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# A Vision For Oregon's Forests



*Oregon Board of Forestry*

and

*Oregon Department of Forestry*

Strategic Planning Document

v1103-23

2024

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

## Introduction

### NOTES from 10/19 on what it means to be ‘bold’”

- Tonally the doc needs improvement in this
- There is a sense of urgency, we have a lot to do, and we are committed to doing the work of proactive resiliency building
- Commitment or acknowledgment that relationships need repair- to build social license inside and outside the Department, across urban and rural communities and landscapes. Partnerships and relationships matter. Sincere tribal engagement matters and we will do better.
- Fire will continue to be devastating, with higher intensities. It is urgent that we increase the pace and scale of our efforts to build landscape resiliency to fire.
- Overall, speak to what we are doing differently. Where are we innovating? Where are we making bigger efforts to work we already do? Where are we prioritizing or creating new areas for accountability?
- Name our duties to society - to address climate change, to address fire, and to follow the law.
- Innovation includes funding mechanisms.

Social and ecological systems are in a time of transition and rapid change. Recognizing this, the Board of Forestry and Department of Forestry established a **Vision for Oregon's Forests** that responds to the call for a bold, forward-looking policy approach that will best serve forests and people in Oregon into the future.

## Context and Commitments

The Board and Department recognize that:

Climate impacts are felt in every corner of the state and in dynamic and unpredictable ways. In today's evolving climate environment our forests represent both a significant asset and ongoing threat to infrastructure, human health and safety, and the greater economy.

- Policies will be responsive and adaptable to global and local climate change, mitigating threats to human health and safety; and economies.

- Policies will strive for a reciprocal relationship between human cultures. **This means taking care of the forests so the forests can take care of us - for mutual benefits and values.**
- Policies will support economic development, diversification and innovation in the forest sector that promotes the adaptive capacity of forests.

Oregon's rural, urban and suburban populations have varying social perceptions and expectations about forests and how forests should be managed to benefit human populations and safeguard natural resources.

- Policies will be based on a comprehensive, all-lands approach, that will reflect the unique landscape and forestland ownership of Oregon, and will honor the complexity of relationships Oregonians have with Oregon's forests.
- Policies will be based on the best available information, and be applicable in a place-based manner to meet local, regional and statewide expectations of Oregonians.

The State has a unique and specific government-to-government relationship with 9 federally recognized Tribes in Oregon.

<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/aboutodf/Pages/tribalrelations.aspx>

- Policies will honor government-to-government relationships with Sovereign Nations; and meet obligations to protect tribal cultural resources.

Social expectations are shifting with calls for more inclusive, accountable decision making and recognition of inequities in our systems.

- Policies will seek to reflect and integrate the needs of all communities including those which have been historically marginalized.

Workforce supply and demand are changing, labor costs continue to increase, and there is growing uncertainty about the ability of managed forests to cover associated costs in this dynamic state of climate and social change.

- Policies will recognize the changing needs for a trained and skilled workforce that will support the work needed in Oregon forests.

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**About the Board of Forestry** (est. 1907): *The Mission of the Board and Department is to guide management of Oregon forests and fire to benefit all Oregonians.*

ADD a LINK

**About the Department of Forestry** (est. 1911): *The Purpose of the Department is to engage communities, staff and resources to sustain and adapt forests and landscapes for social, economic and ecological benefits.*

ADD A LINK

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## Glossary of Terms:

*(Placeholder): Forest management: Intentional use of the suite of tools available to impact the state or condition of the forests. This can range from no - intervention to intensive intervention. (Question - further definition needed for the range of management applications?)*

Climate -smart forestry: A holistic approach for addressing the management needs related to the existential pressures exerted from climate change

Complete and coordinated response system: Oregon's cross -boundary wildfire preparedness and response system which includes the coordinated efforts of federal, state, tribal and private partners.

Forest ecosystem services: The benefits provided by healthy, functioning ecosystems to humans; these services are categorized into the following four groups (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005).

Place-based: General planning approach which emphasizes the characteristics and meaning of places as a fundamental starting point for planning and development. "Solutions that are uniquely tailored to a geography and the relevant communities or people for a given locale."

Silviculture: The growing and cultivation of trees.

Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI): The geographic area where structures and other human development meets or intermingles with wildland or vegetative fuels. A transition zone between wildlands and human communities.

