

v12-11-23

A Vision For Oregon's Forests



Oregon Board of Forestry
and
Oregon Department of Forestry
Strategic Planning Document
2024

v12-11-23

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

Introduction

Oregon's forest ecosystems are vulnerable. Statewide, forest health is in decline due to climate driven stressors such as insects, diseases, drought, and wildfire. Our forests don't stand alone in their vulnerability in the face of mounting and escalating challenges.

Forests are an integral part of the social, economic and environmental fabric of our state, and as such, their vulnerability is ours as well. Clean air and water, sustainable forest products, biodiversity, public health and safety, and many more critical benefits Oregonians rely upon require a foundation of resilient forest ecosystems. But there is a lot of work to do to help our forests get there.

Recognizing the importance and urgency of the work ahead, the Oregon Board of Forestry and Oregon Department of Forestry collaboratively developed a bold, forward-looking strategic Vision for Oregon's Forests that will best serve Oregon's forests and people 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. Unless bold action is taken now and for the foreseeable future, the composition, structure and contribution of forests will be altered significantly in the future. Addressing climate change by offsetting some greenhouse gas emissions by sequestering and storing carbon is one of society's grandest challenge, as is the reduction in use of fossil fuels in all aspects of our societies and economies. Indeed, it is our most marginalized populations who will suffer the most if we do not act soon and persistently, so we will need to engage with those populations to seek their involvement in forest management decisions.

v12-11-23

- Policies will be responsive and adaptable to global and local climate change by storing carbon while, mitigating threats to human health and safety; safety, and economies, and social justice.
- Policies will strive for a reciprocal relationship between human cultures representing multiple identities, so that everyone feels a responsibility to . This means taking care of the forests so that forests can take care of us, by providing - for mutual benefits and enabling a wide range of realized values. Unlike wild animals which are a public good owned and managed by the government, the plants on which they depend are owned and managed by landowners or companies. As such each landowner has a social responsibility to contribute to a wide range of societal values.
- Policies will support economic development of local and regional economies, social services, aesthetic values and carbon storage. , Diversification and innovation in all aspects of the forest sector management should that promotes the adaptive capacity of forests to meet societies needs in both the short and long term. .

Oregon's rural, urban and suburban populations have varying social perceptions and expectations about forests and how forests should be managed to benefit humans and other species 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 Oregon and will honor the complexity of relationships Oregonians have with Oregon's forests. Policies will challenge ALL Oregonians to step up and take responsibility for ensuring that forests will benefit humans in a wide range of ways, and benefit all other species in our state and beyond as we adapt to climate change and rely on forests to work with us toward that goal.
- Policies will be based on the best available information science, and be applicable in a place-based manner to meet local, regional and statewide expectations of Oregonians over the long term, ideally seven generations.

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.
- Policies will encourage collaboration with Tribes to co-manage forests by pairing using western science and with Indigenous Knowledge, such that management decisions are truly partnerships and not simply information passed from one government to another.

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 and identities including those which have been, and continue to be, historically marginalized.
- The board and department will provide clear and accurate information about forestry in Oregon and accessible opportunities for all Oregonians to provide meaningful input on policies and decisions.

Workforce supply and demand are changing, labor 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 educational requirements for a trained and skilled workforce that will support the work needed in Oregon forests while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting carbon storage in living trees and long-lasting wood products. Educational and employment opportunities will include communities and identities that have been and continue to be excluded from the profession.

Commented [1]: Edits from Brenda and Joy

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- 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.

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- 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.

v12-11-23

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Commented [2]: Previous language (presented to Board 10-19-23)

v12-11-23

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

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.*

VISION

Complex and resilient forest ecosystems that endure and adapt.

Commented [3]: Added back in per suggestion from Chandra

GOALS and STRATEGIES

Resilient Forests

Goal: To reduce the vulnerability of Oregon's forest from a myriad of catastrophic climate driven disturbances, ODF will direct its policy, management and educational actions to enable and promote all forest land managers to make intentional decisions that increase adaptive capacity of forest ecosystems.

Commented [4]: New language added from Mike and Ben

The Board of Forestry believes that all forest owners and stewards have a social responsibility to improve the resilience and adaptive capacity of their lands. The Department of Forestry has the tools to incentivise and support this work.

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 (years to decades to centuries). Beyond the legal requirement

v12-11-23

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.

Communities in rural, suburban, and urban environments can support forest adaptation if each individual in those communities can see their values represented in the outcomes of management decisions. A wide range of values include clean water, clean air, fish, wildlife, aesthetics, and timber for jobs and housing, recreation, and others. Complex, 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 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 to provide incentives to landowners to contribute to carbon storage and habitat management goals.
- 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.

v12-11-23

- Support management of forests where needed to protect human life and infrastructure, especially in the WUI and around the most vulnerable communities.
- 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 while maintaining the benefits to other species provided in the post-burn environment.
- 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 that engages local communities and uses Indigenous Knowledge and western science as the basis for safe, effective and strategic use of fire. Engage with vulnerable communities as well as tribes to support funding for strategic fuel reductions and repeated applications of prescribed burning.
- **Add: strategy for fuel load treatment.**

Resilient Communities

Goal: To reduce the vulnerability of Oregon's communities from changing climate and associated stressors and disturbances, policy and management decisions will foster healthy relationships between humans and forests.

