

July 31, 2007

Steve Hobbs, Chair Board of Forestry

Chair Hobbs,

The Committee for Family Forestlands (CFF) is providing this letter as a formal document to the Board's 2007 issue scan. In April 2007, the CFF conducted the second family forestland symposium, *Looking Forward II, Oregon Families & Their Forestlands: What's at Stake*. One of the purposes of the Symposium was the development of potential solutions to the issues challenging family forestland viability. The following issues were identified at the Symposium, and should be considered in developing Department of Forestry work plans for the upcoming years.

Issues Identified

- Uncompensated services – the need to provide incentives for services provide to the public.
- Intergenerational transfer – how to ensure orderly transition of forestland from current generation to the next.
- Conflict of values - people who own forests for income have a different set of values than those who own forests for amenity purposes.
- Global climate change.
- The delivery mechanism for influencing stewardship and sustainability is not effective for either participating or non-participating groups and individuals.
- Economic challenges of family forestland owners.
- Engaging the wider community of family forestland owners.
- Viability of family forestlands, values conflict with urban neighbors, unpaid services

Summary and Discussion of Major Issues

For most symposium participants, **compensation for ecosystem services and other societal benefits** is clearly the most urgent challenge. Five groups addressed it in slightly different forms. A synthesized list of solutions from these groups:

- Develop financial incentives (cost-share programs, others) for maintaining and enhancing environmental values and services
- Reduce state inheritance taxes
- Develop and increase access to market for carbon sequestration
- Enact “hold harmless” agreements protecting landowners from trespasser liability lawsuits

- Enact tax credits for keeping land in forest
- Create a “green credit” forest fund to pay for conservation easements on family forestlands
- Develop a multi-level set of performance standards, with policy and market incentives for managing to stricter environmental standards than those in the Forest Practices Act
- Improve Oregon’s land-use planning process to increase private flexibility while retaining public value

The next most important challenge is to **address the conflict of values, reach out to the wider community and build on common ground.** Two groups addressed this issue, generating these solutions:

- Develop more intensive public education on forestry and family landowner issues
- Organize more family forest tours for the public and school children
- Increase capacity of family forestland owners to engage the wider community and elected officials
- Partner with NGOs to find funding, provide training, develop educational material, and build solutions
- Reach out to rural property owners with diverging views
- Promote work opportunities for older children

The third most important challenge is to take advantage of **opportunities presented by global climate change.** The group that addressed this problem looked past the financial incentives of carbon banking to make the point that the public alarm over global climate change offers an opportunity to align the interests of family forestland owners with those of the larger society. In this way, this group’s solutions also address conflicts of values and outreach to the community.

This group proposed that family forestland owners:

- Demonstrate how management practices align with societal values
- Create jobs and business opportunities that improve economic conditions and the environment
- Stimulate synergy between environmental groups, tree farmers, manufacturers, and consumers
- Reconnect urban and rural Oregonians through the marketplace
- Reduce carbon output of forestry; increase carbon storage in forests

The fourth most important challenge is to **improve the delivery of stewardship information to family forestland owners,** targeting particularly those who are not now being reached. The solutions proposed by the group that addressed this need also echo concerns about conflicts of values and outreach to the community. The group proposed the following solutions:

- Train foresters who interact with family forestland owners to talk to them about the Ties to the Land family succession program

- Use the Ties to the Land program to engage landowners who are not now being reached by any forestry stewardship programs
- Build new coalitions among public agencies, private citizens, and industry

The fifth most important challenge is to **expand markets for locally harvested forest products**. The group that addressed this issue proposed these solutions:

- Develop local farmer's market-style markets for wood products
- Build awareness of and pride in using locally grown wood and other products
- Improve marketing and public relations efforts on behalf of local wood products (for example, "Get on Oregon Field Guide" or Build Local Alliance, buildlocal.org)

These proposed solutions resist neat categorization under their various topic headings. Rather, they overlap with one another to address several problems at a time, testifying to the interwoven nature of the challenges faced by family forestland owners.

In summary, the members of the Committee for Family Forestlands supports including these issues in the 2007 issue scan process.

There is additional information regarding these and other issues developed at the Family Forestland Symposium. Please refer to the Symposium proceeding (attached) for a complete list of all issues raised.

Sincerely,

Ron Cease, Chair
Committee for Family Forestlands