

# OREGON FOREST RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Presented to the House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Jim Paul, Executive Director  
February 7, 2023



Oregon Forest  
Resources Institute

# What is the Oregon Forest Resources Institute?

- Created by the Oregon Legislature in 1991.
- Support Oregon's forest products industry *and* the wise stewardship of natural resources for the benefit of Oregonians (ORS 526.605).
- General Authority (ORS 526.640):
  1. increase public understanding of forestry and its public benefits
  2. support education within the forestry sector
  3. conduct research and help facilitate continued improvement in wood utilization
  4. provide publications and other materials relating to the Institute's work



# OFRI's structure – three primary programs

- OFRI's programs provide educational materials and programming for the general public, K-12 teachers and students, and forestland owners.
- The agency does not receive state general fund money. It is funded by a dedicated portion of the forest products harvest tax.
- The State Forester appoints 11 of the 13 members of OFRI's governing board of directors and certifies that the agency's annual budgets are prepared and adopted in accordance with statute (ORS 576.416).



# OFRI funding

- OFRI's funding comes from a statutorily-dedicated portion of the forest products harvest tax.
- Over the past decade harvest tax revenues collected (on a quarterly basis) to fund the agency have been between \$3.17 and \$4.04 million per year.
- The harvest tax rate—currently \$1.12 per thousand board feet—and budget are set annually by the OFRI Board.



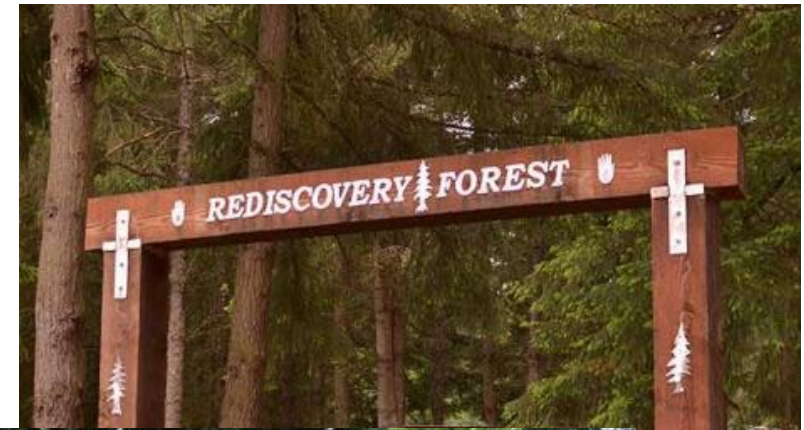
# Public education

- educational statewide media
- special reports and publications
- sector economic data
- county-by-county economic analyses
- website resources
- public interpretive signage
- public awareness research



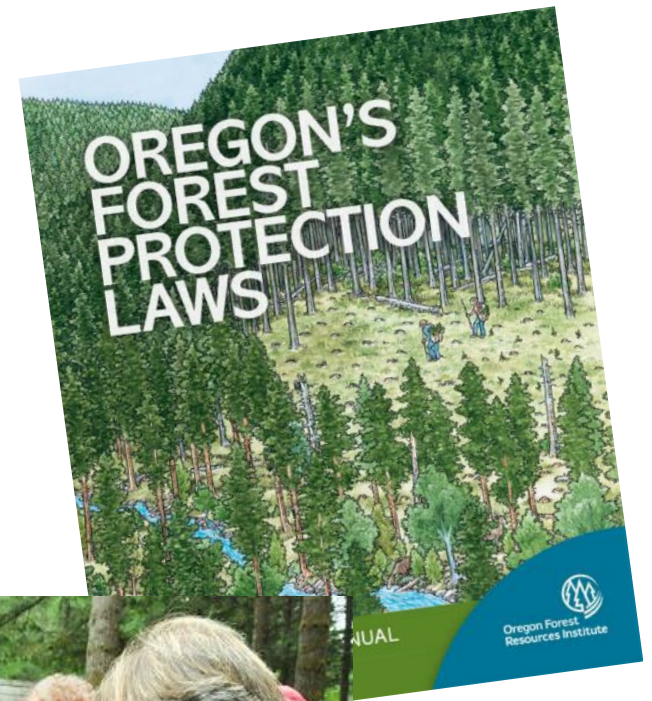
# K-12 education

- classroom materials and curriculum
- teacher training
- career and technical education (CTE)
- classroom programs
- field programs
- 15-acre teaching forest
- bus reimbursement for schools



# Landowner education

- publications, videos and resources
- forest protection laws reference manual
- Partnership for Forestry Education (PFE)
- support for multiple OSU/OSU Extension forestland owner educational programs
- wildlife management tours, workshops and publications



# 2021 Secretary of State audit

- In 2020-21, the Oregon Secretary of State Audits Division conducted a performance audit of OFRI.
- 10-month process—completed July 2021
- The audit produced five recommendations for the agency.
- Agency immediately began implementing suggested changes.





