

Federal Forest Working Group



***Retrospective of Accomplishments
and Ongoing Considerations
2009–2018***

Author

Pete Dalke
Senior Project Manager
Oregon Solutions
dalke@pdx.edu

Acknowledgements

The Oregon Solutions Federal Forest Working Group project has been made possible through support from the Oregon Governor’s Office and the leadership of the Federal Forest Advisory Committee, which authored the 2009 report “Achieving Oregon’s Vision for Federal Forestlands” for the Oregon Board of Forestry. Staff support for this Oregon Solutions project has come from a variety of supporters, most significantly the Oregon Governor’s Office, Oregon Legislature, Oregon Department of Forestry, and the US Forest Service. Additional support came from the Association of Oregon Counties, Oregon Business Council, Oregon Department of Energy, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Forest Resources Institute, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Sustainable Northwest, and The Nature Conservancy.

Oregon Solutions is grateful for the guidance and support of these entities and would also like to thank the many additional stakeholders in the Federal Forest Working Group, including local forest collaborative participants, forest management professionals, nonprofits, researchers, and government agencies who framed discussions and provided technical support, and in total provided invaluable input into the work of implementing the recommendations outlined in the 2009 Federal Forest Advisory Committee report.

Oregon Solutions

National Policy Consensus Center
Mark O. Hatfield School of Government, Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, Oregon 97207-0751
503-725-9077, npccdesk@pdx.edu, www.pdx.edu/npcc



PREFACE

The collaborative efforts of the Federal Forest Working Group to address issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the health of Oregon's federal public forests and that of neighboring human communities has spanned three Oregon governors over more than a decade. The engagement and related direct efforts of each of these gubernatorial administrations and the state's executive branch agencies, federal management agencies, including the US Forest Service, and many diverse partners have been essential to the advancement of this work. This report attempts to capture the underpinnings of the Federal Forest Working Group, the accomplishments over time, and considerations for future focus.

The Federal Forest Working Group involved numerous stakeholders who worked collaboratively over the years to implement the recommendations contained in the 2009 Oregon Board of Forestry report, "Achieving Oregon's Vision for Federal Forestlands." The conveners from the Governor's Office for the effort have included Mike Carrier (under Governor Ted Kulongoski), Brett Brownscombe (under Governor John Kitzhaber and Governor Kate Brown), Lauri Aunan (under Governor Kate Brown), and Jason Miner (under Governor Kate Brown). The Oregon Department of Forestry provided key support for the project initially through Planning Director, Kevin Birch, and more recently through Partnership and Planning Program Director, Chad Davis.

Stakeholders participating with the Federal Forest Working Group over the years have included the following:

American Forest Resource Council
Ann Walker Consulting LLC
Associated Oregon Loggers
Association of O&C Lands
Association of Oregon Counties *†
Bark
Blue Forest Conservation
Boise Cascade
Communities for Healthy Forests
Coquille Indian Tribe*
Crag Law Center *†
Defenders of Wildlife
Ecotrust
Grayback Forestry
Hampton Affiliates
Hells Canyon Preservation Council
Integrated Resource Management
Iron Triangle LLC
Langdon Group
Local forest health collaboratives, coordinators and representatives

Lomakatsi Restoration
National Environmental Fuels Association
National Forest Foundation
Numerous local elected officials statewide
Ochoco Lumber
Office of US Congressman Kurt Schrader
Office of US Congressman Peter DeFazio
Office of US Senator Jeff Merkley
Office of US Senator Ron Wyden
Oregon Business Association
Oregon Business Council†
Oregon Business Plan
Oregon Department of Energy
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality†
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife†
Oregon Department of Forestry†
Oregon Forest Industries Council
Oregon Forest Resources Institute†
Oregon Governor's Office, Natural Resources Office†
Oregon Governor's Office, Regional Solutions Teams†
Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association
Oregon State University, School of Forestry and Forestry Extension
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Oregon Wild
Pacific Rivers Council
Pinchot Institute for Conservation
Portland General Electric
Rural Development Initiatives
Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition
Sustainable Northwest†
The Nature Conservancy *†
University of Oregon Ecosystem Workforce Program
US Bureau of Land Management†
US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service
US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development
US Endowment for Forestry and Communities (for Restoration Fuels LLC)
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Forest Service†

US Forest Services, Pacific Northwest Research Station
Western Environmental Law Center
Wisewood Energy

**Oregon Board of Forestry's Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee original members.*

†Signatories on the original Federal Forest Advisory Committee—Ad hoc Implementation Work Group Declaration of Cooperation

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In January 2009, the Oregon Board of Forestry adopted a report from their Federal Forest Advisory Committee (FFAC) entitled *Achieving Oregon's Vision for Federal Forestlands*, hereinafter referred to as the FFAC 2009 report.¹ The purpose of the FFAC 2009 report was to set forth “a vision and set of key goals that should be pursued on federal forestlands to create forests that are ecologically sustainable, economically viable, and appreciated by all stakeholders. It presents recommendations to implement the FFAC’s vision and includes specific policy steps necessary to achieve the vision.” The FFAC 2009 report “articulates Oregon’s interests at the national policy level and is intended to guide the state’s participation in planning the future of Oregon’s federal forestlands.”

