OSU College of Forestry
McDonald-Dunn Research Forest Faculty Planning Committee Meeting #2
11 October 2022, 1-3pm
301 Peavy Forest Science Center and Online (via Zoom)

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

College of Forestry research forest staff present: Jenna Baker, Stephen Fitzgerald, Brent Klumph, Carli Morgan

I. Overview of planning process

Holly Ober described plans for Community Listening Session #2 and requested feedback on the proposed format and location. Suggestions provided by FPC members for potential off-campus venues were Corvallis Public Library, Old World Deli, Benton County Extension Office, and Corvallis Community Center. The group then looked at the planning website to view the variety of information being posted there.

II. Sharing of material covered during past meetings

Ober shared highlights of similarities between the deliberations had thus far by the SAC and FPC and then proceeded to provide an overview of answers to questions raised at the Joint SAC-FPC Meeting, SAC Meeting #1, and FPC Meeting #1.

- Previous question about historical records describing the Annual Performance Metrics delineated in the 2005 Plan
    - The group discussed how annual reports from the period 2006-2009 speak to some of these metrics opaquely, but the exact metrics defined don't seem to have been reported comprehensively as envisioned. There was a suggestion to consider workforce capacity of the Research Forest staff when deciding what performance metrics should be monitored to evaluate forest performance in the new plan.
    - A suggestion was made to consider enabling members of the public to assist with data collection associated with long-term monitoring of the forest.
    - A suggestion was made to consider developing an online platform where data collected by research forest staff and others could be stored in a database.
    - A suggestion was made to use data from Motor Pool to gain insight into the number of vehicles and number of visitors to the forest by OSU researchers and classes.
    - A suggestion was made to create a mechanism online whereby any instructor using the research forest needs to provide notification of use and tell number of vehicles and number of people (instructors, students, researchers, etc.).
    - In response to a remark that information on visits by K-12 classes is difficult to collect, it was clarified that a Special Use Permit is required for large events, but tracking is difficult for smaller groups.
- Previous question about Dean DeLuca's charge in October 2020
    - A summary was provided.
- Previous question about current forest conditions
    - A figure was shown that indicated the anticipated % of each theme, and mention was made that the actual % likely differs from this because the plan was suspended 2008-2019.

- Previous question about % of forest in mature conditions
    - The current acreage represents 3.6% of the McDonald-Dunn Forests.
- Previous question about northern spotted owls
    - Annual surveys indicate there have been no northern spotted owls for many years. These surveys regularly detect barred owls, which tend to preclude occupancy by northern spotted owls.
- Previous question about stream surveys
    - GIS data for streams is not entirely accurate. This is being addressed through stream surveys in 2023. It will soon have important implications because the Private Forest Accord places restrictions on management activities within stream buffers.
- Previous question about whether hunting is allowed
    - Hunting is allowed in the Dunn Forest but not McDonald.
- Previous question about what forms of wildlife damage control are used
    - Physical barriers, chemical repellents, and western redcedar variants with high terpene content used to deter browsing.
- Previous question about long term research projects
    - A table was shared, showing 8 projects currently in place with lifespans >10 years.
    - It was noted that not all long-term studies were captured on this table, such as longitudinal studies of recreational use of the forests.

A discussion ensued about constraints, concerns, and opportunities:

- Comments were shared regarding constraints on conducting research in these forests: (1) having public access can be problematic to studying wildlife due to disturbance; (2) there's little instrumentation in the forests collecting environmental data – in contrast to the H. J. Andrews; (3) there's little old forest to research; (4) the possibility of vandalism is concerning; (5) lack of awareness of what harvests are planned precludes the ability of researchers to plan in advance for research (e.g., can't do pre-post data collection if you don't know what's going to take place); and (6) prevalence of invasive plants.
- Concern was expressed that although the goals of the forests include wildlife, recreation, outreach etc., the themes are "plantation-motivated" or "extraction-motivated".
- Opportunities highlighted included (1) an opportunity for more research if harvests of a particular type could be requested; (2) opportunities for more research to be done if there's wider notification of what harvests/treatments are planned so that all types of associated research could be planned; (3) opportunities for more undergraduate research given close proximity to campus, if student awareness increases; (4) opportunities for student engagement in outreach and interpretation; (5) opportunities to create a map showing where research and teaching is occurring across the forests.
- It was suggested that a survey could be conducted to solicit information on research plans people have for the next few years so the research forest staff could plan accordingly.

