



Forest Facts

OREGON INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

April 2007

Sustainability has emerged worldwide as a unifying concept in forest management. The Oregon Board of Forestry defined sustainable forest management in its strategic plan, the *Forestry Program for Oregon*, which was adopted in 2003, and included strategies and actions to achieve sustainability for Oregon's public and private forestlands. The Board then needed a way to know if these strategies and actions were being met.

Are Oregon's public and private forestlands being sustainably managed? And how will we know?

To begin to answer the question if the Board's sustainable forest management strategies and actions were being met, in early 2007, the Board endorsed Oregon's Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management – 19 of them. These indicators were based on recommendations from an advisory committee to the Board that was made up of a broad-based group of Oregonians. The committee sorted through scientific, technical, and policy information, sought public input, and recommended a set of

indicators that could be used to measure progress implementing the *Forestry Program for Oregon*.

What are indicators and how can they help us talk about sustainability?

Indicators are like measuring sticks. They are a way to make Oregon's forest conditions and trends measurable and understandable. And they can tell us what the current conditions are and track how those conditions change over time. Indicators can provide the Board, other policy-makers, and the public with information describing the environmental, economic, and social conditions of Oregon's public and private forests, and are a cost-effective way to consistently collect important data needed to monitor changes in these conditions over time.

Indicators for all of Oregon's public and private forestlands – and for *all* Oregonians

Oregon's indicators of sustainable forest management are intended to address all of Oregon's public and private forestlands, and belong to all Oregonians – regardless of their values and perspectives, not just the

Board of Forestry. Oregon's indicators may also provide valuable linkages to other sustainability conversations and forest resource assessments at community, regional, national, and international scales. In addition, state, federal, tribal, local governments, and private partners in Oregon can use these indicators in ongoing monitoring, policy development, and communications efforts.

Putting the indicators to work

Many of these indicators address historic policy concerns – questions that Oregonians have been asking for many years. Work to collect the data that will be needed to answer the questions raised by these indicators and conduct a comprehensive assessment of Oregon's forests will be ongoing over the next several years. Much of this work can only be done by collaborating with partners – other natural resource agencies, and national, state, and local entities.

The indicators will also be used to help organize and integrate forest-related technical assessments, research, and monitoring, highlighting Oregonians' highest priorities for needed forest information. These priorities can then be used to develop budgets that more efficiently allocate available funds by promoting assessment, research, and monitoring projects that align with and support the indicators.

2010 Forest Assessment and 2011 Forestry For Oregon Update

Ultimately, these indicators will feed into the information being collected for a comprehensive assessment of Oregon's forests, and report on how the

strategies and actions in the *Forestry Program for Oregon* are being met. In 2010, this assessment will be used during a Board of Forestry symposium on the state of Oregon's forestlands that will be held to kick off the next strategic planning process for the future of Oregon's forests. That process begins in 2011 – coincidentally, the 100th anniversary of the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Sustainable forest management – are we done yet?

It has been said that sustainability is a journey and not a destination. With these indicators in place, we will be able to see where we have been and begin to foresee where we are going. We will know what our successes have been and where we need to focus our efforts. We can lead and plan for the future of Oregon's forests – achieving the Board's vision to provide a sustainable flow of environmental, economic, and social benefits from Oregon's forests for all Oregonians.

Just as the trees we plant today are for the benefit of those who will follow us, it is hoped that future Oregonians will benefit from and build upon our efforts at the start of the 21st century to ensure that the environmental, economic, and social values our forests provide will be maintained and enhanced – sustained for future generations.

Learn more

For more information on the *Forestry Program for Oregon* and Oregon Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management, visit the Oregon Board of Forestry website at www.oregonforestry.org.