

Polk County Forestland Classification Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

December 2, 2009

9:00 – 12:00 pm

Oregon Department of Forestry, Dallas Office

Meeting called to order by Terry Lamers (Chair) at 9:05 a.m. on December 2, 2009, 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: Mike Totey - Oregon Department of Forestry District Forester for the West Oregon District, Allison Blair, Oregon Department of Forestry Wildland Fire Supervisor for the Dallas office.

Agenda

1. Review Draft Minutes from last meeting
2. Update on recent meetings with Assessor and Fire Chiefs (Jeff)
3. Review Senate Bill 189
4. Review Benton County Presentation from their public meetings
5. Develop plans/strategy for public meeting in Polk County

1. Minutes of May 5, 2009 meeting reviewed and approved.

2. Jeff reported on meeting with Doug Schmidt, Polk County Assessor, to review process and maps. Doug repeated concern of workload, costs to Assessor's office, and how it will be done (the office contracts with consultants for a lot of this). Assessor stated his frustration that the county has to undertake these changes that are required because the State was not maintaining the system before. Will the new system be maintained in the future? Polk County does not want to be a guinea pig, do the work if it will be reworked or revised and forced to do it again. The Committee pointed out that Polk is one of several counties undertaking this. Polk County is not a guinea pig, but part of a group of counties taking this on (Polk is mid way in the process, while having one of the less-complex situations of the counties currently doing this process). Mike talked about the efforts across the state, recognized the added workload, but indicated efforts elsewhere that could be used here (ie. Benton County's approach that could be applied in Polk County). The Assessor took a draft of the classification to try to evaluate workload.

Don asked about the mechanisms to maintain forestland classification. Mike Totey reminded Committee members that they are a standing committee. Tom asked what would cause the Committee to reconvene. OAR requires the committee to meet at least once every five years, however Mike said ODF suggests classification committees meet annually to review changes in statute, land use, and communicate with the Assessor's office. Any changes will be delivered to the Assessors office by July 1st. Also, a request from a landowner to review or change their status would trigger a Committee meeting. Notifications, notes to assessors need to be accumulated for consideration in the annual review. Mike says ODF is trying to develop understanding with Assessor's office, so that they can pass that information on electronically or in a timely manner.

Mike noted that the West Oregon District fire protection boundary actually splits some tax lots in Benton County.

Jeff reported on his meeting with District Fire Chiefs Jason Cane, Chief, Polk County Fire District No.1, Bill Hahn, Chief, Dallas and SW Polk Rural Fire District. They are understanding and supportive of the process as outlined. Falls City remained an issue and discussion point. Agreed to participate in public meeting, explain district's role, etc. (Falls City Chief Bob Young was notified, but did not attend). Jeff will somehow connect with him before we go forward with the public meeting. Mike said Benton County is at a similar point, has provided Chiefs with a good aerial photo showing the draft classification along their boundary lines, telling them if they have questions, to contact the committee now. Jeff will pursue that.

3. Jeff handed out 2 documents with information from SB 189 modifications (attached) to become effective January 1, 2009, and Draft rules presented to the Board of Forestry (will lead to a rule making process). Jeff noted that there have been some changes, but nothing that alters the work this committee has done to date.

4. Mike led discussion of presentation developed for three Benton County public meetings (which about 15 people attended collectively). Recommended making a general overview so that the most time could be spent addressing questions. Committee members felt it was a good template. Jeff will send file to committee members for more detailed edits, comments. Terry will take lead in presentation (based on Benton County presentation) working with Brad and the rest of the committee to make revisions for Polk county.

5. Committee will look to hold two meetings, one in Falls City, another in Buell (Dallas if one of those sites is unworkable). Someone will check on availability of venues in those locations in weeks of Feb 15th, 22nd, looking first at Wed 17th, Tues 23rd.

Chairman recessed the meeting at 11:50.

