

2.0 Problem Statements/Potential Solutions

2.1 Natural Processes

Problem Statement: Natural processes have been disrupted in Oregon forests. Problems are most extreme in the dry forest types where unprecedented landscape scale forest health problems are resulting in the loss of key ecological components. Hydrologic regimes have been altered and conditions may not protect beneficial uses like water quantity and quality. Climate change is and will continue to tax the resiliency of federal forestlands and identifying the impacts is challenging. An integrated approach to forest restoration and fuels management that considers historic conditions, natural hydrology and adequate streamflows, fish and wildlife conservation, natural fire intervals, and silvicultural techniques is necessary to achieve long term management goals.

Problem Description: Natural processes on Oregon's federal forests have been modified by a number of factors. For example, decades of fire suppression and silvicultural practices on some federal forestlands have modified fire regimes and behavior producing changes in vegetative conditions – including changes in species composition, increased stand density, and a reduction in the large tree component – ultimately reducing forest resiliency and impacting aquatic habitat. Growth has dramatically exceeded removals on federal lands during the past decade causing a build up of fiber across the landscape. The results have been high tree mortality and fuels build-ups due to insects, disease and invasive species, and large un-natural wildfires resulting in impacts to wildlife habitat, water quality, private timber investments, structures in the wildland-urban interface, and public impacts from smoke. Without an increase in active management these conditions are expected to continue.

(Comment from Ralph - Growth has not necessarily exceeded the total removals through thinning/logging and decay. There is a natural flux on the forest. There are far more smaller-diameter trees than larger-diameter trees on the forest than existed historically. (Eastside Science Panel Report) As for active management, there needs to be a decrease in the existing road network and more active management to do so. On the other hands, there needs to be less fire suppression, old growth logging and road building.)

Water quantity and quality are inseparable issues. Adequate streamflows and natural hydrology help maintain high water quality in Oregon's rivers and streams. Water quality and quantity issues are linked to changes in land uses, increasing intensities of land management, growing demand for water, and uncertainty about the role climate change will play in long term supply. In the Pacific

Northwest, watershed health also is directly related to healthy populations of migratory salmon. Many measures of ecosystem performance, water quality, and watershed health have been linked to salmonid populations.

Climate change may be affecting forest and hydrological conditions in Oregon. If trends continue, changes from dry temperate forests to grasslands, moist forests to dry woodlands, and high-severity fires may eliminate entire forest types. This type of change would increase risks of species extinction, and reduce economic and social values derived from the forest. Management decisions will determine if federal forests will serve as net carbon sinks or carbon sources.

Potential Solutions

	Potential Solution	Add/Delete	Changes – issues to FFAC for Discussion
	<p>2.11 Issue/ impediment – 2.11a - Lack of understanding about large scale dynamic ecosystems and their management.</p> <p>2.11b - Currently many legal, economic, and administrative frameworks limit the ability to manage large scale dynamic ecosystems to provide for certainty at the expense of managing for dynamic ecosystems.</p>		
1	Create clear goals for the restoration of dynamic processes through landscape-level management plans that minimize static strategies, are highly prioritized, place-based and based on the best available science.	Modified - Potentially delete	Modified – added additional clarification and removed references to specific plans (land management plans and regulatory agency implementation plans).
2	Commission a study to review the current state of northwest forest law as it has been implemented through litigation against the federal agencies. Obtain an independent assessment that is informed by input from local and regional practitioners to determine which on-the-ground issues are driving the litigation and whether there are patterns to the court rulings against the agencies.	Modified	Added clarification and independent assessment
3	The federal agencies should increase the use of “Options Forestry” to create and act on learning opportunities. “Options Forestry” expands the range of management options and actions selected in controversial Environmental Impact Statements. (The Siuslaw National Forest’s Five Rivers Project provides an example where multiple strategies, proposed by different constituent groups, were selected as part of an alternative.) This approach includes an upfront assessment of the scientific uncertainties, and selects a variety of management options all designed to reach the same goal, The approach structures monitoring in a rigorous statistical design to test the effectiveness of each option at meeting the project’s goals.	Modified	Issue: Skeptical about the ability of the concept to function under very controversial situations. Worry that people will begin to accept the misconception that NEPA decisions should be based on compromise instead of environmental analysis.
4	The federal agencies need to invest in creating and then acting on learning opportunities. They should invest in research (pilot projects) to address the scientific uncertainties and benefits of controversial dual-purposes management practices. Pilot projects need to be able to test key hypothesis with guaranteed long term funding, and regulatory	Modified	