**Wildfire** : Unwanted or unattended human or natural caused ignition of forestland vegetation that requires an immediate strategic or tactical suppression response to protect life, forest resources, and property. *Different from 'fire' or 'good fire'. May need to revisit.*

## NOTES from 10/19

- Revive the overarching Vision statement from before
- Scan and name for each goal a clear outcome (potentially refine the Goal statements to reflect this); where there is a 'bold' guidance (something new, significantly different or enhanced from previous policy guidance from the Board)
- Under the Intro, speak to a sense of urgency- where? why?
- Maintain a continuous improvement and learning mindset (perhaps put this in intro)

## GOALS and STRATEGIES

### Resilient Forests

#### NOTES FROM 10/19 Retreat:

- Lots of conversation about the range of management tools to be put to use. Many suggested that the driving force should be 'intentional' or 'purposeful' management that meets the forest's needs for resilience. There is a sense that all intentional considerations are 'active' management, including cases in which intentionally not intervening is a management strategy.
- Consideration of the implications the use of the term 'active management' has in this context. For some it raises immediate perception of a narrow definition of intense harvesting/logging, while for others, the term described by the Society of American Forests (?)



shows a broader range and the group might consider adapting a term off this description.

- Strong alignment around place based application, and that ‘place based’ speaks to geographies as well as social /cultural. Ultimately put both lenses on outcomes for resiliency.
- Recognition of the ‘beast at the door’, growing wildfires and the massive investment made by the State for proactively dealing with this.
- The ‘bias’ should be toward outcomes: what is the best management tool to support resilient forest? Some dialogue about time frame for outcomes - 7 generations? 10 -20 years? 3-5 year adaptations to deal with rapid changes? Perhaps tie an outcome(s)
- Note that most intentional non-intervention will happen in federally managed wilderness areas.
- Need for establishing metrics (this should be done in next phase)
- POTential goal to review Forest Practices Act reforestation with a lens of ‘resilient forests’.
- Is there a balance or rebalanced approach to how we apply salvage logging as a management tool for resilience? Narrow salvage logging policy on state managed lands?

Goal: Policy and management decisions enable forest stands and landscapes to persist over space and time.

Context: Changes related to climate, social values and economics are resulting in changes to ecosystem functions and ecosystem services provided to our society. Society recognizes the importance of reciprocal relationships between humans and forests; relationships in which humans support forests so that forests can support humans and other species.

The range of components that describe forest complexity, structure and function in each ecoregion in Oregon will be defined at multiple spatial scales (stand- to landscape-level) and temporal scales (stand initiation to old-growth). Beyond the legal requirement of the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, and state forest practices act rules, complex and functional forests representing a wide range of seral stages from complex early successional to old-growth contribute to maintaining populations of native species over space and time in each Oregon Forest Type. Active management over the complete lifecycle

continuum utilizing science, continuous learning and stand conditions enhance complexity.

Communities in rural, suburban, and urban environments can support active forest management if each individual in those communities can see their values represented in the outcomes of that management. A wide range of values include clean water, clean air, fish, wildlife, aesthetics, and timber for jobs and housing, recreation, and others. Complex, actively managed and functional forest ecosystems in each of Oregon forest types hold the greatest opportunities for providing these values over space and time.

## STRATEGIES:

These strategies are intended to be a suite of management tools that should be applied where and when appropriate to meet this resilient forests goal.

- Promote Stewardship Agreements  
<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/fire/documents/shared-stewardship-mou-agreement.pdf>  
that include ecological forestry principles that further forest complexity components, including diversity of regenerated woody and nonwoody species, a wide range of stand densities, extended rotations and increased retention of large legacy structures (live green trees, snags, and downed wood) during harvest activities.
- Support development of Safe Harbor Agreements and Habitat Conservation Plans in collaboration with landowners and the federal government.
- Support additional incentives including statutory changes that allow tax incentives for private landowners who implement Stewardship Agreements that make meaningful contributions towards forest complexity goals.
- Support exploring carbon markets that allow the development of complex functional forests to develop that also sequester and store carbon.
- Support Forest Legacy efforts to retain and manage forests for diverse goals, including forest complexity.
- Support management to reach desired outcomes and landscape objectives. Apply appropriate application of a range of tools based on place-based need.

- Support management of forests where needed to protect human life and infrastructure, especially in the WUI.
- Engage with partners on place-based plans that seek to balance ecological, economic and social trade-offs to support the recovery and regeneration of diverse forests in the aftermath of severe disturbance events.
- Adopt new, and revise existing, Oregon Administrative Rules pertaining to harvest and reforestation to incentivize retention and development of forest complexity components.
- Develop a strategy related to prescribed fire. *Strategy for workforce development related to prescribed fire.*
- *Add: strategy for fuel load treatment.*

## Resilient Communities

NOTES from 10/19:

- Need more specific strategy for tribal communities
- Brenda: more work needed on this - will need to revisit
- Define: “scientifically informed” and add a related strategy to all goals.

Goal: Policy and management decisions foster healthy relationships between humans and forests, so that forests support resilient human communities through social, economic, and ecological change.

