



**Timber, Fish and Wildlife Policy Committee  
Forest Practices Board**

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**Policy Co-Chairs:**

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TO: Forest Practices Board  
FROM: Marc Engel and Meghan Tuttle  
SUBJECT: TFW Policy Committee Report and 2022 Policy Work Plan

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The Timber, Fish, & Wildlife Policy Committee (Policy) continues to manage a heavy workload driven by internal process deadlines as well as priorities directed by the Forest Practices Board. To accomplish this, Policy continues to rely on additional meetings, email communications between meetings and the creation of technical and policy workgroups to address specific issues and meet deadlines.

**TFW POLICY COMMITTEE BUSINESS UPDATE for June and July 2021**

**Small Forest Landowner Request for Smaller Riparian Buffers**

When Policy was presented the findings of Policy Workgroup tasked with a review of the potential to incorporate 25, 50 and 75 foot stream buffer widths into an alternate plan template for small forest landowners, the Small Forest Landowner (SFL) Caucus invoked dispute resolution over their results. The SFL Caucus cited the lack of progress on the Riparian Management Zone width prescriptions associated with the proposed widths of 25, 50, and 75 feet in the WFFA prepared *Alternate Prescriptions for SFL in Western Washington* proposal. The two stages of the dispute resolution process have been completed.

At the conclusion of Stage II, Policy received a final report from the mediator documenting the results of the Stage II dispute, Policy is now awaiting the results of the CMER review of the WFFA submitted scientific justification supporting their the buffer widths of their proposal. The CMER review is currently in dispute resolution and the results of their review will be in form of answers to the CMER/Policy Committee framework questions 1 through 6.

When results of the CMER review of the scientific justification are received, Policy will discuss the results and determine how to incorporate the CMER findings into the Smaller Riparian Buffer recommendations. Upon completion of the Policy determination of how to address the WFFA submitted scientific justification then the Policy caucuses who participated in the dispute resolution Stage II process will prepare a report documenting their assessment of the dispute and recommendation(s) for resolution. These reports will be bundled into a Minority and Majority report and presented with Policy's

recommendations to the Board. Though there is no timeline, either in rule or guidance, associated with this process, Policy is committed to bringing recommendations to the Board as soon as possible.

### **Proposal Initiation (PI) Request for Type Np Buffer Basin GIS/FPA Project**

The Policy Committee, at their May 2021 meeting, rejected a request to initiate a Type Np Buffer Basin GIS project. Dispute resolution was then invoked by the Industrial landowners' caucus based upon the non-consensus vote by Policy.

The Industrial Landowners' Caucus, at the June 2021 Policy meeting, presented their reason for calling the dispute was based on the premise that not all caucuses agree that the site selection constraints for the CMER Type Np study limit application of study findings to the broader managed forest landscape. They stated the constraints resulted in purposeful rather than random sampling of the population of Np basins and contemporary harvest practices, limiting the study's scope of inference. Therefore, it is unknown if the frequency or magnitude of responses observed in the Type N study are representative of responses likely to occur in most operational harvest units.

Policy is entering into Stage I of this dispute resolution with the first meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> July. It is expected that Stage I will be completed in early September.

### **Type Np Buffer Recommendation Development**

At the May meeting the Board received an outline from the Policy co-chairs regarding the expected receipt date by the Policy Committee of the final report from the Np Workgroup; and, the steps in which Policy will undertake to develop Type Np Water buffer recommendations based on guidance outlined in Part 3.4 of Board Manual Section 22. In the time since the co-chairs have reported to the Board, the following have occurred within the Policy Committee:

- Policy formally accepted the final Np Workgroup Report at their June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting and agreed to convene their first Type Np Buffer recommendation development meeting in mid-June;
- Policy convened its first Type Np Buffer recommendation meeting on June 17<sup>th</sup> with a review of the Policy Committee Recommendation process as outlined in Part 3.4 of the board manual, a review of the Type Np Report, establishment of additional information needed and questions to answer in preparation for the process, and to schedule additional meetings;
- Policy met on July 28<sup>th</sup> to receive a presentation on from Ecology on Water Quality Standards and the Clean Water Act
- Additional meetings are scheduled are scheduled for August 18<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

The Policy Committee is currently in the phase of alternative courses of action analysis to determine an appropriate management response. It is expected this phase will be completed in fall after which Policy will develop a consensus decision on an alternative to recommend to the Board. If the Policy Committee has not agreed upon an alternative, any Policy Committee caucus may invoke the dispute resolution process.

### **TFW Policy Process to Complete Board Work Plan to Address SAO Recommendations**

The TFW Policy Committee has been directed by the Board to develop recommendations for action to address two of the SAO recommendations for improvements of the Adaptive Management Program. Policy has been assigned to focus on development of two actions meant to improve the decision making process by developing recommendations for:

- Decision criteria for determining actions; and
- A net gains model for project planning.