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 approaches that contribute a full range of social, economic and ecological benefits should strive to enhance community resilience by meeting their needs over the long term.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote access for diverse communities to healthy forests for recreation, culture, education, and appreciation, in ways that are welcoming and inclusive to a wide range of identities and backgrounds represented among Oregonians.

v12-11-23

Ensure access that respects cultural resource protections, private ownership and societal benefits from privately owned lands.

- Promote forest and forestry related educational programs, technologies, pilot projects, forest management jobs, infrastructure and other tools to enhance forest resilience to climate change while promoting the viability and vitality of communities.
- Ensure management of forests contributes to clean water and air, and stores carbon, for all Oregonians.
- Collaborate with universities, other state and federal agencies, tribal nations, NGOs, and private industry to educate and engage communities on forest issues.
- Employ shared stewardship to support collaborative management across ownerships, promoting diverse strategies that maintain the full range of social values while storing carbon and adapting forests to the changing climate.
- Take a place-based approach to supporting resilient communities that recognizes unique characteristics, identities, and cultures represented historically and currently in that place.
- Engage with communities on place based plans to support community recovery from severe disturbances and enact plans to reduce risks in the future.

Wildfire Response

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 strategic management to mitigate hazards and control forest fuels, and the role for natural fire to occur where appropriate to enable ecological processes and patterns important to other

v12-11-23

species. 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.forestsandrangelands.gov/documents/strategy/natl-cohesive-wildland-fire-mgmt-strategy-addendum-update-2023.pdf>
 - Restore and maintain landscapes that can adapt to future climatic conditions while sustaining humans and other species.
 - Support fire adapted forests and communities; and
 - Respond to fire in ways that will enhance adaptability of the forest to future climatic conditions while protecting human life and property.
- 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

Goal: The Board and Department will 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.

v12-11-23

- Fire: Modernize Oregon's complete and coordinated wildfire protection system to respond to the increased severity and frequency 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 while maintaining the benefits to other species enabled by the fire. Encourage 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

Strengthen the public trust and confidence in ODF's ability to effectively accomplish its mission and provide excellent service to Oregonians.

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, inclusive 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

v12-11-23

- Build and enforce an agency governance structure that ensures consistent and transparent implementation of all agency functions.
- Establish and maintain visible voluntary programs and assistance for landowners and the public.
- Create and maintain strategic and operational plans that support accomplishment of the objectives in this document.
- Engage and collaborate regularly with the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon.
- Collaborate and coordinate with partners to identify and pursue opportunities and leverage efficiencies to accomplish individual and shared goals and objectives.
- Manage ODF's state forestlands to produce a blend of social, economic and environmental benefits to Oregonians, and demonstrate leadership in forest management.
- Instill trust and confidence in the agency and its work through transparency into operations and performance, consistent enforcement of laws and rules, financial accountability, and effective communications in delivery of services.
- Continue to build a diverse, innovative, and accountable workforce where employees understand and value their role in the agency's mission.
- Provide workforce development opportunities promoting a culture of safety, well-being, and learning that incorporates Tribal relations, climate smart forestry, and principles of diversity, equity and inclusion.

ACTIONS SECTION (NEW)

Going forward on actions:

- Actions can all be one section each for Board and agency
 - They don't need to go priority by priority
- Actions for the Board that align with how they operate – in alignment with the Board Policy Manual:
 - Approving and supporting other strategic plans that relate to their priorities:
 - 20-year strategy (support)
 - State Forests FMP (approve)
 - Etc.
 - Rulemaking related to their priorities

v12-11-23

- FPA updates
- Prescribed burning
- Etc.
- Approving and supporting Agency Request Budgets and associated Policy Option Packages that support policies
 - Forest resiliency funding/positions
 - Fire funding
 - Etc.
- Engagement
 - Tribes
 - Annual meeting
 - Field tours
 - Public
 - Continued public input into Board and agency work
 - Board meetings with socials and tours
 - Outreach/surveys
- Learning
 - Expert panel presentations to stay abreast of current science and issues – “culture of learning”
- Additional actions for agency (above +) building the strategic and operational plans, building the ARB and POPs, etc.

Additional Resources

Context/Further Information

LINKS will be provided

Climate-Smart forestry

National Wildfire Cohesive Strategy

Diversity, equity and inclusion

Tribal relations

v12-11-23

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>

2024 Finalize Vision/Action Planning and Implementation

(Winter/Spring)

v12-11-23

Community Engagement / Public Review

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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