- Previous question about the downed wood/snag research
    - The study described in the plan was not done, but results of research on these topics are posted on the website.
- Previous question about a bibliography
    - An explanation was provided of how there's a protocol for getting information on publications resulting from research conducted on the forests, but workforce

capacity limits the ability to maintain these efforts. There's also a GIS database accompanying the research and a list of sites used frequently for teaching. However, the location of teaching changes over time because forest conditions are not static and course topics change over time.
    - A suggestion was made to conduct a survey of faculty and staff about where teaching is occurring and what sorts of conditions are desired for future teaching opportunities. Perhaps an incentive could be offered to fill out the survey. A brief summary of the survey of academic use of the forests conducted in June 2022 was mentioned, noting that sample size was small and nearly no responses were received from individuals from other colleges although there is known use by instructors from other colleges.
    - A need was mentioned for better tracking of use of the forests for K-12 classes. A suggestion was made to post a QR code at trailheads that could be scanned so that instructors of classes visiting the forests could report on visits through a phone.
- Previous question about annual timber volume and revenue generation
    - It was noted that the annual 6 million board feet harvest estimated by the 2005 plan authors seems to have been fairly realistic, if the lean years are removed from consideration. It was also noted that some locations allocated to particular themes aren't harvestable in the manner expected for that theme (e.g., oak woodlands), so the 6 million board feet may not be achievable longer-term if the plan were to stay in place as is.
- Previous question about age class distribution
    - In explaining why the current conditions differ from those anticipated, it was pointed out that during the period the plan was suspended (2008-2019), research forest staff sometimes opted to thin stands rather than clear cut them, which resulted in more acreage in older ages.
- Previous question about budget for recreation & outreach
    - It was shared that $335,000/year is needed to maintain the current amount of recreation and outreach (~22% of the revenue generated through timber harvest). This doesn't include road maintenance or volunteer efforts, but does include printing of trail maps, port-a-potties, and educational events. It was recommended that this information on the budget required for recreation and outreach is publicized to increase public understanding of the cost of these benefits.
    - Ideas were presented on increasing interpretation efforts by using movable signs to showcase ephemeral forest management and more modern means of providing interpretation (multimedia). A suggestion was made to link interpretation to a pdf map (using Avenza) online so people could learn through their phones while out in the forest.
- Previous question about forest inventory and carbon inventory
    - These data are now processed. A graduate student is beginning to generate carbon estimates and predict carbon storage associated with various forest treatments and site productivity. There are plans to evaluate the ability of the forests to offset carbon emissions of the COF.
- Previous question about revenue generation
    - Historically $1million of revenue generated from timber has been provided to support COF operation. Dean DeLuca committed to increase the proportion of timber revenue used to support R/T/O directly ties to research forests.

III. Discussion of the relevance of themes from the 2005 plan

- It was clarified that these 4 themes were framed so as to represent what the authors felt were of greatest interest and most deserving of research at the time of plan development. Their intent was to reflect 4 different objectives prevalent among forest landowners at the time.
- The group was asked to consider whether each of these are still relevant and whether others should be added
    - It was pointed out that all 4 themes emphasize Douglas-fir and questioned if this is appropriate, given climate change. An emphasis on climate adaptation was recommended for the new plan, which could involve adjusting these themes so there's flexibility to incorporate species other than Douglas-fir.
    - It was suggested that research be conducted on plant species diversity not only in reserves but also in areas slated for high yield.
    - It was suggested that perhaps themes 3 and 4 could be combined.
    - It was suggested that allowing openings of a variety of sizes in theme 4 could increase structural diversity more than the 1 to 4-acre openings currently stipulated.
    - It was mentioned that the spatial arrangement of the themes within zones makes timber harvest challenging. In response, appreciation was expressed for allowing greater ability to mix themes within zones (i.e., more spatial freedom to apply themes, which could reduce concerns about pseudo-replication). It was suggested that more randomization of the location of themes, and also more mature stands could enable more research opportunities. A map showing where each theme currently occurs was requested. Support was expressed by multiple individuals for the idea of decoupling the themes from zones, and ensuring there is flexibility for research forest staff in selecting the location of treatments, yet it was recognized that greater flexibility could lead to concerns regarding accountability, so transparency in planning would be paramount.
    - In response to a suggestion that all themes potentially be dissolved and instead just manage for goals, it was mentioned that the SAC members expressed continued interest in all 4 themes (e.g., theme 1 enables faster pivoting to something new in the face of climate change).
    - It was suggested that in the new plan, themes could be framed according to the intent of each in producing benefits (e.g., theme 1 produces revenue generation, theme 2 produces wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration).

IV. Next steps

- We'll meet again in 2 weeks; an agenda will be sent a few days beforehand