Context : Forests have both direct and indirect effects on quality of life, economic opportunities for communities, and ecological conditions in rural, suburban, and urban areas across the state. Resilience varies regionally and between communities of place and culture. Forests provide a range of benefits to Oregonians and contribute to community resilience. Place-based and scientifically informed management approaches support forests to contribute a full range of benefits to enhance community resilience by meeting their needs.

## STRATEGIES:

- Promote access *for diverse communities* to healthy forests for recreation, culture, education, and appreciation, in ways that are welcoming and inclusive for a wide range of needs that are important

to Oregonians. Ensure access that respects cultural resource protections, private ownership and natural resources.

- Promote forest and forestry related educational programs, technologies, pilot projects, forest management jobs, infrastructure and other tools to invest in the sustained economic viability and vitality of communities.
- Ensure management of forests contributes to clean water and air for all Oregonians.
- Educate and engage communities on forest issues
- Employ shared stewardship to support collaborative management across ownerships, promoting diverse strategies that maintain environmental and economic values.
- Take a place-based approach to supporting resilient communities that recognizes unique characteristics of that place.
- Engage with communities on place based plans to support community recovery from severe disturbance events.

## Wildfire Response

NOTES from 10/19:

- From ET at the regional district level - this provides clear leaders intent that enables me to operationalize.
- We need to champion prescribed fire.
- Add a strong strategy around community/public education and outreach particularly around risks to communities.
- Develop a policy statement about fire. (Mike offered to begin this)
  - Prescribed fire/fuels management - mistakes will be made, are you willing to accept this?
  - Smoke management
  - Monitoring and evaluation
  - Social license through education and outreach
  - Safety related to defensible space - education / wildfire prevention plan
- Should this be more generally 'fire response' goal?
- Building understanding and partnerships - see 20 Year Landscape Resiliency Strategy

Goal: Suppress, manage, and mitigate wildfire to protect communities, allow natural ecosystem processes, and promote the adaptive capacity of Oregon's forests.

Context:

Wildfire has been a force that has helped shape Oregon's forests for millennia. Both natural and human induced fire, the use of prescribed fire, and the suppression of fire, have played important roles in creating the forests we have today. Across Oregon, fire in forests has always existed in a variety of regimes, from frequent, low intensity fire to stand-replacing events, and mixed severity fires that present a spectrum of disturbance patterns. This plan seeks a balanced approach that recognizes the role of fire suppression in providing protection to life and property, the role of active management to mitigate hazards and control forest fuels, and the role for natural fire to occur where appropriate for ecological function. Place-based solutions based on robust assessments of current conditions and desired outcomes will be essential to promoting forests that are resilient and can provide abundant benefits to Oregonians.

## STRATEGIES

- Align with the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy <https://www.forestsandangelands.gov/documents/strategy/natl-cohesive-wildland-fire-mgmt-strategy-addendum-update-2023.pdf>
  - Restore and maintain landscapes
  - Support fire adapted communities; and
  - Respond to fire
- Advance the implementation of the 20-Year Landscape Resiliency Strategy <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/fire/documents/olrs-progress-report.pdf> and all-lands shared stewardship across Oregon.
- Maintain a high quality complete and coordinated wildfire preparedness and response system.

## Climate Leadership

### NOTES from 10/19:

- Suggest to reframe this goal to building capacity for climate smart leadership, with three primary strategies -

- Implementing capacity
- Incentives
- Internal training/ technical capacity development
- Continuous learning and growth mindset
- Tone should be optimistic and leverage with global activities.
- What does ‘just and equitable transition’ mean to the Department?
  - Social justice component
- Carbon/capping emissions as a goal.
  - Note about damage to sequestration from fires.

Goal: The Board and Department will be leaders in promoting climate-smart forest policies and actions. **BEN: Build capacity for climate smart leadership.**

Context: The Board adopted its Climate Change and Carbon Plan in November 2023, which centered climate-smart forest management to guide activities contributing to adaptation and mitigation, as well as social dimensions of the effects of climate change. Climate-smart forestry is a holistic approach for addressing the management needs related to the existential pressures exerted from climate change.

Link to CCCP: <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/forestbenefits/Documents/odf-climate-change-and-carbon-plan-draft.pdf>

## STRATEGIES:

- **Silviculture:** Establish a just and equitable transition to climate-informed silviculture and climate-smart forestry that optimizes climate mitigation and adaptation, while maintaining a sustainable flow of wood products to ensure long-term resource benefits and viability of the forest products industry and flow of long-lived forest products.
- **Fire:** Modernize Oregon’s complete and coordinated wildfire protection system to respond to the increased severity of wildfire. Promote fire and smoke-adapted communities in the wildland urban interface and beyond, to mitigate the impacts of climate-induced increases in wildfire severity.
- **State forests management:** Lead by example and demonstrate climate-smart forest management on State Forests to achieve adaptation, mitigation, and the achievement of forest resource goals.
- **Restoration:** Accelerate the pace, scale, and quality of climate appropriate forest restoration to increase the resilience to increased wildfire, drought, and biotic disturbance severity and incidence. Support implementation of the recommendations of the Governor’s Council on Wildfire Response.

