaps county governments could make a compelling argument.

Peter will send the POPs to the committee members for their comments, which will eventually be presented to the Board of Forestry at the Board's July meeting. There are several more obstacles this time to getting approval than the last time: declining state and federal funds; Private Forests is competing with other fire organizations for funding; and logging is down, which lowers the harvest tax income. Peter believes we'll make it through the end of this biennium with the current funding.

It was suggested that between this CFF meeting and the next, the committee discuss this topic, through e-mail or over the phone so we are prepared to really delve into it at the next meeting.

Communications/OFRI

Kevin provided the committee a draft of a news release he wrote about family forestlands in Oregon. This release was created to include: educating people about the existence of the CFF, helping provide a broader understanding of the issues we are facing, and attract some attention for OFRI. Kevin is also working on Private Forests communication action plan. The focus will be to provide consistent communication and education; complete review and centralizing of Private Forests communication products, such as website and brochure improvement, and updating publications; and also improving internal communications and training. Kevin will send another draft out to the committee with their suggestions and changes incorporated. Mike Cloughesy handed out several copies of various OFRI publications from over the years, including the report of the 2001 family forestland symposium. There is still valuable information in these older publications. Mike also provided a list of talks related to forestry and landowners that OFRI holds throughout the state. This is another good way to educate the public about forestry. Rex reiterated the importance of including the people who work in the industry, put a human face on it. Mike asked those present to develop an OFRI PowerPoint talk that can be presented by both OFRI and/or various CFF members, if necessary.

CFF Vacancies

Bill Arsenault recommended Rick Barnes to replace him as the southwest representative on the committee. The rest of the committee agreed and Rick accepted. Possible suggestions for landowner-at-large include Brenda Woodward, Justin Heffernan, and Jim LeTourneaux.

Bill Arsenault's Farewell

The committee honored and thanked Bill for his eight years of service on the Committee for Family Forestlands. He's been a dedicated and involved committee member and his valuable contributions, insight, experience, and sense of humor will be missed.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be on June 26 in Salem.