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## ***Senate Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development February 4 2013***

Background materials. Submitted to the Committee by Pete Dalke, Oregon Solutions staff to the Federal Forest Advisory Committee- ad hoc Implementation Working Group

### **Oregon's Federal Forest Advisory Committee and Collaboratives**

In 2006 the Oregon Board of Forestry created the Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee (FFAC), which represents a diverse range of stakeholder interests, and charged it with developing a “a vision and set of key goals that should be pursued on [F]ederal forestlands to create forests that are ecologically sustainable, economically viable, and appreciated by all stakeholders”<sup>1</sup> in Oregon. The recommendations developed by the FFAC were published in 2009. The executive summary of the FFAC report notes that in “in the current system of governance, Oregonians have relatively little direct influence on how these [Federal] forests are managed and used. Federal agencies manage 60 percent of the total forestland in the state, and Oregon cannot chart a sustainable, productive future for its forests without considering federal forestlands.”<sup>1</sup> The FFAC report identifies a series of national, state, and local recommendations. The FFAC’s state and local recommendations concentrate on supporting community-based collaborative groups to first assess forest health conditions and then plan projects at the landscape scale to address high priority needs.

Community-based forest health collaboratives have been emerging across Oregon over the last twenty years. The emergence of these collaborative partnerships has been in large part to provide review and provide recommendations for Federal forest management activities occurring near their communities. Starting with a handful of pioneering local partnership efforts in the 1990s, the number of community-based collaboratives identified in this report now exceeds twenty. As of 2012 there is at least one community-based collaborative group working with each of the 11 National Forests that are wholly, or in part, included within the State’s boundaries.

The FFAC’s Implementation Work Group (FFAC-IWG) is working to develop more stable administrative support, technical assistance, and project implementation funding mechanisms to contribute to organizational stability of Oregon collaboratives and facilitate the scaling-up of landscape-level agreement, treatment, restoration, monitoring, and evaluation activities of these groups. To assist this effort, Oregon Solutions staff gathered information for 23 collaborative groups and summarized into an Oregon State-wide Forest Collaborative Inventory (the “Inventory”). Of the 23 collaboratives

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<sup>1</sup>Achieving Oregon’s Vision for Federal Forestlands

[http://www.oregon.gov/odf/board/docs/ffac\\_color\\_report\\_and\\_cover\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/odf/board/docs/ffac_color_report_and_cover_for_web.pdf)

summarized in the Inventory, 14 are focused on “Dry Forest” landscapes and 9 are focused on “West-side Forest” landscapes.

Key findings about the 23 collaborative groups summarized in this Inventory include:

- The rate at which collaboratives are being created has increased substantially in the past decade.
- More than 170 organizations are engaged in the 23 collaborative groups.
- All 11 USFS National Forests and 7 of 9 BLM Districts in Oregon are engaged in collaboratives.
- Each collaboratives is typically engaged with just one USFS National Forest; in contrast, each USFS National Forest is typically engaged with two or more collaboratives.
- All West-side Forest Collaboratives have an "All Lands" focus; in contrast, most Dry Forest Collaboratives focus on "Public Lands".
- Dry Forest Collaboratives are characterized by more involvement by State, County, City, Conservation/Environmental NGOs, Professional Association NGOs, Private Forest Products and Management Business, and Private Energy Business organizations than are West-side Forest Collaboratives.
- West-side Forest Collaboratives are characterized by more involvement by Watershed Councils and Soil and Water Conservation District organizations than are Dry Forest Collaboratives.
- Although not yet formally quantified, anecdotal comments by collaborative contacts strongly suggest that collaboratives have significantly reduced litigation of Federal land management actions.
- Funding is the most-commonly reported need for Oregon collaborative groups.

The working draft of the Inventory is posted and maintained on-line at the FFAC-IWG webpage maintained by Oregon Solutions. <http://orsolutions.org/osproject/federal-forestlands>

## US Forest Service: Collaboration and the Law - Background Information

This information is from the *USFS Partnership Resource Center*:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/prc/legal-administrativeresources/collaboration-law>

The Forest Service and other federal agencies are authorized to work collaboratively with the public under a variety of laws and directives. Empowered by such, the agencies work regularly with partners, including tribes, states, other federal agencies, nonprofits, businesses, and communities.

**Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act**: Congress, under **Title IV of Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009** (PDF, 40 KB), established the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The purpose of the CFLR Program is to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes.

- [FS Resource Site on CFLRP](#)

**Healthy Forests Restoration Act**: The **Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003** significantly changed the way the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management do fuel reduction projects to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire. In addition to specifying how special fuels reduction projects should be created and implemented, the law also promotes use of biomass and small diameter materials; creates a forest reserve program; provides technical assistance for private landowners, and addresses insect infestations and other environmental threats to healthy forests.

- [FS Guidance and Direction on HFRA](#) (This site is located on the FS intranet and only accessible to FS employees.)
- [USDA and UDOI Comprehensive Strategy on HFRA](#)

**Stewardship Contracting**: The **2003 Appropriations Act (16 U.S.C. 2104 Note)** provides the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management ten-year authority to enter into stewardship contracts and agreements. Stewardship contracting is intended to promote collaborative working relationships with local communities, improve land conditions, and help develop sustainable rural economies by developing, implementing, and monitoring projects collaboratively. Final agency direction became effective December 12, 2005.

- [FS Stewardship Contracting Website](#)
- [Sustainable Northwest's Stewardship Contracting and Collaboration Best Practices Guidebook](#)

**Tribal Forest Protection Act (P.L. 108-278)**: The **Tribal Forest Protection Act** (TFPA) establishes a process for tribes to work collaboratively with federal agencies to perform hazardous fuel reduction and forest health projects on federal lands adjacent to tribal lands.

- [FS resource page on TFPA](#)

## Links to Additional Resources for Consideration

### **People Restoring America's Forests: 2012 Report on the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration**

**Program:** US Forest Service annual report on the CFLRP projects nationwide, including the three in Oregon (Deschutes, Fremont-Winema and Malheur National Forests).

<http://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/documents/cflrp/CoalitionReports/CFLRP2012AnnualReport20130102.pdf>

### **National Forest Health Restoration: An Economic Assessment of Forest Restoration on Oregon's Eastside**

**National Forests:** Prepared for Governor John Kitzhaber and Oregon's Legislative Leaders, November 26, 2012.

[http://www.oregon.gov/gov/docs/OR\\_Forest\\_Restoration\\_Econ\\_Assessment\\_Nov\\_2012.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/gov/docs/OR_Forest_Restoration_Econ_Assessment_Nov_2012.pdf)

**Help Rural Communities:** This is a 4-page summary of the "National Forest Health Restoration: An Economic Assessment of Forest Restoration on Oregon's Eastside National Forests", prepared December 2012.

[http://oregonforests.org/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NF\\_Restoration\\_Economic\\_Report.pdf](http://oregonforests.org/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NF_Restoration_Economic_Report.pdf)

### **Stewardship Contracting for Landscape-Scale Restoration**

[http://ewp.uoregon.edu/sites/ewp.uoregon.edu/files/downloads/WP\\_25.pdf](http://ewp.uoregon.edu/sites/ewp.uoregon.edu/files/downloads/WP_25.pdf)

### **Strategies for Front Line Collaboration: Lessons from Stewardship Contracting**

<http://www.businessofgovernment.org/report/strategies-supporting-frontline-collaboration-lessons-stewardship-contracting>