The Oregon Board of Forestry adopted the FFAC 2009 report’s vision for Oregon’s federal forestlands as “a legacy, a refuge, and a resource loved and celebrated by our citizens, inhabited by healthy populations of fish and wildlife, and managed with humility, wisdom, and innovation to sustain the economic, environmental, social, and cultural well-being of our rural and urban communities.” To address this vision, the FFAC believed addressing complex and interrelated problems of our public forests requires a strategy at different scales: solutions at the state and local level, and solutions at the national level. They also believed that actions at both scales must be implemented simultaneously.

The Oregon Board of Forestry adopted the FFAC’s vision for Oregon’s federal forestlands as “a legacy, a refuge, and a resource loved and celebrated by our citizens....”

The FFAC 2009 report laid out five recommendations for pursuing solutions at the state and local level:

Recommendation 1. The Oregon Governor and the Oregon Legislature should create a federal forestland liaison program to facilitate and support federal agency and local community efforts to improve forest health on federal forestlands.

Recommendation 2. The Oregon Governor and the Oregon Legislature should assist federal agencies in providing administrative, financial, and technical resources to local collaborative partnerships to build trust and help identify scientifically-informed and socially-acceptable forest management projects to improve forest health. State funds should be managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry as one element of the federal forestland liaison program. They recommend that state and federal funding be sufficient to create three new collaborative processes annually and provide ongoing support for existing collaborations.

Recommendation 3. Local collaborative groups in cooperation with state and federal agencies should first assess forest health conditions and then plan projects at the

1. Available online at [Achieving Oregon’s Vision for Federal Forestlands](#).

landscape scale to address high priority needs. By planning at the landscape scale, treatments can be designed to improve the ecological effectiveness and efficiency of actions taken. To address the scale of the problem, it is their recommendation that these collaboratives convene around a geographic area of at least 100,000 acres.

Recommendation 4. Collaborative groups should define and delineate the amount and characteristics of older forests that should be conserved and reestablished to maintain ecological sustainability and resiliency as part of their landscape assessment.

Recommendation 5. Leaders from state, federal, county, and tribal governments, and private forestland owners should meet on a regular basis to discuss and coordinate policies that affect forest health issues and the recommendations in this report.

Specific action items to implement each recommendation were further discussed in the body of the FFAC 2009 report. Implementing the five state- and local-level recommendations became the focus of the eventual Oregon Solutions project called the Federal Forest Working Group.

The Governor’s Natural Resources Office convened an initial meeting in January 2009 to discuss the FFAC 2009 report, and to identify opportunities to leverage public, private, and nonprofit resources in the absence of state funding for implementation. The Oregon Department of Forestry, Sustainable Northwest, the Oregon Business Council, the Association of Oregon Counties, The Nature Conservancy, and the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University participated in the meeting. The group asked for Oregon Solutions’ assistance in drafting an initial state-level Declaration of Cooperation² set of agreements to align implementation of the report’s recommendations with state agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the US Forest Service, as well as anticipated federal economic stimulus funds for forest-related jobs.

Implementing the five state and local level recommendations became the focus of the eventual Oregon Solutions project called the Federal Forest Working Group.

The earlier success of the Oregon Solutions’ Lakeview Biomass Project team bolstered enthusiasm for replication and similar results in other rural communities.³

2. The Declaration of Cooperation, while not a binding legal contract, is evidence to, and a statement of, the good faith and commitment of each of the signing parties. The parties to a Declaration of Cooperation have, through a collaborative process, agreed and pledged their cooperation and leveraging of resources to complete a specific project.

3. The Collins Companies opened a \$6.6 million small diameter sawmill, serving 495,000 acres of public and private forest and retained eighty local jobs. Planning and engineering for a twenty-six megawatt biomass cogeneration plant also began at the same time. Iberdrola Renewables began work on the biomass project, but stopped at the end of 2011 due to market conditions. Since then, [Red Rock Biofuels](#) broke ground in 2018 on a \$320 million jet and diesel fuel refinement facility to convert woody biomass and agricultural waste into usable fuels.

After four months of work to align commitments in support of implementing recommendations in the FFAC 2009 report, stakeholders signed an Oregon Solutions' Declaration of Cooperation in April 2009. In addition to the stakeholders at the initial January 2009 meeting, the Declaration of Cooperation signatories included the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, the Crag Law Center, the US Forest Service, the US Bureau of Land Management, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

The Declaration of Cooperation brought together the key stakeholders needed to create the opportunity for meaningful implementation of the FFAC 2009 report recommendations. This included support for an FFAC Implementation Work Group and efforts to facilitate the effective and timely leverage of funding, technical resources, and needed administrative actions to begin implementation.

