

Polk County Forestland Classification Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

June 25, 2008

8:00 - 12:15 pm

Oregon Department of Forestry, Dallas Office

This was the second meeting of the Polk County Forestland Classification Committee.

Committee Members Present: Jeff Classen, Don Duhrkopf, Terry Lamers, Tom Parsons, Brad Withrow-Robinson

Guests: Mike Totey, Oregon Department of Forestry Assistant District Forester for the West Oregon District.

The Meeting began with Jeff handing out an agenda for the meeting.

Agenda Item 1; Election of Officers: Discussion began for requirement of committee to elect a Chair and Secretary. It was discussed that it would probably be best for the Chair of the board to be one of the three Polk County landowners appointed by the Polk County Commissioners. Terry said he would be willing to serve as the chair. **Don made a motion for Terry to be the Chair. Motion was seconded by Tom and a vote was called for. Terry Lamers was unanimously elected to be the Chair of the Polk County Forest Classification Committee. The meeting was subsequently presided over by Terry Lamers.**

Next was discussion on selecting a Secretary. Terry said he would like to see a Vice Chair position in addition to the Secretary. After discussion it was agreed that the committee would elect both a Vice Chair and a Secretary. Don said he would be willing to do the job of the vice chair and Brad said he would be willing to do the job of the secretary. **Jeff made a motion to elect Brad as the Secretary and Don as the Vice Chair. Tom seconded the motion. Terry asked for any further discussion. There was no further discussion so Terry called for a vote. Don Duhrkopf was unanimously elected to be the Vice Chair and Brad Withrow-Robinson was unanimously elected to be the Secretary of the Polk County Forest Classification Committee.**

Agenda Item 2: Work to establish By-Laws for the Polk County Forestland Classification Committee:

Jeff handed out a draft set of by-laws for the committee to consider and use as a starting point to develop the by-laws for the Polk County Forestland Classification Committee. The draft was a document the Benton County Forestland Classification

Committee is currently working on. The committee reviewed the document item by item and made a number of edits after thorough review and discussion.

Don pointed out that statute dictated committee composition, including “an owner of grazing land or a representative thereof”. As there is currently no grazing land designated in Polk county, and there is a diversity of landowner interests represented, it was agreed that the committee was within the intent of the law and could proceed.

This is a standing committee, but as recognized in item IV of the Bi-laws, members serve terms up to three years. If a member needs to retire from the position he/she should give notice to the Chair, who will turn it back to the appointing agency of that position to fill. Also, if a member becomes inactive (two unexcused absences) the Chair should contact that member, and when the Chair deems it appropriate, initiate a retirement notice and turn it back to the appointing agency for a replacement member.

Regarding By-Laws section VII, it was noted that it is critical that this committee operate in compliance with Oregon’s Public Meeting Law. Jeff will investigate how best to do that. It is the intent of the committee to operate in a transparent and well-documented manner. As secretary, Brad will make provisions for the recording and maintenance of appropriate records, and will work with ODF’s Gail Culbertson to prepare and maintain records. The committee agreed this should probably include audio recordings. Records would be maintained at the Dallas ODF office, which is designated as our place of business.

There will be no vote by proxy, but it was agreed to take advantage of communications tools (ie teleconference) to allow members to participate remotely is permissible, and should be added to the by-laws.

There was additional discussion to clarify the quorum. Business can be conducted with a quorum of three. If a member leaves and the quorum is lost, business of the committee stops.

Regarding the bullet on passage of motions, it was discussed and agreed that the intent was not of a simple majority of attendees, but a majority of the committee, and thus would always require a vote of 3 or more to pass.

The final bullet related to notification and the committee’s desire for appropriate input from public stakeholders. Postings to the County website seem essential, as well as good communications with local fire marshals. Final decision on language of the final bullet will be made at the next meeting.

Brad will revise the document and present it for review at the next meeting. Additionally, Jeff will double-check the statues listed in the document to make sure they were correct.

Work to develop criteria for determining forestland in Polk County:

Jeff handed out a document which provided suggested decision criteria the Polk County Forestland Classification Committee might use to decide what land will be classified as forestland. These suggested criteria were taken from the Final Report of the 2007 Oregon Forestland Classification Review. The committee will review the document in detail at its next meeting.

Aerial photos for a couple Sections of land in Polk County were also handed out to show how aerial photos could be used with the decision criteria to help the committee evaluate and determine what land should be classified as forestland. Jeff demonstrated GIS program and data layers available to the committee through the Department of Forestry network. This program was the source of the photos distributed. All agreed it should be used to review all the lands within the West Oregon District Protection Boundary in the classification process.

The committee discussed how to best review the lands in Polk County, make determinations of Forestland and record those decisions and then record that information with Polk County. Deciding and recording actions by 1/16th of a section will be tedious and prone to confusion during discussion (especially if members of the public, unfamiliar with the land survey system attend) and also at recording. Opinions varied widely in the group how best to do this, with merits of using official 1/4 of 1/4 language, or renaming each 1/16th argued. Brad proposed a compromise dual labeling format, with each 1/16th designated by a letter label that is clearly linked to the 1/4 of 1/4 system. Lettered left to right, top to bottom, the lettered 16th designations are only to be used to facilitate discussion in the meeting process: all formal recording will be by the "1/4 of 1/4" section nomenclature.

It was decided for the next meeting Jeff would provide some copies of photos from several sections and the committee would test the decision criteria using photos and the GIS program to see how these tools would work for classifying forestland. Brad will draft a document for recording decisions and comments by 1/16th. The committee hopes that once the criteria are refined and eventually established, that photos can be accessed digitally on screen to avoid the costs of printing a huge number of photos. It was also discussed that some field visits would probably be necessary to ground truth some of the test work as the classification criteria are refined.

Also discussed during this meeting was the need to invite others who may be impacted by the work of this committee such as the assessor's office and local fire departments. It was noted that this input should be sought and incorporated early in the process of refining the criteria. Also discussed was the desire to work with the Polk County Web Master to establish a link to the work of this committee (to be pursued soon by Jeff and Brad).

Next Meeting Agenda Items:

- Review and approve minutes.
- Review and approve by-laws.
- Review and test classification criteria.

Future Meeting Dates:

The next committee meeting will be July 17, 2008 from 1:00 - 5:00 at the Oregon Department of Forestry office in Dallas. This is a change of date (formerly set for the 14th).

Other future meeting dates scheduled are August 7, 2008 from 1:00 - 5:00 and August 21, 2008 from 1:00 - 5:00 both at the Oregon Department of Forestry office in Dallas.

Action Items:

- All – continue review of materials handed out at meetings.
- Jeff is working on materials for testing the decision criteria at the next meeting.
- Jeff will verify the statutes listed in by-law document.
- Jeff will contact the county web master.
- Jeff will contact assessor's office and fire department folks about committee.
- Jeff will work up minutes for first two meetings and email to Brad for final editing.
- Jeff will work on system to document classification decisions.
- Jeff will email Brad the by-law document to edit and the review criteria document.
- Jeff will try to get a copy of the Douglas County by-laws and decision criteria.
- Brad will edit by-law document for next meeting.
- Brad will edit minutes Jeff sends to him.
- Don will bring document for conducting public meetings for everyone to review at next meeting.