

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

July 25, 2006

Chair Hobbs and Members of the Board of Forestry:

As Chair of and on behalf of the 20-member ad hoc Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest Management Indicators, I am pleased to offer to the Board of Forestry the Committee's final report as attached.

In March of 2005, you appointed the Committee with the following charge:

1. Coordinate with technical experts to reach both strong policy and technical consensus on a set of recommended sustainable forest management indicators for use in measuring *Forestry Program for Oregon* implementation progress.
2. Solicit and summarize broad stakeholder input on both the usefulness of the selected indicators and the desired future outcomes for these indicators.
3. Provide advice to the Board of Forestry on desired future outcomes for the recommended indicators.
4. Provide advice to the State Forester on future Forest Assessment Project priorities.

Since my letter to you in June, the Committee has completed its work. We ask the Board of Forestry consider adoption of the suite of 19 sustainable forest management indicators proposed in our Final Report. We also recommend that other public and private organizations interested in Oregon's forests consider embracing these indicators as a way to approach sustainable forest management at the statewide level in Oregon.

The attached Committee Final Report provides more information on the suite of indicators and on each of the individual indicators we recommend. With other Committee members, I will be joining you at your September 6 meeting to present the final report, answer your questions and provide details. We look forward to this opportunity to help you understand our work.

I would like to use the remainder of this correspondence to share with the Board ideas emerging from Committee deliberations that are not covered in the Committee's report but may be important as you consider your next steps in this process:

Public Involvement

Department of Forestry staff has made it very clear to the Committee and other stakeholders that it is the Board's intent that the Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management for Oregon will not be the sole property of the Board of Forestry, but rather needs the understanding, acceptance, support, and ownership of all Oregonians who are interested in the state's forests.

DIVISION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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The Committee's report is written in considerable technical detail and may be difficult for some members of the public to comprehend on first reading. Therefore, I encourage the Board and the Department to take the information in the report and develop materials that present it in a more accessible format for various audiences. The Department should also be encouraged to continue its efforts to promote public dialogue about sustainable management of Oregon forests. The policy concepts and framework in the *Forestry Program* and the suite of indicators of sustainable forest management proposed here should provide a common basis for such dialogue.

Regarding this set of indicators, the Committee has completed a lengthy process winnowing a long list of possible indicator concepts to the suite of 19 that taken together, in our collective view, best respond to the concerns of Oregonians. This process has engaged many technical and policy people interested in Oregon's forests. The public needs the opportunity to engage and surely has valuable insights that could help the Board of Forestry fine-tune the proposed indicators. However, we encourage that the focus of additional public involvement be adding value to the considerable work represented by this report rather than opening up the process for a new round of indicator development.

Indicator Implementation

As you will see in the Committee's report, implementation of the proposed 19 indicators will require the integration of a wide variety of data from a number of different sources. Most indicators build on current data streams and build from historic policy concerns. For some indicators new data collection methods will need to be developed and either existing funding will require reallocation or new funding will need to be established. I encourage the Board of Forestry to build on the collaboration established through the Advisory Committee process and to direct the Department of Forestry to build and maintain a network of cooperators for support of long-term indicators implementation. This means not only the technical experts but also working with executives of cooperating organizations. Doing so will promote other policymaking groups and policy processes to become involved in indicator implementation. I hope that such collaborative efforts will foster integration with other data collection and reporting efforts to improve the quality of information while avoiding duplication and maximizing efficiency. Such a strategy of collaboration and integration should allow the planned 2010 Oregon Forest Assessment Symposium and Report to provide useful feedback on how well indicator implementation is progressing as well as substantively benchmarking Oregon's progress on sustainable forest management.