The Boards Work Plan requires Policy to complete and deliver recommendations in calendar year 2022.

The Policy co-chairs will present the assigned work to Policy at their August 2021 meeting to initiate a Policy timeline for completion of these tasks. Policy will update the Board of the progress beginning at the November 2021 meeting.

### **MAJOR TFW POLICY COMMITTEE TOPICS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2022**

#### **Existing Policy Priorities**

- **Adaptive Management Program (AMP) budget and the Master Project Schedule (MPS):** Policy will review and prepare recommendations to present to the Board at the May 2022 meeting.
- **Type Np Water Riparian Management Zone (RMZ) buffer width recommendations:** It is anticipated that Policy will complete the development of a consensus decision on an alternative to recommend to the Board in December 2021 to be presented to the Board in February 2022.
- **Type N Experimental Buffer Treatment in Hard Rock Lithologies Phase II:** The report and Policy recommendations are anticipated to be delivered to the Board in May 2022.
- **Type N Experimental Buffer Treatment in Hard Rock Lithologies Phase II - addendum:** The report and Policy recommendations are anticipated to be delivered to the Board in May 2022.
- **Type N Experimental Buffer Treatment in Soft Rock Lithologies:** The report and Policy recommendations are anticipated to be delivered to the Board by February 2022.
- **SAO:** Policy will deliver recommendations for transitioning to a net gains approach, SAO recommendation #5, to the Board at the May 2022 meeting; and Policy will provide options for the AMPA to include in a memo describing different ways that decision criteria could be made part of the AMP process to be delivered to the Board by November 2022;
- **WFPA Headwater Stream Smart Buffer Pilot Project:** The Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Committee (CMER) is completing an on-going scientific review of the proposed study design that was provided by WFPA. The review is currently in the deliberation phase at CMER and it is uncertain when CMER will present the results of their review to Policy.

- **Small Forest Landowner Request for Smaller Riparian Buffers:** Completion of stage 1 and 2 of the dispute resolution process to prepare Small Forest Landowner Alternate Plan Template prescriptions will be completed and it is anticipated that recommendations will be presented to the Board at the February 2022 meeting.
- **Small Forest Landowner Experimental Harvest Prescription:** Policy has received the workgroup recommendations and plans to of recommendations for the Board until after the Policy recommendations for the Small Forest Landowner Smaller Riparian Buffers are delivered to the Board.  
**Extensive Riparian Monitoring:** Policy is developing a recommended extensive riparian monitoring strategy for inclusion in the MPS in calendar year 2022.

### CMER Priorities:

It is anticipated that the Cooperative Management Evaluation and Research Committee (CMER) will bring work products requiring action to Policy and these products include:

- **Deep Seated Research Strategy:** Physical, Groundwater and Evapotranspiration Modeling (including Toolkit Development) study design is estimated to be provided to Policy in November 2022;
- **Eastside Timber Habitat Evaluation Project (ETHEP):** The scoping document and the preliminary six questions document are complete, the revised charter is anticipated to be provided to Policy in June 2022;
- **Eastside Type N Riparian Effectiveness Project (ENREP):** Is in currently in implementation and a Charter is anticipated to be provided to Policy in January of 2022;
- **Type N Experimental Buffer Treatment in Hard Rock Lithologies (Temperature, Sediment, Vegetation, Litterfall):** CMER and ISPR approved Phase II final report and the completed 6 questions document are anticipated to be provided to Policy in February 2022. The addendum to the Final Report is estimated to be provided to Policy in April 2022;
- **Wetlands Management Zone Effectiveness Monitoring project:** The scoping document and study designs will not be going to Policy until 2023 and 2024, respectively. The project charter is anticipated to be provided to Policy in April 2022.
- **Forested Wetland Effectiveness Project:** The Project Management Plan is expected to be provided to Policy in January 2022.
- **Type N Experimental Buffer Treatment in Soft Rock Lithologies:** The final report and the completed 6 questions document are anticipated to be provided to Policy in December of 2021;
- **The Westside Type F Riparian Prescription Monitoring Pilot:** The Charter is estimated to be provided to Policy in November 2022.
- **Water Typing (PHB/DPC):** ISAG is currently working on the PHB study design and will initiate work on the Default Physical Conditions (DPC) study design in the fall of 2021. Each study design will undergo a review period in the SAG, CMER, and ISPR which can take ~12-18 months to complete. As such, the water typing study designs are not expected to be presented to Policy or the Board until early to mid-2023. In the meantime, the DPC charter is expected to be brought to Policy in April 2022.

### New Projects:

The Policy Committee workload is heavy, yet must also remain sensitive to the changes in various timelines and to new issues as they come up. The capacity for Policy to accept any new work as assigned

by the Forest Practices Board or taken on for other reasons could require delaying existing priorities and/or scheduling additional meetings.