The original ad hoc FFAC Implementation Work Group was founded on the principle that a collaborative and sustainable partnership of federal, state, and local governments, forest industries, environmental groups, and other nongovernmental organizations could add value to efforts aimed at improving forest health, economic vitality, and social and environmental benefits for Oregon's federal forestlands and forest-associated communities.

The original ad hoc FFAC Implementation Work Group was founded on the principle that a collaborative and sustainable partnership of federal, state, and local governments, forest industries, environmental groups, and other nongovernmental organizations could add value to efforts aimed at improving forest health, economic vitality, and social and environmental benefits for Oregon's federal forestlands and forest-associated communities.

The agencies and entities who signed onto the Declaration of Cooperation agreed to participate in the FFAC Implementation Work Group—which ultimately came to be known as the Federal Forest Working Group (FFWG)—to do the following:

- Promote and encourage the formation of local collaborative partnerships.
- Provide a neutral forum to work directly with local partnerships in facilitating their formation and implementation.
- Seek to provide administrative, financial, and technical resources to local collaborative partnerships to build trust and help identify scientifically-informed and socially-acceptable forest management projects to improve forest health.
- Mutually support the leveraging of resources needed for implementation of the collaboratives and other recommendations of the FFAC, as appropriate given each stakeholder's resources, expertise, and mission.

- Advocate for, and identify, specific opportunities for linking economic stimulus funding to implementation.
- Support the development of, and advocate for, projects that improve forest health and resiliency.
- Provide strategic technical assistance to the US Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service in support of local collaborative processes.
- Link local collaborative partnerships to outside technical expertise as needed.
- Organize regularly scheduled meetings of the chief executives who have forestland management responsibilities to discuss and coordinate policies that affect forest health issues and the recommendations of the FFAC 2009 report.
- Identify any other initial stakeholders who should be considered for participating as a member of the work group.

*The Federal Forest Working Group
“has become a critical hub in
advancing federal forest health
in Oregon.”*

The FFWG meaningfully advanced the commitments above through collaborative work spanning the engagement of three governors’ administrations (Kulongoski, Kitzhaber, and Brown) and many diverse partners over a decade. As described below, the group leveraged resources and took relevant actions in pursuit of implementing the FFAC 2009 report recommendations.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Following the April 2009 Declaration of Cooperation, and with Oregon Solutions serving a facilitation and process management role, the FFWG began conducting work through regular meetings convened by the Oregon Governor’s Office as well as other efforts of numerous FFWG stakeholders.

The FFWG was soon recognized as an important center of multi-stakeholder collaboration. The Policy Playbook for the 2011 Oregon Leadership Summit noted that the FFWG “has become a critical hub in advancing federal forest health in Oregon. The FFAC laid out a vision and recommendations in its 2009 report, and the working group has been crafting next steps.”⁴

The FFWG collaboratively engaged in a number of projects, including building support for efforts to establish a federal forest program at the Oregon Department of Forestry, expanding opportunities for and the effectiveness of local and statewide forest collaboration, and

4. Oregon Business Plan, “Policy Playbook: Time to Deliver,” 2011 Oregon Leadership Summit, December 12–13, 2011, http://oregonbusinessplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2010_agenda_and_plan.pdf.

leveraging resources to implement new federal authorities for federal forest management. The FFWG also vetted federal forest management tools provided by Congress, including the following:

- Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (2009 federal legislation)
- Insect and Disease Designations: Categorical Exclusions (2014 farm bill)
- Stewardship Contracting Authority (2014 farm bill)
- Good Neighbor Authority (2014 farm bill)⁵

Ultimately, the FFWG contributed substantially to bringing recommendations from the FFAC 2009 report and commitments from the Declaration of Cooperation into reality.

The FFWG served as a forum for stakeholders to share information across sectors of interest as well as get quick information on various programs, related tools, and efforts. It also served as a place where discussions and debates were encouraged, all of which supported the expansion of community-based forest collaboration efforts on all eleven national forests in Oregon.

The efficiency of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process was a constant topic. In 2012, the US Forest Service planning process was changed from an appeals process to an objection process (formally known as the “pre-decisional administrative review process”). The US Forest Service believed providing a pre-decisional objection opportunity would allow more open communication that would help people understand issues and consider resolution more proactively. This change aligned with the expanding public interest in a more collaborative approach to multiple-use public forest management. Significantly, since 2009, there has been no new litigation of NEPA forest management decisions in Oregon where a local forest collaborative group was involved in the decision.

Ultimately, the FFWG contributed substantially to bringing recommendations from the FFAC 2009 report and commitments from the Declaration of Cooperation into reality. The key programs, projects, and efforts enabled by FFWG include the following:

- **2010–2012:** The FFWG supported efforts to implement Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLR) projects utilizing this new approach and funding provided to the US Forest Service by Congress. Results included that three of the first twenty CFLR projects nationwide were initiated in Oregon:⁶

5. Good Neighbor Authority allows the US Forest Service and US Bureau of Land Management to pass federal funds through to state agencies to implement management and restoration actions on federal land managed by the agencies. In 2018, Congress expanded Good Neighbor Authority opportunities for projects.

