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RESOURCES**

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MEMORANDUM

January 26, 2024

TO: Forest Practices Board

FROM: Lori Clark, Adaptive Management Program Administrator (AMPA)
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SUBJECT: Washington State Auditor Office (SAO) Performance Audit Update

In January 2021, the Office of the Washington State Auditor (SAO) completed a performance audit of the Forest Practices Adaptive Management Program (AMP)¹. The audit provided 13 recommendations for improving AMP program performance. The report referred eleven of these recommendations to the Forest Practices Board (Board). In May 2021, the Board approved priorities among the recommendations in the form of a response plan. In October 2022, the Board approved the TFW Policy workgroup & AMPA recommendations list of five net gains options in support of the SAO Recommendation #05, adopting a net gains model for TFW Policy.

This memo is an update on the status of each action item related to the AMP response plan to the SAO Recommendations, including the Net Gains Options (see attachment, tables 1-3). The AMP staff and participants have completed action items on SAO recommendations 3, 4, and 7-11 for improvements to decision making, accountability, and transparency and are making significant progress to advance the remaining SAO recommendations 5-6 related to AMP decision making process. All SAO recommendations action items are scheduled to be completed in 2024.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need more information.

Attachments:

- Update on Implementation of SAO Recommendations

¹ [Performance Audit of the Adaptive Management Program](#)

Update on Implementation of SAO Recommendations

Table 1: Recommendations to be considered and acted upon by caucus principals that may be aided by third-party neutral assistance focusing on conflict transformation.

Focus Area	Action Item	SAO Rec #	Status	Update
Decision making process	1) Review consensus decision making model: 2) Require participation by caucus principals	1 and 2	Delayed	<p>This SAO Recommendation is assigned to the Principals.</p> <p>The status of these two recommendations remains as delayed status. This is primarily because any changes to the decision-making model would require a rule-change.</p> <p>Two rounds of TFW Principals meetings were held during the 21-23 biennium.</p> <p>The FPB approved the MPS with funds to continue facilitating the Principals meeting for the 23-25 biennium.</p>

Table 2: Recommendations involving changes to AMP processes to be evaluated mainly through the appropriate **AMP committees**.

Focus Area	Action Item	SAO Rec #	Status	Update
Decision making process	Implement a “net gains” approach to each proposal, project, and decision that benefits more than one caucus by considering packages of projects instead of individual projects.	5	In-Progress	<p>FPB approved the TFW Policy’s recommendation on the net gains options.</p> <p>Net Gains Option 1 - Adopt Multi-Criteria Decision Making/Structured Decision-Making.</p> <p>A consultant will support TFW Policy and the FPB with SDM and adopting decision criteria beginning February 2024.</p> <p>The USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units Program will offer a two-day Structure Decision Making (SDM) workshop for all AMP participants April 9th-10th.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Est. due to FPB August 2024</p>

				<p>Net Gains Option 2 - Clarify Process for Outside (Non-CMER) Science (PI) Est. due to FPB May 2024</p> <p>Net Gains Option 3 - Set Clear AMP Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synchronize CMER Work Plan and MPS – in process List AMP Priorities - CMER will deliver the 2023 Project Summary Sheets along with a recommendation for projects that can be removed from the AMP future project list to inform the TFW Policy AMP priorities discussion. MPS Contingency Plan - complete <p>Net Gains Option 4 - CMER Reform - CMER completed edits to the Protocol & Standards Manual (PSM) to address this recommendation.</p> <p>Net Gains Option 5 - Develop Guidance or Manual for TFW Policy - complete</p>
Decision making process	Adopt decision criteria for determining actions that will occur depending on project results before those results have been found.	6	In-Progress Progress is being made, although this recommendation will take more time than expected to complete.	<p>A process for revising Schedule L-1 was developed and approved by CMER, TFW Policy, and the FPB in 2023. This will serve as the basis for the quantitative measures for the decision criteria in a structured decision-making model. The review and revision process should be completed in FY25.</p> <p>A consultant will support TFW Policy and the FPB with SDM and adopting decision criteria beginning January 2024. The USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units Program will offer a two-day Structure Decision Making (SDM) workshop for all AMP participants April 9th-10th.</p>

Table 3: Recommendations that are administrative in nature to be evaluated primarily by Board and AMP staff and brought to the Board for decision and action.

Focus Area	Action Item	SAO Rec #	Status	Update
Decision making process	Update language in the board manual to reflect WAC which says dispute resolution is	3	Completed	Board approved changes to Board Manual 22 update February 2022.

	required when consensus cannot be achieved within the Science or Policy committees.			
Decision making process	<p>The board should set a trigger for dispute resolution. It should work with the Adaptive Management Program Administrator and the chairs of the committees to determine the appropriate amount of time:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Identify and recommend to the Board schedule or process-based triggers for invoking dispute resolution. 2- Add line item for dispute resolution in the Master Project Schedule. 3- Establish on-call contracts for dispute resolution for Policy Committee. 4- Establish on-call contracts for a CMER technical arbitration panel. 5- Establish on-call statistical assistance contract for CMER. 	4	Completed	<p>Task 1 - The AMPA and TFW Policy recommend allowing time for the implementation of other SAO Recommendations before deciding on a trigger for the Board to initiate dispute resolution.</p> <p>Tasks 2-5 are completed.</p>
Transparency and accountability	Peer review science program every 5 years	7	Completed	<p>Board approved language requiring 5-year review for part 6.1 of Board Manual Section 22 at the May 2023 meeting.</p> <p>The rule-required science review of the program will be fulfilled this biennium through a separate project lead by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. There is funding in the FY2027 MPS to fund the next 5-year AMP Science Review.</p>
Decision making process	Onboarding and training for new members	8	Completed	<p>TFW Policy and CMER members received OPMA training in June 2023. The AMPA offered an AMP Introduction On-Boarding presentation in June 2023.</p> <p>Hybrid training materials will be developed as funding allows.</p>
Transparency and accountability	1) Complete biennial fiscal and performance audits of the AMP every two years	9	Completed	BM language exists. Funding was added for FY 2025.

<p>Transparency and Accountability</p>	<p>2) Tracking system for life cycle of projects 3) Public facing dashboard</p>	<p>10,1 1</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>AMP staff have completed work on project tracking system and with cost and schedule metrics for continuous monitoring of projects.</p> <p>A DNR-supported SharePoint Online platform was created and will make this information available to the public with the launch of the Dashboard.</p> <p>CMER and TFW Policy members have received access and training on the SharePoint Online platform for increased transparency and access to TWF files, reports, and meeting materials.</p> <p>DNR worked with a consultant to build the AMP Dashboard this quarter. It is expected to be completed and launched by February 2024.</p>
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