



**OSU McDonald-Dunn Research Forest FMP
Community Listening Session #2 (November 7, 2022)
Public Comments by Category**

A recording of the session can be found [here](#).

INTRODUCTION

The Oregon State University College of Forestry invited the public to participate in the second of four community engagement sessions regarding the development of a new forest management plan (FMP) for the McDonald and Dunn Forests. Participants were able to attend in-person and via Zoom. The primary purpose for this listening session was for the College to hear from those who use the forests or are interested in their future about ideas, experiences and hopes related to the McDonald and Dunn Research Forests. Suggested prompts for input included the three questions below, but input was accepted on all topics offered by meeting participants.

1. What do you value about the forests?
2. What could be done to increase the ability of the forests to provide learning opportunities?
3. What should be prioritized to ensure sound forest management in the face of changing conditions (increased recreational use, wildfire risk, and climate change impacts, etc.)?

Community input will be collected and considered as the College develops content for a new forest management plan, implementation actions and outreach related to this new plan. The two additional engagement sessions will be scheduled in 2023. The FMP development process is timed so that the new plan will be ready for implementation in 2024.

Below is a summary of comments shared, grouped by subject matter:

I. FOREST VALUES

- An overall important asset to the community
- Improves livability of the area, quality of life, and health for the entire community
- Supports OSU faculty retention by providing an accessible resource to those who come to Corvallis specifically to work at the university
- Provides accessibility to nature and recreation
- Fosters many resources including trees (old growth), water, and biodiversity, all of which extend beyond the forests' boundaries.

- Hope that decisions will be made with citizens and the planet in mind, given the urgency of the climate crisis.

II. LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- Utilize the forests to showcase and promote more public learning opportunities around diverse management activities and research related to all resources on the forest (not just silviculture). Relay what was researched, why, how and what was learned. Connect this more directly to local OSU Extension work.
- Shift research and projects away from intensive harvest focus in order to learn how to address current and future needs through ecological management and move forest practices forward with new innovation.* Create a stronger application and connection with ecological forestry classes.
- More ecological education is needed overall and could provide a baseline, foundational resource for other OSU departments.
- Teach more holistic management ways.
- Research innovative solutions to the climate crisis at hand.
- Conduct more research, demonstration and classes around prairie and oak savanna woodland habitat restoration. Connect this to OSU College of Agriculture property and pasture management.
- Create an engineering competition or program with an incentive to identify alternatives to spraying herbicides.
- Actively learn how to support and protect beavers on the landscape, and promote practices for others.
- Conduct research around the Soap Creek area.
- Explore and implement alternative approaches to slash and burn techniques.
- Provide learning and skill building opportunities or pathways for students in the forestry preservation sector; sustainable and economic trail building (in partnership with Team Dirt and OSU Adventure Leadership Institute); and wilderness skills and first aid.
- Be intentional about youth education related to preservation of nature and focus on the future, to help teach the next generation how to manage resources and balance values in the best way possible. Connect to the Forest Discovery Program. Foster more direct experiences on the forest to get more youth involved.

III. PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Climate Focused Management

- Urgently address the climate crisis by shifting management to a new way of thinking.

- Actively reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration.
- Conduct a complete carbon inventory and explore the possibility of selling carbon credits.

Conservation and Ecological Approach

- Preserve the forests for future generations.
- Stop clearcutting, increasing harvest (as has supposedly occurred over the last five years), overharvesting, and spraying herbicides.
- Reduce active forest management and private timber industry engagement.
- Shift towards ecological forest management, habitat restoration, and increased conservation focused on stand-level management.
- Implement Traditional Ecological Knowledge and indigenous management practices (e.g. traditional burning).
- Assign tangible values to other resources in the plan besides timber (air, water, habitat, carbon, etc).
- Preserve old growth and create updated maps to show where those trees and stands are.
- Commit to creating more reserves. Consider a special conservation reserve area(s) exclusively for natural functions/reserves/biodiversity, possibly some where no human access or recreation is allowed.
- Focus on riparian areas.
- Regularly test water and make results public, especially after spraying.
- Reintroduce beavers.
- Focus on addressing, managing and removing invasive species (without spraying).
- Create more habitat for older forest dependent species, reduce fragmentation by connecting islands of older forests with closed canopy, and snags creation.
- Conduct pre-disturbance surveys that focus on species impacted by logging. If those species are detected in the harvest unit, there should be documented commitments and a plan outlined to protect them.
- Pursue a forest certification for sustainability.