6. William H. Butler and Courtney A. Schultz (2019), *A New Era for Collaborative Forest Management: Policy and Practice insights from the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program*, Table 1.1 Summary Landscape Project Characteristics.

1. Deschutes Skyline (Deschutes National Forest, 2010)
 Link: <http://deschutescollaborativeforest.org/>
 Landscape area (acres): 257,850
 Proposed treatment area (acres): 60,000
 CFLR funds requested: \$10,057,000

2. Southern Blues Restoration Coalition (Malheur National Forest, 2012)
 Link: <http://www.bluemountainsforestpartners.org/work/research-and-reports/>
 Landscape area (acres): 877,900
 Proposed treatment area (acres): 271,980
 CFLR funds requested: \$27,500,000

3. Lakeview Stewardship Group (Fremont-Winema National Forest, 2012)
 Link: <http://lcri.org/forest-collaboration/>
 Landscape area (acres): 662,289
 Proposed treatment area (acres): 150,000
 CFLR funds requested: \$28,100,000

- **2013:** The FFWG produced a policy option package to “provide staff and budget support to local collaborative groups in the dry fire prone forests of southern and eastern Oregon.” The Oregon Board of Forestry approved advancing the package, and it was carried forward in the Oregon Governor’s recommended budget. The Oregon Legislature subsequently approved initial funding to the Oregon Department of Forestry for a Federal Forest Restoration program to include technical assistance and science support for local collaborative groups working with the US Forest Service and US Bureau of Land Management to implement management projects (\$2.9 million). This funding marked Oregon’s initial decision to invest state tax dollars to advance forest management work on federally-owned public lands.

- **2015:** The Oregon Legislature provided continued funding for the Federal Forest Restoration program at the Oregon Department of Forestry, including one-time funding for staff as well as increased technical assistance and science support for local collaborative groups working with federal agencies to implement management projects (\$5 million). Attachment A includes revisions to the FFWG vision and purpose statement made by the stakeholders to reflect the expanded state funding and intent for program implementation on a statewide basis.

- **2016:** The state of Oregon signed a Good Neighbor Authority master agreement with the US Forest Service.⁷ The Oregon Department of Forestry and the Oregon

7. In March 2015, Oregon Governor Brown, Oregon State Forester, Doug Decker, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Director, Curt Melcher, signed a master Good Neighbor Agreement with the US Forest Service.

Department of Fish and Wildlife immediately worked to identify and administer the first state-federal Good Neighbor Authority projects in Oregon.⁸

- **2017:** The Oregon Legislature provided the Oregon Department of Forestry with permanent base-budget funding for Federal Forest Restoration program staff, as well as technical assistance and science support for local collaborative group work on management projects (\$3 million). They also provided expenditure authority for the State Implementation Partnership with the US Forest Service and US Bureau of Land Management. This partnership effort, leveraging additional support for local collaborations, and the state’s use of Good Neighbor Authority tools started to be referred to as the “Oregon Model” to increase resilience on federal lands and provide important ecosystem, economic, and social benefits to all Oregonians.
- **2018:** The Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 4118 regarding use of the Good Neighbor Authority and provided an additional \$500,000 for project implementation through the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. A contract was signed for the first Good Neighbor Authority timber sale in Oregon: Paddock Butte on the Fremont-Winema National Forest. As of April 2019, the Oregon Department of Forestry has completed sixteen projects and has another twenty-one projects in progress across seven national forests in Oregon. This work includes commercial timber sales and noncommercial fuel reduction activities, using contractors and Oregon Department of Forestry seasonal employees to implement project work.⁹
- **2019.** The Oregon Legislature approved the Oregon Department of Forestry budget for fiscal year 2019–2021, which includes \$1.5 million per year for the Federal Forest Restoration program to provide financial and technical support to local forest collaborative groups, issue contracts to increase the pace of project approval, and develop and implement Good Neighbor Authority projects. A recent report shows that the \$1.4 million state investment in grants to local collaborative groups since 2014 has leveraged at least an additional \$2.5 million in financial and in-kind support from collaborative participants and partners. The funded groups have collaborated on nearly 1.9 million acres of federal forestland in Oregon.¹⁰

8. A fact sheet, “Federal Forest Restoration Program—Use of the Good Neighbor Authority 2016–2018 Activities and Outcomes,” is available online at https://ewp.uoregon.edu/sites/ewp.uoregon.edu/files/FS_16.pdf.

9. Chad Davis, Oregon Department of Forestry Partnership and Planning Director, written testimony to the Oregon House Natural Resources Committee, April 3, 2019, <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/186829>.

