

Agenda Item No.: 4
Issue # and Title: State Forests Work Plan 2, IBI 6 – Improve Northwest Forest Management Plan to achieve desired outcomes.
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SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to outline policy choices for the Board and to present the Department’s recommendations associated with Intermediate Board Issue 6 - Improve the Northwest Oregon Forest Management Plan to achieve desired outcomes.

CONTEXT

The Board has been deliberating on the balance of economic, social, and environmental values provided through implementation of the Northwest Forest Management Plan (NW FMP) on the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests. The 2001 plan established a set of integrated forest management strategies intended to provide improving levels of economic and environmental outputs through time, and social outputs commensurate with resource availability.

As this plan has been implemented on the three North Coast Districts (Tillamook, Forest Grove, and Astoria), the Department has refined its information and learned from its management activities. With this updated knowledge, it has become apparent that the expected economic level has fallen short of the predicted level, necessitating the current adaptive management policy discussion with the Board. To inform this discussion, modeling scenarios have been developed that predict economic outputs, expressed as volume, and corresponding forest stand structure-type outputs for a range of management scenarios. Modeling has identified the following possible benefits from this range of management scenarios (Table 1).

As this adaptive management process has unfolded, strategies for managing species of concern have come under close scrutiny. Currently, the forest management plan (FMP) states the “plan and the associated draft [federal habitat conservation plan] contain a set of species-specific strategies intended to protect existing key habitat areas and/or sites considered critical to the short-term survival of individuals or populations.¹”

A habitat conservation plan (HCP) is one tool that can be used to comply with the federal Endangered Species Act. At the time of plan adoption, an HCP was considered to be “a key tool for fully implementing the strategies described in this FMP over the long term,²” largely due to the operational effects resulting from northern spotted owls. The Board directed the Department to pursue the proposed Western Oregon Habitat Conservation

¹ NW FMP, p. 4-81 through 4-84; SW FMP, p. 4-79

² NW FMP, p. 4-3

Plan in 2001, which covers both the Northwest Forest Management Plan and the Southwest Oregon Forest Management Plan. Both forest management plans recognize that if the habitat conservation plan is not adopted, “the forest management plan will be expanded to include further detail on managing habitat for specific species or populations”.³

Table 1. Management scenario model outputs for the three North Coast Districts

Scenario	Volume After 10 Years (MMBF)	Complex Structure at 20 Years	Complex Structure at 80 Years	% of maximum wood emphasis option
Wood Emphasis – FPA Cores	272	15%	11%	100
Wood Emphasis – SF Take Avoidance	256	15%	15%	94
PM Volume Emphasis (20% complex)	236	17%	20%	87
PM Structure w/ Best Volume	220	19%	27%	81
PM w/ SOC (30% Complex)	196	22%	32%	72
Average Operating level 2002 to 2006 based on Harvest and Habitat modeling work – 183 MMBF				
FMP w/ SOC (40% Complex)				Tbd
FMP w/ HCP (40% Complex)	169	26%	41%	62
FMP w/ HCP (50% Complex)	142	26%	51%	52

The Board also adopted intent statements when the forest management plans were approved. The intent statements included additional guidance to the Department’s work related to pursuing an HCP as follows:

- Clearly understand the economics of an HCP, to allow a re-valuing of state forests with and without an HCP.
- The HCP will allow for full implementation of the FMPs and result in a net benefit to the state and counties over a plan with “take avoidance” strategy for listed species.

The Department completed additional analysis of the draft HCP through its Harvest and Habitat modeling work group. The results were presented to the Board in March 2006. Findings in the report furthered the Board’s interest in exploring alternatives for addressing species of concern.

Direction from the Board in 2007 led to department-developed draft species of concern strategies to “maintain, enhance and restore habitats for species of concern.”⁴ These strategies were presented to the Board in April 2009.

ANALYSIS

Species of Concern

³ NW FMP, p S-15

⁴ Board of Forestry State Forests Performance Measure 6 target

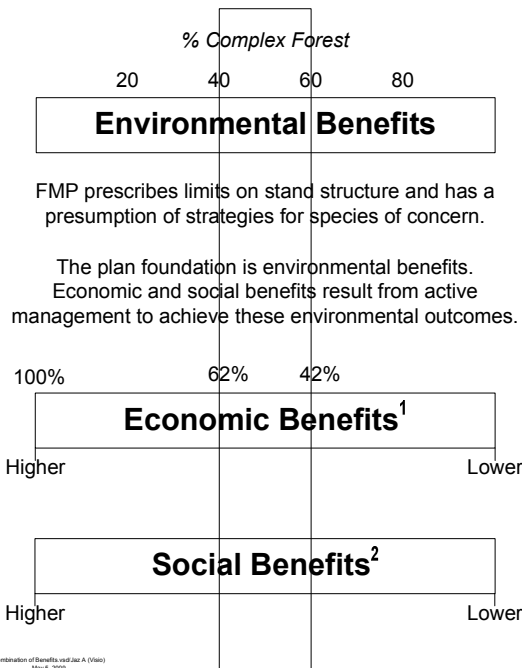
The current Northwest Oregon Forest management Plan relies on the federal HCP process to determine contribution levels that state forests make to habitat for species of concern. By decoupling the FMP from the habitat conservation planning process, the following benefits can be expected:

- The Board will set policy direction for species of concern based upon managing for “greatest permanent value”, rather than indirectly through the development of an HCP.
- The forest management plan will serve as the policy foundation and set the sideboards for future consideration of Habitat Conservation Plans as Endangered Species Act compliance tools.