Desired Trends for the Indicators

As I stated in my June letter, the Committee decided to not undertake the Board's charge to develop desired future outcome statements for the proposed indicators. Such desired trend statements are essential for the indicators to be meaningful and to help define what sustainable forest management means to Oregonians. The Committee concluded that the Board of Forestry, or another designated policy-making body, is a better forum for facilitating public dialogue regarding this topic because desired trends and targets are policy goals. In lieu of Committee recommendations, it is my

understanding that Department of Forestry staff will propose an initial set of short-term desired trend statements for the proposed indicators in the near future. The Committee's proposed indicators and staff's desired trend statements will provide a robust starting point for deliberation on trend statements and targets. We encourage the Board to take on this work directly and I stand ready to support the Board in that work. Recognize that such work is an ongoing process. Once trends and targets are established Oregonians will hopefully respond and inform the Board on whether these proposals are appropriate. Through periodic review based on new information and changing public values in the future, the Board and Oregonians may ask for changes in various indicators, modification of the suite, changes in desired trends or that our work toward targets be modified. Such adaptation is also an essential part of instituting Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management for Oregon.

Connecting Indicators to Forest Research and Broader Forest Assessment Work

Agreement on a short list of Oregon indicators of sustainable forest management provides a unique opportunity for collaboration and more efficient use of funds for monitoring, research, and landscape-scale forest assessments. If Oregonians from all points of view can agree collecting information on these 19 indicators is important, then the data collection efforts that supplement and support the indicators can be assigned a high priority for funding. Such efforts are already underway with the Department of Forestry and the USDA FS Pacific Northwest Research Station. For the indicators to remain credible, policy makers and the public will need to see clear linkages between any indicator reports and the more detailed technical and scientific information that supports them. In addition, within the Department of Forestry and other organizations, more specific agency and program performance measures can be nested beneath the higher-level indicators to provide details on our collective progress toward sustainable forest management in Oregon.

Connecting Indicators to Other Efforts at Local, State, Regional, and National Scales

The proposed Oregon indicators of sustainable forest management are intended to provide the basis for a "sustainability narrative" at a statewide scale. To be meaningful, some indicators may need to report trends at sub-state scales such as counties, timbersheds, watersheds, forest cover types, or ecoregions. All of these analyses can focus on providing a narrative as to the extent that Oregon's forests at a statewide scale are being sustainably managed. We hope that this state-level effort will complement smaller-scale assessment, such as at county, national forest, or community levels. Likewise, the Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management for Oregon can complement the Oregon Progress Board Benchmarks that assess conditions and trends across all Oregon environmental, economic, and social sectors. In the future, it may be possible to expand the discussion of sustainable forest management to other neighboring states and someday develop West Coast regional indicators of sustainable forestry as has already been done in the Northeast among 20 states. Oregon is known nationally as a leader in incorporating sustainable forest management concepts in to state level policies and assessment. Oregon's use of indicators will no doubt influence future national reports on sustainable forest management. The next national report is scheduled for

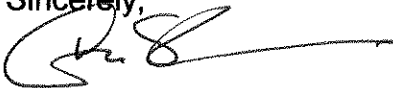
2010. The statewide suite of indicators offered here fills an important "niche" regarding Oregon statewide sustainable forest management.

Developmental Indicators

For each strategy of the *Forestry Program for Oregon*, the Committee considered many components as the basis for possible indicators. Since the intent of the project was to develop a short list or suite of relevant, understandable indicators, not every component is represented by an indicator in the Committee's report. Some components were not included because of the significant implications for data collection, immature science to support the measures, or the emerging nature of the concern tapped by the component. Some of these components may be of value in the future and so the Committee recommends that the Board retain the list of developmental indicator concepts provided in Appendix A of this report for future reference. While not proposed for adoption by the Board of Forestry at this point, they address important and/or emerging issues warranting review at a future date.

In closing, I would like to thank the Board of Forestry for the opportunity to serve as Chair of this Advisory Committee. Our work is important work in service of Oregon's forests and Oregon's people. I want to thank fellow Committee members for their professionalism, good will and robust participation in a complex and arduous assignment. Let me also take a moment to thank publicly the deeply committed staff of the Oregon Department of Forestry and their peers in other state, federal, and tribal governments and those in the many private organizations contributing to this effort. We simply could not have done our job with out their significant efforts. I look forward now to joining other Oregonians, under the Board's leadership, as we continue on the pathway towards sustainable forest management.

Sincerely,



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