10. Emily Jane Davis, Anna Santo, and Eric M. White (2019), “Collaborative Capacity and Outcomes from Oregon’s Federal Forest Restoration Program.” University of Oregon Ecosystem Workforce Program Working Paper Number 92, ewp.uoregon.edu/sites/ewp.uoregon.edu/files/WP_92.pdf.

Additional FFWG projects and products have included the following (in chronological order):

- The FFWG advocated for the creation of the Community Capacity and Land Stewardship Grant Program implemented with US Forest Service Region 6 and the National Forest Foundation. The program has resulted in sixty awards to Oregon groups—grants totaling \$1.07 million—to increase the capacity of organizations implementing large scale restoration projects.¹¹ (2011–2019)
- Stakeholders worked together to produce a report to consider the economic impact of doubling the average number of acres treated annually to benefit and restore forest ecosystem health on Oregon’s dry-side national forestlands. The report, National Forest Health Restoration: An Economic Assessment of Forest Restoration on Oregon’s Eastside National Forests, showed that \$1 million spent on restoration could generate as much as \$5.7 million in economic returns (2012). This report was highly relevant to the 2013 Oregon Legislature’s decision to support collaborative federal forest management work with state tax dollars.
- An initial survey of forest collaborative groups led to the compilation of an Oregon Forest Collaboratives: Statewide Inventory (2013). The report was completed by Oregon Solutions staff at the direction of the FFWG. Over half of Oregon’s twenty-six collaboratives are fairly new, having formed since 2011.¹² The FFWG was instrumental in identifying resources to support local forest collaboration needs, including formation of new collaborative groups (e.g., Harney County Restoration Partnership, Umatilla Forest Collaborative Group, Wasco County Forest Collaborative Group, South Santiam All Lands Collaborative, and Wild Rivers Coast Collaborative).¹³ The US Forest Service discussed the need for accelerated restoration in the Blue Mountains of northeastern Oregon and southeastern Washington, where existing collaborative groups were actively engaged with the US Forest Service in landscape-scale restoration projects, with the FFWG.
- The US Forest Service proposed the Eastside Restoration Strategy (2013) to restore ecological resiliency and ensure socio-economic viability of eastside communities. The intent was to accelerate the pace and scale of restoration on more than 2.6 million acres of national forestlands.
- There were efforts to identify solutions to keep existing mill infrastructure viable, especially around the Malheur National Forest. According to Scotta Callister of the Blue Mountain Eagle, “The possible shutdown of the only operating sawmill in Grant and

11. Personal communication with Adam Liljeblad, Director, Conservation Awards, National Forest Foundation.

12. Emily Jane Davis, Lee Cerveny, Meagan Nuss, and David Seesholtz (2015), *Oregon’s Forest Collaboratives: A Rapid Assessment*. Research Contribution Summaries - RCS 1, Forest Research Laboratory, College of Forestry, Oregon State University, Corvallis, https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/concern/technical_reports/6t053h28v.

13. The statewide collaborative inventory was updated and expanded by the US Forest Service Regional Office in 2017, https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd567241.pdf.

Harney counties stirred a full-court press by local, state, and federal officials to find a way to preserve what was seen as a vital tool for restoring the health of the forests.” Results included the US Forest Service increased program of work on the Malheur National Forest. (2012–2014)

“For eastern Oregon...projects that have input from a forest collaborative group are less likely to be appealed.”

- Stewardship contracting implementation began. Use of stewardship contracting as a tool to help accomplish more forest restoration has continued to increase both on National Forests on the eastside of Oregon and for numerous projects in western Oregon, especially on the Siuslaw National Forest.¹⁴
 - A ten-year stewardship contract on the Malheur National Forest was awarded as part of the US Forest Service accelerated eastside restoration effort (2013). This enabled the last remaining lumber mill in Grant County to invest \$2 to \$3 million in small log breakdown, dry kiln and boiler work at the facility, retaining jobs, and creating new opportunities. A public benefit company was subsequently formed and announced planning for a \$15 million investment in a torrefaction facility (2017). Groundbreaking on the facility, Restoration Fuel LLC, took place in June 2019.¹⁵
 - The Siuslaw National Forest volunteered to pilot the US Forest Service's fledgling stewardship authorities around 2001, and is a recognized leader in the use of stewardship contracting and retained receipts to advance restoration projects both on and off the forest. The Siuslaw National Forest works with the Siuslaw Stewardship program (see <http://www.cascadepacificstewardship.org/>). The partnership is a forest collaboration hosted by Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development (a 501c3 nonprofit) and made up of a collection of individuals and organizations to promote forest restoration and support local communities.
- The Senate Bill 357 Task Force involved the FFWG and led to the development of the SB 357 report to the legislature relating to the fundamental question of what state-level leadership actions Oregon can take that are relatively within its ability to control, and that will have long-term, pragmatic effects in advancing the pace and

14. “The Federal Forest Dashboard: Management and Restoration Indicators for Six National Forests in Eastern Oregon” includes a metric for stewardship contracting that shows that recently more timber harvest acres have been offered through stewardship contracts than traditional timber sales. <http://orsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Dashboard-1-31-17-version.pdf>, p. 6.