	flexibility that allows for short term and localized impacts that may provide long-term restorative benefits. The federal agencies should become strong partners in the Watershed Research Cooperative paired watershed studies to establish cause and affect relationships among physical and biological parameters.		
5	Federal land management agencies and federal and state regulatory agencies should work together to assess existing water quality standards to ensure they reflect knowledge of dynamic ecosystem processes and ensure landscape resiliency. These standards should consider disturbance and resultant variability of conditions across the landscape. Land management agencies could better integrate innovative forest management approaches that look beyond land uses and ownerships by participating innovative collaborative processes, development of IMAP methodologies, and integrating OWEB watershed assessment protocols that support the “Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.” These processes should recognize opportunities for enhanced water management, through water storage, and an overall net reduction of the negative hydrologic impacts of roads.	Modified	
6		Combined with #5	

	Potential Solution	Add/Delete	Changes – issues to FFAC for Discussion
	<p>2.18 Issue/ impediment – Lack of strategic plan for a transportation system (e.g., roads, culverts, ditches) in forests: impact, how maintain, funding; legacy federal forestland road networks are aging and in need of rehabilitation (existing roads, fire roads); how temporary are temporary roads in terms of their effects on the landscape; impact on county roads to access forest roads (maintenance); and connect to stewardship contracting (link to culvert replacement, etc.) and biomass.</p>		
7	<p>Separate mandated funding should be found to survey and upgrade the existing forest road network. Legislation should direct federal agencies to assess fish passage, stream crossing, and road location problems, road density in the watershed, fiscal maintenance capabilities, and develop road maintenance and abandonment plans. Federal agencies should work cooperatively with the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Oregon Department of Forestry to support basin and watershed-scale assessments and meet the goals of the “Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.” After careful study, roads that are found to have no long term value or pose a threat to watershed values, should be decommissioned or abandoned. The bill should have sufficient funding to hire best value and most capable crews to decommission the road system. The result should be a “key” or administrative road system that is permanent and all weather. The road system should be located strategically to provide for fire protection and other anticipated management actions, while producing as little impact on the natural ecosystem as possible. Collaboration with County and Tribal governments is essential when roads cross jurisdictional boundaries.</p>	Modify	<p>This issue is budget driven. There needs to be separate funding and a mandate for an assessment of conditions and planning for a permanent road system.</p>
8	<p>Congress needs to develop a new system to fund roads. There should be a separate line item in the budget to maintain a “key” or administrative road system that is permanent and all weather. This should include sufficient funding for properly trained crews to maintain and improve the road system. Non-timber projects such as fire suppression, fuels reduction, recreation, and others, which depend on the road system, should have an explicit budget component to</p>	Modify	<p>The Solution needed additional clarification and funding mechanisms.</p>

