

Polk County Forestland Classification Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2008

9:00 – 12:00 pm

Oregon Department of Forestry, Dallas Office

Meeting called to order by Terry Lamers (Chair) at 9:00 am on December 5, 2008, Oregon Department of Forestry, Dallas Unit, 825 Oak Villa Rd., Dallas, OR

Members in attendance: Don Duhrkopf, Terry Lamers, Tom Parsons, Jeff Classen and Brad Withrow-Robinson.

Quorum present.

Guests: Jason Cane, Chief, Polk County Fire District No.1, Bill Hahn, Chief, Dallas and SW Polk Rural Fire District. Allison Blair.

Minutes of November 3, 2008 approved.

Meeting Agenda handed out by Jeff (attached to Minutes).

After introductions, Jeff reviewed the forestland classification purpose and process. Chiefs Cane and Hahn were given printouts of a PowerPoint presentation that Mike Totey and Jeff Classen presented at the first committee meeting (6/13/08) that summarize the laws and process for forestland classification. The Committee's progress in developing the decision criteria was also presented. In the following discussion, the Polk and Benton County processes were compared and contrasted. The Committee sought the Chief's recommendation on the process, particularly regarding residential Wildland Urban Interface.

The Chiefs were generally very supportive of the processes to date. They expressed pleasure in a good working relationship with the ODF, and great confidence in the ODF's capacity. In particular, they felt the ODF and Rural Fire Protection Districts compliment rather than competed over resources. They noted that Rural Fire Protection Districts have specific capacity (i.e. structural fires, hazardous materials), and benefit from ODF's greater capacity (both equipment and personnel training) to handle wildland fire. Of particular concern is access to rural homes (for large heavy vehicles such as fire engines). County building codes currently do not impose strict access requirements (to accommodate fire equipment to enter and safely turn around) for private lanes or driveways where homes are being built. This creates a future hazard for rural interface fires (California and Deschutes county scenarios were mentioned); ODF's wildland fire capacity is a strong benefit in these situations. The Chiefs supported the Committee's effort to make the classification follow logical landscape features, and avoid pockets or islands when possible. The Chiefs cautioned the Committee not to assume that an area

Approved 1/15/09

built up with houses, is in fact an urban fire protected area. Much of the discussion was comparing the mechanics or policy of the various fire protection groups.

It was noted that Chiefs or their representatives for both West Valley Fire Department and Sheridan Fire Department were invited and interested but were unable to attend this meeting.

Chief Cane and Chief Hahn concluded by saying they were supportive of the process to date, appreciated being invited for this update, but did not feel it was necessary to sit in on future routine committee meetings. They expressed their willingness to consult further if issues came up. They were thanked by Chair Lamers and departed at 10:15.

Decision Criteria

Jeff passed out another draft of criteria prepared by Brad and Jeff, following Committee's discussion at last meeting. After close review, discussion and some small changes, the motion was made to accept the criteria (with changes), which was seconded and passed unanimously.

Website

Jeff handed out printed copies of the draft website developed by Leslie Friesen. After some discussion about the website structure, a motion was made, seconded and approved that Brad work with Leslie to make minor changes and get the site posted ASAP.

Press Release

Jeff handed out printed copies of the press release in development. Committee members made notes and comments on their copies and gave them to Jeff to use for a revision. When press release and website are both finished, release will be sent to Statesman Journal, Itemizer-Observer, Capital Press and Sheridan Sun.

Next meeting is set for January 15 if website is available to public in time and press release is sent out far enough in advance of meeting. Other meeting dates are set for January 22 and February 5.

Meeting was adjourned 11:55

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Meeting Agenda

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1. Approval of Minutes from 11/3/08 Meeting.
2. Review forestland classification process with Fire Departments.
3. Work on decision criteria and decision flow chart.
4. Update on web site development.
5. Review draft press release.
6. Selecting meeting dates for January and February.