Recreation

- Better integrate forest management and recreation planning.
- Continue to encourage the recreation and community connection to the forests, but need to address concerns about increasing human presence. Don't want to "love the forests to death."
- Address and manage increasing and changing use (and project for the future.)
- Build and maintain additional trails in partnership with Team Dirt or other entities (e.g. nature trail at 400 road to educate about biodiversity), as more trails and strategic location can disperse and balance impact (e.g. some areas emphasize mountain biking and some exclusively without mountain biking).

- Better connector trails (e.g. Dimple Hill to Oak Creek) and increased and improved signage can help disperse impact too.
- Look at improving access options aside from parking structures/expansion (e.g. e-bikes would allow more people to access the forest without cars), with consideration for neighbors.
- Address variable regulation of “illegal trails”
- Consider more supported staff positions to build trails on the forest (potential student opportunity) and don’t solely depend on volunteer work.
- Impose limits on recreation in some areas, including some with no recreation all together. It is unusual for a College research forest to be so accessible to the public in every corner.
- Allow and incorporate e-bikes to support access for all ages.
- No e-bikes due to speed and safety concerns.
- Mitigate e-bike issues by providing bells for riders, strategic planning and management, and providing education/signage to educate best practices for multi-use areas.
- Maintain access to Dunn for hunting purposes.

Transparency, Accessibility and Engagement

- Create more touch points between the College of Forestry and the broader community/forest users
- Provide better access to research and management information about the forest - specifically about how research projects connect to the FMP, ongoing management decisions and harvest. It is currently difficult to find what research is being done and what the outcomes are. Consider an online platform to share project updates before, during and after. Also utilize existing infrastructure (e.g. trailheads, cabins, etc).
- Provide more transparency around economic goals and drivers, as well as publicly accessible information regarding profits, operational budgets, and where revenue goes (that is not buried in archives or needs to be requested).
- Financial goals of the College should not drive management decisions.
- More neighbor connection and communication - especially regarding invasive species education, management approaches, and coordination for improved results.
- Write the FMP so that it is readable, understandable, and includes all information about what research actually happens in the forest.
- Provide access and be responsive to questions about research data.
- Be transparent about the integration and/or influence of the timber industry

Partnerships

- Support for Team Dirt outreach, partnership, youth engagement, and creation/maintenance of trail user opportunities. Due to the relationships fostered in this space, user conflicts are generally low
- Incorporate new partnerships with local schools and create pathways for youth activities.

- Explore potential state funding for expanded career and technical education opportunities.
- Appreciate ongoing collaboration between Starker Forests and OSU to maintain access.
- More partnership and collaboration between the College of Forestry and College of Agriculture (specifically around oak management); OSU Adventure Leadership Institute; and NICA.
- Incorporate more direct Tribal partnerships to implement Traditional Ecological Knowledge and indigenous management practices (e.g. traditional burning). Consider utilizing the Oak Creek facilities as a potential cultural history museum that represents the original inhabitants, history of the land, and practices.
- Engage students in the integration of tribal management practices and partnership building.

IV. PROCESS

- Appreciation for the College holding the listening sessions and the opportunities to provide input.
- Desire for College decision makers to be present during public engagement sessions and provide the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers in real time.
- Suggestion to actively include students in the process.
- Hope that the College will continue to listen to the community throughout the planning and implementation process, not just every 2-5 years.
- Desire for the College to fully embody the promises made in 2019 regarding collaborative forest planning process.
- Question about how and why the Dean chose the members of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee.
- Concern about the current process underway (e.g. SAC member selection; Vision, Mission, and Goals development, potential conflict of interest with industry and research forest staff participation, etc).
- Desire for citizens to be able to meet and engage with committees involved with creating the plan.
- Suggestion to develop a distribution list specifically about this process.