- Urban forests: Increase the extent and resilience of urban and community forests to maximize the climate mitigation and health benefits of urban forest canopy.
- Post-fire: Facilitate and encourage the reforestation of areas burned by wildfire and afforestation of low-productivity lands that are understocked or not in forest use.
- Conservation: Support a strong, but flexible, Land Use Planning System as a cornerstone of maintaining Oregon's forests on private lands.
- Research and monitoring: Maintain a research and monitoring program to track the status and trends of ecological, economic, and social indicators and the effects of climate change and to track progress related to this plan.

## Organizational Excellence

Notes from 10/19:

- Flag a need to add firefighter safety strategy, including issue of post recovery and snags. Potentially add to overall 'employee safety' strategy.
- Department will own and update this goal, and share it with the Board in the next version.

**Need a specific goal statement, which should clearly articulate the leadership principles necessary to realize the vision of this document. And, the goal needs to speak to the field for implementation. Continuous improvement should be part of the goal, along with a bias for action and support for making some mistakes along the way. What does it mean for ODF to be a Learning Organization?**

**Context** : Oregon state agencies have an obligation to the Oregonians they serve to continually improve business processes to promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness in their delivery of services. This includes being transparent, accountable and fiscally responsible. In order to achieve this, ODF's operations must be integrated and aligned through shared common policies, goals and objectives that support direction provided by the Board, Executive Branch and Legislature. Engaging with partners, urban and rural communities, local governments and Sovereign Nations is essential. Operational excellence requires a well-trained, highly competent and diverse staff of professionals.

## STRATEGIES

- Work with other state and federal agencies to leverage efficiencies and opportunities to accomplish individual and shared goals and objectives. – **Expand to a broader statement about partnership, collaboration, and coordination among partners...recognizing we only directly manage about 3% of the forest base in Oregon.**
- Increase transparency into agency operations and performance through clear, accurate and easily accessible reporting.
- Continue to build a strong and diverse agency workforce. **Employees should feel safe and included; need to develop resiliency within the workforce. How?**
- **Workforce retention?**
- Establish and maintain visible regulatory programs with consistent enforcement of laws and rules.
- **Need a strategy related to training, which should include development of a safety culture, DEI, Tribal relations, and climate smart forestry.**
- **Specific strategies around Tribal and community engagement? Thinking specifically about engaging a more diverse set of Oregonians in the work we do.**

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## Additional Resources

*Context/Further Information*

*LINKS will be provided*

Climate -Smart forestry

National Wildfire Cohesive Strategy

Diversity, equity and inclusion

Tribal relations



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Place Based implementation

Ecosystem services

*(PLACEHOLDER) MANAGEMENT- describe the range of fully passive to fully intensive management tools. )*

Reference Materials:

National Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy:

<https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/documents/strategy/natl-cohesive-wildland-fire-mgmt-strategy-addendum-update-2023.pdf>

Pacific Northwest Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment: <https://pnw-quantitative-wildfire-risk-assessment-osugisci.hub.arcgis.com/>

Oregon Forest Action Plan: <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/aboutodf/OregonActionPlan.pdf>

ODF Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan 2023-25: **hyperlink coming**

ODF/Tribal Relations: <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/aboutodf/Pages/tribalrelations.aspx>

Shared Stewardship MOU: <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/fire/documents/shared-stewardship-mou-agreement.pdf>

2021-2023 Landscape Resiliency Program Report:

<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/aboutodf/documents/2023-odf-sb762-landscape-resiliency-program-report.pdf>

Peer reviewed: Climate-Smart Forestry: Promise and risks for forests,society, and climate.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pclm.0000212>

Peer reviewed: Meta-Overview and Bibliometric Analysis of Resilience in Spatial Planning – the Relevance of Place-Based Approaches. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12061-022-09449-z>

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## 2024 Finalize Vision/Action Planning and Implementation

(Winter/Spring )

Community Engagement / Public Review

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Connecting the Plan with Staff and Action Planning to align with 2024 Vision  
Update Indicators and Key Performance Measures to reflect 2024 Vision

**(Spring )**

Department Action Planning

**(Summer/Fall )**

Progress Tracking

**(Fall )**

Board Annual Progress Update

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