	support maintenance of the “key” transportation system. In addition, policies need to be changed to allow road use and other fees to be retained locally for maintenance. Collaboration with County and Tribal governments is essential when roads cross jurisdictional boundaries.		
9	To accomplish project work, a new “paradigm” for the use of low-impact temporary roads for projects should be developed (i.e., local projects road systems that may or may not be all weather but are low impact, temporary (e.g. no pipes, gravel removed, replanting, etc.), and removed after the project is completed). This plan needs to address how these roads will be built, and if classified as temporary, how to remove these roads from service and rehabilitate the forest to minimize impacts.	Modify	The Solution needed additional clarification No road is “truly temporary” as far as the effects upon aquatic ecosystems. ORVs exacerbate this problem, and thinning (opening up the forest) will as well, particularly in Eastern Oregon.
9a	As part of legislation on forest roads, Congress should identify ways to reduce the costs associated with building and maintaining the road system. This should include a comprehensive examination of the federal road standards and identifying and removing barriers to developing cooperative relationships with states and counties for maintenance agreements that cross ownership boundaries.	Add	Need to reduce costs and identify ways to work cooperatively on road maintenance with state and county. Reducing the costs associated with building new roads might provide a way to reduce costs of maintenance and increase funding for decommissioning and network reduction. The goal should be identifying ways to reduce costs of the roads system by limiting its growth all together.

	Potential Solution	Add/Delete	Changes – issues to FFAC for Discussion
	<p>2.19 Issue/ impediment – Certain federal forestlands (including juniper woodlands) in Oregon are over-stocked and are experiencing changes in species composition contributing to the threat of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncharacteristic wildfire • Forest insect pest and disease outbreaks • Losing key ecological components • Impact on the hydrologic cycle and watershed functions <p>Large areas of overstocked juniper woodlands also need treatment to limit the spread of juniper and restore healthy range conditions. During outbreaks, widespread tree mortality alters the forest ecosystem and makes it more susceptible to large scale wildfires.</p>		
10		Delete	
11	Management plans must provide a legitimate and reliable definition of the public-private interface and encourage private owners to take strategic action through good neighbor policies and incentives.	Modify	Identify “Good Neighbor” policies to encourage private owners to take action on their land and the expanded application of state fire safety policies in rural residential areas.
12	Ensure that management does not introduce non-native plants, insects and disease and that planning efforts assess the existing condition and invest in a plan to eradicate existing introductions.	Modify	<p>The use of new roads (whether temporary or not) contributes to the spread of invasive weeds, disease, and insects.</p> <p>Properly constructed roads can be instrumental and a good tool in curing the problems of invasive weeds, disease and insect.</p>
13		Delete	
14		Delete	
15	Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to identify and prioritize treatment opportunities across the landscape and across ownership boundaries with outcome based performance measures to track and monitor accomplishments.	Modify	Consider recommending statewide task force to consider the who, what, when, where of the needed work. Identify forest types, areas, map-based assessment and sideboards.
16	Develop programmatic assessments (EIS) with a purpose and need to increase landscape resiliency through a wide-range of alternatives. The assessment must be performed at the regional and landscape scale and provide for the tiering of action-oriented projects to increase the effectiveness of the recommendations and reduce overall planning costs. The more alternatives the better, including active restoration with/without removal of material and the reintroduction of fire.	Modify	1) Develop a list of scientifically controversial issues regarding the effectiveness of thinning treatments, 2) compare and contrast the advantages of road network reduction, range management modification to determine maximum gains in landscape resiliency per dollar invested, 3) examine past programmatic work to increase success of high-value projects.

<p>17</p>	<p>Fund long-term community-based solutions (e.g. Oregon Solutions Projects in Lakeview) to prioritize treatments and attract investments at the local level to address the unique characteristics and variety of landscape conditions through the development of short-term (2-5 year) and longer-term (10-20 year) treatment plans prioritized based on: 1) presence of collaborative process with strong support from all interest groups, 2) Long-term map-based plans that a) decrease the road network, b) protect key ecological features (endangered species, old-growth, aquatics), 3) meet outcome-based landscape resiliency metrics and 4) provide a long-term stable, sustainable supply of smaller diameter logs and biomass from public lands.</p>	<p>Modify</p>	<p>Oregon Solutions is an excellent tool for getting competing interests working with one another. The total volume of thinning/biomass removal must be a component, not in addition, to the total sustainable volume targets in the NW Forest plan and ICBEMP/Eastside Screens. Prioritize projects that pay for the maintenance of key roads and the decommissioning of legacy roads.</p>
-----------	---	---------------	---