15. A fact sheet on the economic activity resulting from the Malheur 10-year stewardship contract can be found at https://ewp.uoregon.edu/sites/ewp.uoregon.edu/files/FS_13.pdf.

scale of federal forest management. The report contains relevant options for potential new funding mechanisms to drive increased funding into forest management work. (May 2014)

- The FFWG engaged with the framing and delivery of a federal forest field tour for Oregon legislators. (Fall 2014)
- Research regarding litigation of NEPA decisions was presented to the FFWG. The findings suggested that “for eastern Oregon...projects that have input from a forest collaborative group are less likely to be appealed.”¹⁶
- Efforts were started to better address the need for focused training for local forest collaborative groups. That training addresses the following:
 - Building trust and productive collaborative relationships,
 - Effective collaborative decision-making
 - Dealing with issues of risk and uncertainty in the context of specific collaborative issues and questions (2015)

- Mapping to better understand the geographical distribution of Oregon’s community-based forest collaborations was completed. More than twenty-five community-based forest collaborative groups in Oregon have been mapped by the University of Oregon Ecosystem Workforce Program. An interactive version of the map and additional resources for effective forest collaboration were made available online at the Oregon Explorer Forest Collaboratives webpage: Oregon Explorer “Forest Collaborative” web resources. (2015–2017)

Efforts have evolved to include new tools and new opportunities as part of the Oregon Model for partnering on federal lands management. However, much remains to be done.

- “Federal Forest Dashboard: Management and Restoration Indicators for Six National Forests in Eastern Oregon.” The FFWG’s dashboard report represented a unique and focused attempt to track management and restoration on national forests and share information in a more meaningful way with stakeholders, policy makers, and the public. Like gauges in a vehicle, the dashboard displays a range of data at a glance. The dashboard is based on clearly defined methodology that allows changes to be tracked over time. This initial dashboard drew as much as possible from existing US Forest Service data sources, accessed additional data to track indicators not tracked

16. Brent M. Summers, The Effectiveness of Forest Collaborative Groups at Reducing the Likelihood of Project Appeals and Objections in Eastern Oregon, (master’s thesis), Portland State University, 2014. See a PowerPoint presentation of the research.

by the US Forest Service, and focused on the dry forests of eastern Oregon (Deschutes, Fremont-Winema, Malheur, Ochoco, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests). (2017).¹⁷

- The FFWG advanced prescribed fire and smoke management discussions that ultimately resulted in a Smoke Management Advisory Committee decision to support increased use of prescribed fire to address forest health and resilience. (2017–2018). In early 2019, the Oregon Board of Forestry and the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission, with input from the Oregon Health Authority, completed a coordinated rulemaking to allow greater use of prescribed fire as a tool to improve forest health and resiliency.

ONGOING CONSIDERATIONS

Over the last ten years, at least three of the five FFAC 2009 report strategic recommendations dedicated to solving problems at the state and local levels have largely been addressed. A federal forest program funded by the Oregon Legislature exists at the Oregon Department of Forestry. At least one community-based forest collaborative group is meeting and working directly with each of the respective eleven national forests in Oregon. These collaborative efforts are being supported with a combination of federal, state, local, private, and philanthropic resources. During this time, the FFWG has met regularly to discuss forest health issues and coordinate policy. Efforts have evolved to include new tools and new opportunities as part of the Oregon Model for partnering on federal lands management. However, much remains to be done. Below is a summary compilation of each of the five state and local recommendations from the FFAC 2009 report, the current status of their implementation in light of the FFWG’s focus over time, and considerations of ongoing relevance.

Over the last ten years, at least three of the five FFAC 2009 report strategic recommendations dedicated to solving problems at the state and local levels have largely been addressed.

Recommendation 1. Create a liaison program. As part of implementing the FFAC 2009 report recommendations, the Oregon Department of Forestry has developed a core business statement for the effort (Attachment B).

Ongoing consideration: Stakeholder support for the Federal Forest Restoration program is essential to ensure continued state funding for the effort.

Recommendation 2. Allocate ongoing resources to local collaboration processes. The combination of federal, state, local, private, and philanthropic resources, including state

17. The dashboard data was updated in 2018. (See http://orsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Federal-Forest-Dashboard-3_15_2018-PowerPoint.pdf.)

legislative investment through Oregon Department of Forestry's Federal Forest Restoration program, which supports local collaboration efforts, is limited, particularly for establishing effective new collaboration efforts.

These discussions need to continue in a neutral, transparent forum where efforts to highlight examples of areas with emerging agreement are shared as well as areas where disagreement persists.