Long Term Complex Structure Range

The current FMP allows economic, social, and environmental outputs in the following ranges:

Combination of Outcomes



¹Economic benefits at 40% complex structure come from the analysis reported in Table 1. Economic benefits for 60% complex structure are estimated.

²Social benefits as currently measured by the performance measures are primarily tied to the Department’s investment level.

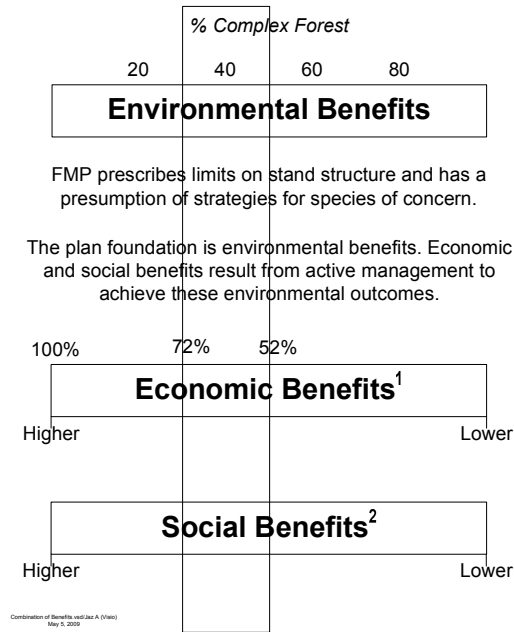
This Board Work Plan Intermediate Issue 6 is to improve – not replace – the current FMP. This plan includes diverse resource management goals for environmental, social, and economic components (Chapter 3). These goals are met through three basic concepts that are at the heart of the FMP. These are structure based management, aquatic and riparian conservation, and forest health. At its core, structure based management is designed to produce and maintain an array of forest stand structures across the landscape in a functional arrangement. This array of stand structures provides for the social, economic, and environmental benefits called for in the management direction of these lands.

This FMP uses the concept of structure based management to emulate the diversity of stand types historically associated with conifer forests, recognizing quantity and distribution was highly variable through time. At the province scale, the plan suggests that the percentage of older stand types ranged from 30% to 70%, while at smaller scales the variability was even greater.

A key working hypothesis in the plan is that providing an array of forest conditions through time and space that emulates conditions created by historic disturbance regimes will meet the management plan goals of the plan. The current FMP stand structure percentages were chosen based on historic disturbance regime information and with specific attention to providing older forest stands to provide for species of concern. The target array of stand structure was thought to provide needed habitat and biodiversity, while providing for high levels of sustainable timber harvest and revenue levels, consistent with other planning goals. At levels below 30% of older stand types (complex forests), the array of stand structures would be inconsistent with the assumptions of structure based management as used in this FMP, especially assumptions of meeting goals for fish, wildlife, and biodiversity.

The following mix of benefits better represents the balance of GPV contemplated by this Board, which results in a revision to the current plan. For a mix that provides greater social and economic benefits, a new FMP would be needed.

Combination of Outcomes



¹Economic benefits at 30% complex structure come from the analysis reported in Table 1. Economic benefits for 50% complex structure with species of concern strategies are estimated.

²Social benefits as currently measured by the performance measures are primarily tied to the Department's investment level.

It is anticipated that revising the plan to reflect this level of outputs would result in the range of economic (expressed as volume) and environmental (expressed as complex structure) benefits in Table 2.

Table 2. Model outputs for the proposed management scenario compared to current and other management scenarios for the three North Coast Districts.

Scenario	Volume After 10 Years (MMBF)	Complex Structure At 20 Years	Complex Structure At 80 Years	% of maximum wood emphasis option
PM w/ SOC (30% Complex)¹	196	22%	32%	72
Average Operating level 2002 to 2006 based on Harvest and Habitat modeling work – 183 MMBF				
FMP w/ SOC (40% Complex)²	TBD			
FMP w/ HCP (40% Complex)³	169	26%	41%	62
FMP w/ HCP (50% Complex)⁴	142	26%	51%	52

¹ Management scenario proposed for Board adoption.

² Management outputs expected if the management plan, unchanged, were coupled with species of concern strategies instead of draft habitat conservation plan strategies.

³ Management outputs expected following the 2009 Implementation Plan revision.

⁴ Current, implemented management approach. Outputs are not expected to change dramatically with species of concern strategies instead of habitat conservation plan strategies.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends the Board direct the Department to develop rule language that makes three adjustments:

1. Remove reliance on the draft Western Oregon Habitat Conservation Plan for development of strategies for species of concern in both the Northwest and Southwest Forest Management Plans; maintain HCPs as a potential future tool for federal Endangered Species Act compliance.
2. Approve use of the Draft Species of Concern (SOC) strategies as the Department’s approach for managing SOC, with the acknowledgment that several planning steps still need to take place before the SOC strategies are final; replace existing habitat conservation language with policy-level principles of these strategies in the plan, develop SOC plans for districts outside the north coast districts, and place specific management standards in policy at the Division level.

Conduct peer reviews and adaptive management as necessary to achieve policy-level principles in the FMPs.

3. Revise the Northwest Oregon Forest Management Plan to allow a different balance of economic, environmental, and social benefits that better reflect those considered in performance measure development discussions; specifically, modify the complex forest structure range from 40 to 60 percent of the forest to 30 to 50 percent of the forest.

NEXT STEPS

- Board consideration and approval of rule language (FMP adjustments) and direction to the Department to proceed with rule-making.