

Draft Minutes
Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Executive Meeting
Salem, Oregon
July 13, 2007

Present: Mike Barnes, Mark Copeland, Mike Gaudern, Nancy Hathaway, Kristina McNitt, John Poppino, Dave Schmidt, Al Thayer. Donna Heffernan by speakerphone for part.

Guest: State Forester Marvin Brown

AWARDS

Al Thayer and Bert Vanderwall were thanked for their service to OSWA. Their talents are very much appreciated.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Al Thayer, Chair of the Government Affairs Committee, gave a report on his observations of OSWA strategy and future design for success. In summary, he said: We have an excellent team in Mike Gaudern and Kristina McNitt. They work long hours keeping a handle on the ever-changing bill environment. We are forced to take a much more active role on issues than we ever did in the past.

With many members of advanced age, we need younger members to step forward and become more active. Our staff needs to be strengthened by adequate compensation with a more expansive role for Kristina. Many of our issues come up between sessions when she is not retained by the current 2007-2008 contract. Example One: The governor will make Board of Forestry appointments between sessions and Kristina's contacts will help us get results. Example Two: OSWA's fire policy needs to be reviewed in conjunction with all other stakeholders. Kristina routinely works with these stakeholders and her involvement is critical for our success.

Mike Gaudern instructed to retain Kristina during interim.

ADVOCACY

Kristina McNitt reported on the legislative session. The upcoming Update article she wrote refers specifically to ODF issues, mostly fire. ODF secured a good total budget, but the structure does not benefit us. The fire burden has been shifted to landowners. Fire taxes have been increased 25% and the deductible comes out of our pockets for the first \$15 million. This is a \$3.65 million shift onto landowners. Kristina views this as a gross violation of our on-going agreement with the state (in the past private landowners have traded off the use of all available equipment and manpower to operate the equipment in return for lower fire taxes.)

It became apparent that the State Forester didn't explain these issues to the Governor's office and at the last minute it became necessary to put together information to share with the legislators. SF Brown felt that "the problem with the ODF budget is that the stakeholders are unwilling to pay the administrative costs" when, in reality, these costs were balanced out by the donations cited above.

This issue has been temporarily resolved by using money from the counties. Also unusual, there were no personnel present at the passing of the final budget, as is customary. Meanwhile, every other natural resource agency made it through the budget process royally. ODF received only 7 of the 14 positions they had asked to have restored.

The perception is that ODF has lost reputation. From now on ODF has to have quarterly audits, further proof that there is a lack of trust.

Kristina's frustration is that instead of partnering with ODF at the legislature, we had to work as an advocate. ODF is becoming more of a regulatory agency rather than one focused on landowner assistance.

Log liens: This bill was dropped because of poor response from our membership. There didn't seem to be much point in taking on the banking lobby unless we were determined to see it through. In reality, a landowner's exposure to loss is usually only 2 weeks (mills pay every 2 weeks) so there is some landowner control of this situation.

Inheritance tax exclusion for natural resource businesses: Wayne Krieger formed a coalition of Democrats and Republicans and got a bill passed that excludes \$7.5 million from state death/estate taxes. This bill doesn't address all aspects of the issue, but should be considered a first step.

LEED: Some Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design wording worked its way into some bills and nearly escaped detection. For one thing, LEED values steel above wood in "green" construction benefit.

Burning Ban: We can expect this issue to come to the forefront. Field burning has been continually reduced and the forest industry is next. Environmentalists have provided ugly testimony.

Pesticides: There are proposed changes to the Pesticide Reporting System and we need to regroup and be informed and proactive. If we see that restrictions are inevitable, then we might need to roll together different protection issues (ie.: ag burning, pesticide) into one package.

The legislative interim would be a good time for OSWA to develop policies to address these issues.

MEETING WITH MARVIN BROWN

State Forester Marvin Brown attended and discussed his view of current direction in ODF. The Department has suffered from a fair amount of turnovers in the 4 years he has headed it. Positions have been lost, however current legislature re-funded 7 of them. Stewardship forester positions have tried to incorporate both landowner assistance and regulatory enforcement. However, there are fewer foresters out in the woods.

Additionally, there are increasing demands upon ODF to manage the interface in the Urban Growth Boundary in cities. As new subdivisions and “ranchettes” push fingers into forested areas, there are issues around forestry practices. These issues are time-consuming to resolve as they may involve meetings with county and/or city officials and agencies. Stewardship foresters are spending 60% of their time dealing with interface issues. Out of necessity, ODF has taken on the role of mediator.

To meet this need, ODF has created a new department of Urban Forestry. The urban population is growing and consequently expanding their political base. S.F. Brown thinks that by being more visible in urban areas, the ODF is laying down a foundation for support for our issues. He noted that at the present time there is no other agency to deal with urban forestry other than ODF. This continuing shift in political base and the conflicts in urban forestry is one of the top 7 issues for the Board of Forestry.

For the future, he would like to create a private landowner program that will give added value to the landowner and to the public. This might address assistance and market access.

In contrast, OSWA believes that our best help in the legislature is educating the legislators to understand and support our issues. Our strategy is linking strong rural ties with the urban representatives. Kristina feels this has been very successful.

Basically, we all want political support for forestry in Oregon but we just differ in how to go about it. A common ground would articulate a mutual decision on how to deal with the same issue.

OSWA WORK PLAN

The Ten Year and One Year work plans were reviewed. We are on track with the 2006-2007 work plan and we recommend adoption of the following: The draft Ten-year work plan, 2007-2008 budget, the new OSWA Advocacy packet, and the new OSWA /FFO Education Project packet.

BUDGETING

Agreed that we want a realistic budget for OSWA. Membership is not increasing overall, but cost of doing business is rising. A dues increase is popular if an added service, such as fire insurance, could be tied in. Our choice is: developing sources of non-dues revenue and increasing dues revenue based on new services.

FFO will try to secure grants for special education projects. One educational project now developed by OSWA and Mark Havel is Full Spectrum Forestry, which has the potential to attract funding. FFO will be asked to help raise funds for that project in 2007/2008 and work with OSWA to find funds long-term for other education projects that fit with both organizations missions.

Mike Gaudern was directed to develop a budget for OSWA that has a line item for "Special projects from FFO," should there be any. There should be a separate budget for FFO.

Regarding dues increase vs. non-dues revenue, we need to do 2 things.

(1) present the budgetary information to the members in the Update and let them offer suggestions and opportunities to raise revenue

(2) use some kind of visual format to simplify the information.

ECOSYSTEMS SERVICES/CARBON CREDITS

Corporate representatives and policy-focused NGOs and foundations in the US and Canada are discussing issues relating to carbon credits and the conversations have gone to a high policy level, effectively eliminating any grass roots considerations.

It is possible to work with ODF to fit forestry in--at least we'd be in the loop talking. However, we should seriously consider conversations with the business community and pushing our pilot project concepts with partners at American Tree Farm System.

STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

Judie Fetsch is the new editor of the Update. Kathy Scott continues as webmaster.

Mike Gaudern politely asked for a COL raise. The Executive committee suggested he put into the budget for the Board to consider.

NEXT MEETING is August 3rd.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hathaway
2nd Vice President
July 17, 2007