TFW/Forests and Fish Policy
Forest Practices Board

P.O. Box 47012, Olympia, WA 98504-7012

Policy Co-Chairs: Stephen Bernath, Department of Ecology and Jim Peters, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

MEMORANDUM

To: Forest Practices Board

From: Stephen Bernath, Co-chair
Jim Peters, Co-chair

Date: October 18, 2010

Subject: Policy Priorities for FY 2011

Given the trend of increasing workloads and diminishing resources, the Forests and Fish Policy Committee (Policy) recently reconsidered its priorities. The following list reflects our most urgent priorities.

1. **Adequate funding of the adaptive management program.** While we were successful in securing a supplemental budget request to sustain the Adaptive Management Program (AMP) during fiscal year (FY) 2010, long-term funding continues to be a challenge. The last remaining federal grant will expire in the early spring of 2011, and the existing general fund-state/Forests and Fish Support Account contributions to the AMP are not adequate to maintain the program. Beginning in FY 2011, the program will have a funding shortfall of at least $1.75 million/year. This shortfall will undermine progress toward completing necessary studies to determine if forest practices are effective and to determine if there is a positive trend in protecting public resources such as water quality and in meeting other Forests and Fish resource objectives. Without a full court press in the next six months to make up for this shortfall, the adaptive management program will face a 50-60% reduction in staff and funding to perform its work, putting the adaptive management program at risk.

2. **Clean Water Act assurances.** AMP members continue to work on a number of Clean Water Act assurances milestones, including those directly related to the AMP. Even though considerable effort is focused on completing the milestones, we are behind schedule on several. The lack of long-term AMP funding poses the greatest risk to retaining assurances.

3. **Adaptive Management Strategic Plan implementation.** Full implementation of the actions identified in the strategic plan are essential to reviewing how the system has worked after 10 years, and making mid-course corrections to adjust and improve performance, efficiencies and priorities. Part of this effort is also getting a recommitment by the caucuses to the adaptive management program. On a positive note, many of the Clean Water Act assurances milestones are complimentary to the objectives and tasks in the strategic plan for adaptive management. Consequently, meeting one often contributes to accomplishing the other.

As you know, items two and three above have many sub-tasks, and there is no doubt Policy could easily spend all its resources on just one of these priorities in the next year. Any new work assigned to Policy by the Forest Practices Board, or taken on by Policy for other reasons, will likely distract Policy from timely efforts on funding, meeting Clean Water Act assurances milestones and implementation of the adaptive management strategic plan.

Finally, please be cognizant that Policy and CMER operate by consensus and are primarily staffed by members volunteered by their organizations. Also, this is not a full-time resource-based system. Each of the Policy and CMER members have other assigned duties from their respective employers/interests and many times play multiple roles within the forest practices system, such as board support work and field implementation of forest practices.

Given the workload challenges, diminishing resources and the likelihood of a very busy legislative session, Policy is proposing to suspend some monthly meetings during session. Decisions to suspend meetings will most likely evolve around the number of and urgency of addressing “action” items, such as the April consideration and approval of the FY 2012 CMER work plan and budget.

cc: Forest Practice Board Liaisons
FFR Policy Members