Ongoing consideration: The local forest collaboratives have become a de facto governance approach for input to public land management.¹⁸ Administrative support and skilled facilitation of these processes is essential to transcending differences. Capacity building in the form of funding and technical assistance for administration, facilitation, science support, monitoring, and trainings and workshops to develop shared collaboration skill sets will be critical to ensuring the ongoing success of these community-based efforts.

Recommendation 3. Assess and plan at the landscape scale. The early vision of the FFWG was to apply the principles in the FFAC 2009 report at a very large landscape scale to the national forests and US Bureau of Land Management lands in Oregon. More projects are being planned at a landscape scale than before 2009, but, arguably, not enough. The number of acres included in the planning areas covered by NEPA documents has been increasing in recent years, especially when local collaborative groups are included early in forest management project planning discussions. The US Forest Service has worked in new ways to focus efforts on planning projects at the landscape scale in order to address the extent of the forest health problems. As a result, there are several planning projects, engaging community-based collaboratives, convening around a geographic area of at least 100,000 acres (for example, previously mentioned CFLR projects, the Malheur National Forest ten-year stewardship contract as well as the 100,000 acre Lower Joseph Project on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, and the all-lands Rogue Basin Cohesive Forest Restoration Strategy).

Ongoing Consideration: There remain hundreds of thousands of acres of federal forestlands needing NEPA planning and related restoration work. In addition, there is a significant backlog of NEPA-ready acres in the context of restoration, including prescribed fire use to address wildfire resilience, with inadequate funding for implementation. The absence of restoration at appropriate pace and scale leaves these lands and nearby communities very much susceptible to catastrophic wildfire impacts in these new times of global climate change.

Recommendation 4. Define and delineate the amount and characteristics of older forests that should be conserved and reestablished to maintain ecological sustainability and resiliency as

18. Emily Jane Davis et al. (2017), "Comparison of USDA Forest Service and Stakeholder Motivations and Experiences in Collaborative Federal Forest Governance in the Western United States," *Environmental Management*, 60(5): 908-921. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-017-0913-5>.

part of their landscape assessment. This continues to be the most vexing recommendation from the FFAC 2009 report. The FFWG has attempted to discuss and frame older forest definition, delineation, and management in various ways with limited success. The zones of agreement around older forest definition have increased over time. Management-related zones of agreement have also evolved with various collaborative groups having reached agreement at the project level on issues including thinning in older forest stands, removal of certain trees (e.g., grand fir) larger than twenty-one inches, and use of prescribed fire. The current scientific and policy discussions regarding forest carbon sequestration have added urgency and relevance to this task.

Consideration: Conversations about older forests continue to be a challenging mix of science and social values. These discussions need to continue in a neutral, transparent forum where efforts to highlight examples of areas with emerging agreement are shared as well as areas where disagreement persists. The current global climate science and related state carbon sequestration policy proposals further highlight the need for agreement-seeking to result in broader agreement on policy implementation.

Recommendation 5. Leaders should meet on a regular basis to discuss and coordinate policies. The FFWG has met regularly to discuss forest health issues and coordinate policy. This work has effectively addressed this recommendation. Forest management and restoration efforts across the state have evolved to include new tools and new opportunities as part of the Oregon Model for partnering on federal lands management.

Consideration: Continuation of a high level, neutral discussion table remains relevant as interested local, state, and federal agencies, and affected stakeholders continue to work towards more effective, contemporary, coordinated, and scientifically-sound policies and management paradigms. A determination is needed on how and where this valuable broad decision-maker and stakeholder dialogue will continue on a regular basis. This dialogue is especially important if there is a desire for furthering consideration of a larger investment to increase the pace and scale of work on federal forests as contemplated in the SB 357 report developed in 2014.

Current Ongoing Discussions

On January 30, 2019, Oregon Governor Brown signed [Executive Order 19-01](#) establishing a Governor's Council on Wildfire Response (also known as the wildfire council). This effort has three committees including one related to mitigating the risks of wildfire to forest health and resilience, public health, local communities and economies, and other values. This council and its committees include several individuals and entities who have participated in the FFWG. The conversation between management agencies (state and federal), decision makers, and diverse partners relevant to advancing the FFAC 2009 report's recommendation on landscape-level planning and implementation needs (as well as other related recommendations) has moved from the FFWG to this wildfire council and related mitigation committees. This effort is

expected to build upon the FFWG's list of accomplishments. Work products and recommendations are to be delivered starting in September and December 2019.

The wildfire council is focused on the development of a report and recommendations relevant to engaging the state legislature, congressional offices, federal and state agencies, local government, and affected private and public non-governmental interests in a new public-private partnership that further builds on the Oregon Model for partnering on wildfire-related risks and forest management work. Related to this effort is the implementation of a recently signed shared stewardship agreement between the State of Oregon and US Department of Agriculture, which is connected to and will follow on the wildfire council's work. The shared stewardship agreement is documented in a memorandum of understanding that includes background, purpose, intent, and administrative details for the shared stewardship approach (see Attachment C).

