

OSU College of Forestry
McDonald-Dunn Research Forest Faculty Planning Committee Meeting #1
16 September 2022, noon-2pm
129 Peavy Forest Science Center and Online (via Zoom)

Faculty Planning Committee Members present: Holly Ober (chair), John Bailey, Kevin Bladon, Mindy Crandall (via Zoom), Tiffany Garcia (via Zoom), Mark Kerstens, Dave Lewis, Laurie Schimleck

College of Forestry Staff present (ex-officio): Jenna Baker, Stephen Fitzgerald, Brent Klumph

I. Overview of planning process

Holly Ober gave a presentation that provided an overview of the process being used to develop a new management plan for the McDonald and Dunn Research Forests. She also gave an update on what has occurred to date as part of this process.

II. Faculty Planning Committee (FPC) operating principles

The group discussed the draft principles, which mirrored the operating principles developed by Oregon Consensus for the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC).

Discussion ensued regarding the potential benefits of having meetings open to the public to listen in but not make comments, and to having recordings of each meeting posted online for viewing at any time. There was concern that if meetings were not open for the public to listen to, trust in the process might be undermined. There is nothing to hide and much to be gained if everyone can hear the discussion regarding tradeoffs inherent to forest management decisions. It was unanimously agreed that future FPC meetings would be recorded via Zoom, open to the public to listen in via Zoom, and meeting recordings would be posted to the [forest planning website](#).

III. Questions from the group

Questions were raised by members of the FPC regarding revenue generation from the forest.

- How much revenue generated from the forests are used to support activities associated with the research forests versus supporting other aspects of the COF?
- Is it typical for other universities to use revenue from timber from their research forests to cover non-forest activities?
- Could all revenue generated from the forests be earmarked to go back to the research forests and not to be used to cover expenses associated with other aspects of operating the COF?
- What are the minimum costs associated with keeping the research forests running?
- Would it be possible to pursue grants to support forest management efforts in the future, as is being attempted with the Elliott State Forest?

Dean Tom DeLuca arrived at the meeting and indicated he'd like to increase the proportion of revenue generated from timber harvest that's used to support Research/Teaching/Outreach directly tied to the research forests. There's a long history of a portion of revenue from the forests being used to cover other COF expenses and he'd like to reduce this. The transition will take time.

Research forest staff mentioned that there are a variety of expenses associated with maintaining the forests, including salary. Additional salary is currently needed to address invasive species and reforestation.

Suggestions were made to incorporate an expectation of grant writing into the forest management plan, perhaps forming a committee tasked with this responsibility. The purpose would be to cover special or specific projects, not as a substitute for revenue generation as grants are often for one-off projects and, in addition, there is no guarantee that attempts to obtain a grant will be successful.

Suggestions were made by members of the FPC regarding communication of research opportunities to the academic community. It was suggested that effort be made to make widely known what forest management operations are planned so researchers know what subjects they could address through their own grant proposals. Perhaps a call for proposals could be circulated to inform the academic community of what opportunities are available for research/teaching/outreach, if funds could be made available to encourage research on the forests. If so, such information should be circulated university-wide, so other individuals from all colleges are aware.

IV. Discussion of the 2005 McDonald Dunn Forest Plan

Questions were raised by members of the FPC regarding why the 2005 plan was suspended. It was clarified that the reasoning included an economic downturn, expenses associated with theme 4, expenses associated with monitoring, and the reduction of research forest staff from 10 to 4. It was concluded that it seems the plan was not flexible enough to deal with fluctuating timber prices and a suggestion was made that we should strive to avoid developing a plan whose viability could be called into question by changes in the economy. We also need to be sure we don't overpromise on what forest conditions will be monitored, being sure that existing research forest staff are able to accomplish what is proposed.

A. The group compared the goals stated in the 2005 plan to those specified in the new Vision/Mission/Goals derived in 2021 to encompass all COF research forests.

- It was noted that emphasis shifted from '**net revenue**' to '**financial sustainability**'.
- It was noted that **climate change** wasn't mentioned at all in the 2005 plan, and the creation of a new plan provides an opportunity to promote research that not only looks at potential effects of changing climate but also how it's mediated.
- It was noted that '**cultural heritage sites**' are not included now. It was explained that the rationale was that it's mandated by law that these are addressed, so it was decided they did not need to be included as a stand-alone goal. It was suggested that somewhere in the plan it should be described how cultural heritage sites are surveyed and managed, so readers don't assume otherwise. It was noted that the new goals are 'deeper' than previous (e.g.,

shift from simply protecting very specific sites to considering cultural connections to the forest more broadly).

- It was noted that 'natural heritage and ecosystem services' was no longer included. A member suggested that we might harness existing opportunities to provide outreach on how oak savannas naturally occurred where the McDonald-Dunn Forest currently exists, and efforts are underway to restore what existed previously.
- It was suggested that perhaps the new goal of '**community connections**' could be changed to '**community and cultural connections**'.
- Much discussion ensued regarding the possibility of changing the term '**working demonstration forest**' to '**demonstration forest**'. It was suggested that the term 'harvest' be added to the Vision/Mission/Goals description in an effort to avoid jargon. It was suggested that enough verbiage then be added to make it clear that the intent of harvest on the forests is either to cover costs associated with Research, Teaching, and Outreach or to cover management costs associated with the research forests. We should be clear about what occurs on a research forest: trees are harvested to provide opportunities for Research, Teaching, and Outreach. We should be clear that average growth exceeds what's being harvested. It was suggested that we strive to increase understanding that a "preservation" approach (i.e., no active forest management) would prevent us from meeting the vision and missions of the research forests, which mandate active management with the intent of demonstrating sustainability (which has an economic component, as well as ecological and social). It was mentioned that lack of active management can also result in ecological problems (e.g., invasive species, heightened risk of wildfire, spread of pests and pathogens).
- It was suggested that we strive to convey that not every acre of the forest must meet every goal. Rather, we need to look across the acreage to see all that the forests are providing.
- It was suggested that we consider how we get educational messages to those who are using the forests simply to recreate rather than with an intention to learn.

B. The group discussed the themes of the 2005 plan

- It was suggested that theme #3 (visually sensitive, even-aged forests) simply describes best practices for forest conditions in highly visible locations. Perhaps this continues to be done but is not called out as a forest theme in the new plan?
- It was suggested that the concept of themes may be confusing. One member didn't realize each region of the forest is assigned to a theme. Research forest staff explained that the themes are spatial zones within which certain types of harvest techniques can be used – the designation of areas devoted to a specific theme provides guidance for the operations on the ground.
- It was decided that additional discussion of themes would take place during the next FPC meeting.

V. Decisions on FPC operations

The FPC chair will make input obtained from the public (from the webform) available to FPC members in real time and send weekly reminders to look at this information.

There was a general sentiment of appreciating more frequent meetings that are shorter in duration rather than longer meetings spread farther in time. We agreed to 2-hour gatherings ~every 2

weeks. The FPC chair will send a poll to determine what day of week/time of day would fit everyone's schedule.

ACTION ITEMS

- The FPC chair and research forest staff will get answers to questions asked today
- The FPC chair will send a poll to select a meeting time for the FPC during fall term
- The FPC chair will send to the FPC the link to the new [forest planning website](#).
- The FPC chair will request that a link to the forest planning webpage be placed on the main COF page – not just the Research Forest page – to increase awareness of the planning process