As a part of implementing the shared stewardship agreement, the state is to take several actions including:

- Convene a diverse group of stakeholders to help develop a statewide twenty-year strategic plan focused on fire-prone forests and ecosystems of eastern and southwestern Oregon.
- Develop a financial implementation plan that incorporates public-private partnership, including conservation finance to increase scale, by investing in appropriately-scaled infrastructure in rural communities.
- Help develop a set of metrics that measure progress on creating the outcomes of healthy, resilient forests; vibrant local communities; healthy watersheds with functional aquatic habitat; and quality outdoor opportunities for all Oregonians.
- Help implement restoration using the Good Neighbor Authority.
- Inform investments in the Federal Forest Restoration Program using the priorities identified in the twenty-year strategic plan and Oregon Forest Action Plan.
- Support US Forest Service decisions developed collaboratively under the agreement and Oregon's collaborative approach for developing local solutions.

ATTACHMENT A. FFWG Purpose and Vision Statement

Federal Forest Working Group

Beginning with the 2015–17 biennium, the intent of the Legislature and the Oregon Department of Forestry was to expand the implementation efforts statewide.

Purpose and Vision Statement, Revised September 10, 2015:

“The purposes of the FFWG are to:

- Advance collaboratively driven landscape-scale, active restoration of federal forestlands throughout Oregon;
- Identify and remove policy and financial barriers; and
- Promote innovative solutions to restoration of forest and watershed health.

We will:

- Provide a forum for collaborative groups, federal and state agencies, counties, tribes, and interest groups to raise and solve barriers to accelerated restoration on federal lands (US Forest Service and US Bureau of Land Management);
- Support and contribute to maintaining and growing our innovative Federal-State Partnership that demonstrates new governance structures and ways of doing business together;
- Discuss and foster implementation of new and emerging governance structures that provide for meaningful involvement of community and collaborative leadership, including identifying the resources and conditions necessary to implement these collaborative structures;
- Articulate the need for a consistent supply of timber offered through restoration and forest management that is collaboratively supported; and,
- Work together to identify and secure increased, consistent, and/or diverse funding of collaborative approaches and implementation of landscape scale restoration projects.

These activities will restore forests, help sustain communities by creating jobs and maintaining forest-sector infrastructure, and enhance Oregon’s energy independence.

ATTACHMENT B. Core Business Statement

Oregon Department of Forestry Federal Forest Restoration Program

Core business statement

Accelerate the pace, scale and quality of forest restoration to increase the resilience of Oregon's federal forests, in a manner that leverages collaborative efforts and contributes to the long-term vitality of regional economies and rural communities.

Program principles:

- Partnership-oriented
- Transparent decision making
- Flexible and adaptable
- Increase system capacity
- Measurable metrics

The program also serves as a home for Good Neighbor Authority projects.

ATTACHMENT C. Memorandum of Understanding

Shared Stewardship Memorandum of Understanding Between the US Forest Service and the State of Oregon

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed August 13, 2019.

Excerpts from the agreement are below. The entire document can be accessed online at: <https://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/Oregon-Shared-Stewardship-Agreement.pdf>

Background:

The purpose of this MOU is to document the commitment of the State, represented by the Governor's Office and Oregon Department of Forestry, and the Forest Service to work collaboratively to create a shared stewardship approach for implementing land management activities in the state of Oregon.

The Forest Service and the State have a long history of collaboration. The Forest Service is a critical partner in Oregon's complete and coordinated fire protection system. The State and Forest Service use grant programs to cooperatively manage forest health issues across all forested lands in Oregon, provide technical and financial assistance to nonindustrial landowners, and support urban and community forest protection and management. The State and Forest Service collaborate on multiple monitoring and research projects. The State and Forest Service collaboration extends to the National Forest System with Oregon's Federal Forest Restoration Program; we jointly implement Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership projects, Landscape Scale Restoration projects, and Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) projects. Shared Stewardship is a logical evolution of this relationship.

Oregon is home to 26 forest collaborative groups that work to bring together diverse interests, find common ground, and build greater support for large-scale forest restoration projects. This local work is the foundation of what is known as the "Oregon Model." Financial support of local collaborative groups by both the State and the Forest Service is critical to achieving an increase in the pace, scale, and quality of restoration efforts. Needed restoration work spans forest types and ownership boundaries, and the current level of available funding requires prioritization.

The State and the Forest Service agree that a Shared Stewardship approach that includes federal, state, and local governments; Tribes; forest industries; environmental groups; other governmental organizations; and collaboratives can

play a significant role in creating healthy and resilient forested ecosystems, vibrant local economies, healthy watersheds with functional aquatic habitat, and quality outdoor experiences for all Oregonians.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this MOU is to formalize and document our intention to work together across Oregon's forests to achieve desired outcomes at the most appropriate scale. We will employ a strategy with three core elements:

1. Jointly determine management needs at the statewide scale;
2. Do the right work in the right place at the right scale; and
3. Use all available tools.