# Recommendations and OFRI response

## Five recommendations:

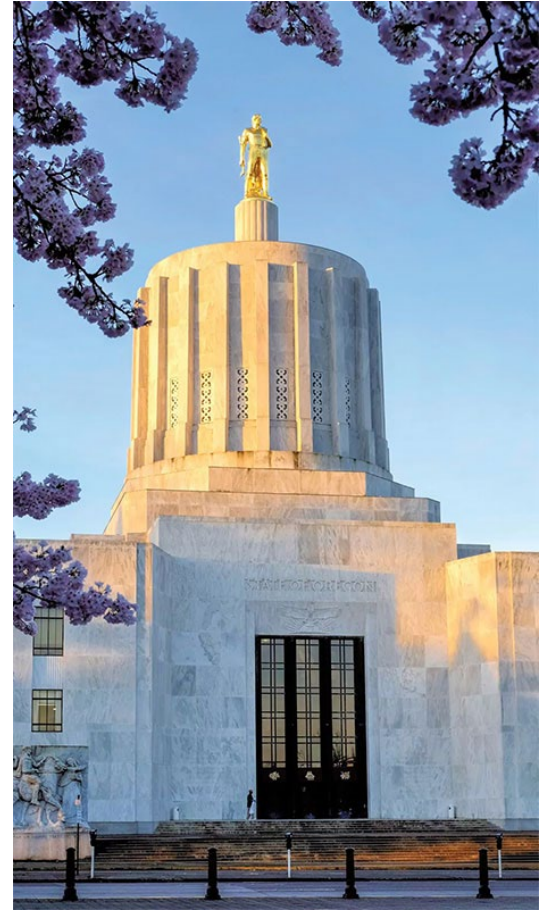
1. Revise and clarify OFRI's enabling statute to be consistent with principles of good governance.
2. Develop a policy/guidance for staff and board members to ensure OFRI avoids activities prohibited by statute.
3. Improve internal controls.
4. Improve transparency and involve a broader array of stakeholders outside the industry.
5. Conduct a comprehensive review of OFRI statutes and determine which statewide policies apply to OFRI—in consultation with DAS and DOJ.



# Looking ahead to 2023:

## Complete remaining audit actions:

- new OFRI five-year strategic plan
- recruit and hire staff to support policy and procedures documentation, and for other operational changes that resulted from the audit
- ongoing training for OFRI board and staff



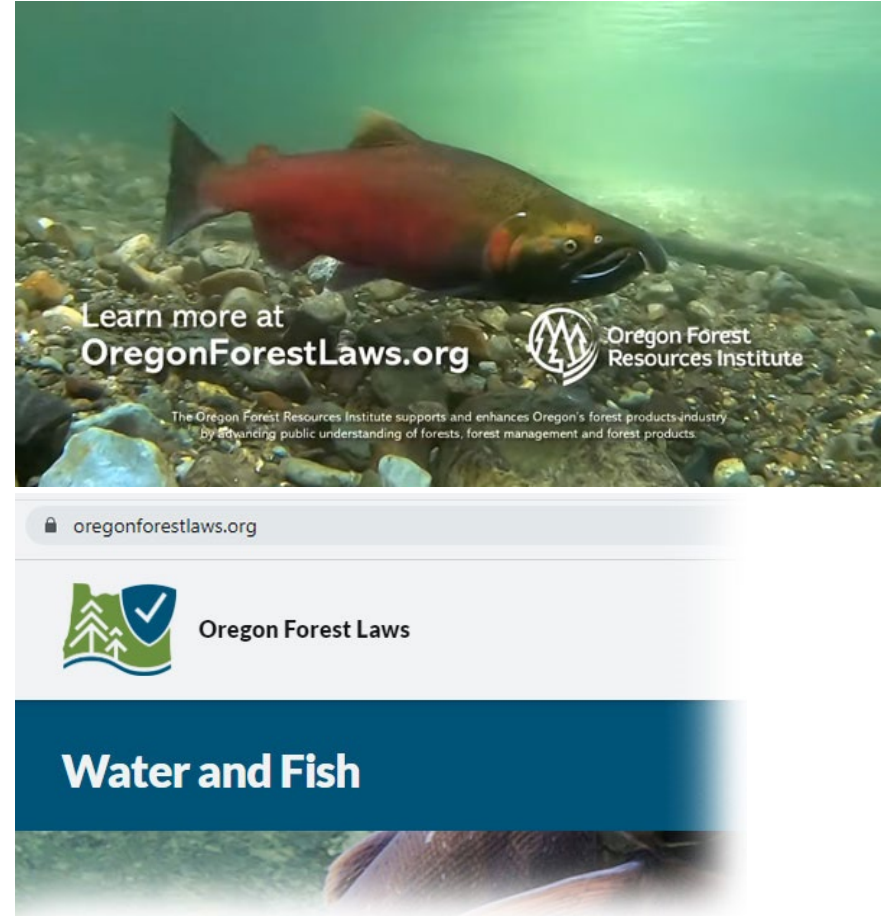
# Private Forest Accord for 2023

- significant changes to Oregon forest practices
- significant educational needs as a result of the changes to forest practice regulations
- OFRI is part of collaborative efforts to help educate a wide range of audiences about the changes in forest practice rules



# Public education

- educational media across the state on television and online
- dedicated website detailing changes to Oregon's forest practice laws
- upcoming special report on the new PFA-related regulatory changes
- planned video series



# Landowner education

- landowner fact sheet series about the changes stemming from the PFA
- forest tours for forestland owners to observe and discuss changes
- sponsorship and support for landowner training and partner outreach



# Operator and manager education

- new edition of *Oregon's Forest Protection Laws: An Illustrated Manual* currently in development (multi-year process)
- co-host of training sessions for forest managers and operators (ex. webinars, workshops)



# Thank you!

Jim Paul  
OregonForests.org

*Related websites:*

*[LearnForests.org](http://LearnForests.org)*

*[KnowYourForest.org](http://KnowYourForest.org)*

*[OregonForestLaws.org](http://OregonForestLaws.org)*

*[TheForestReport.org](http://TheForestReport.org)*



Oregon Forest  
Resources Institute

# ABOUT THE OREGON FOREST RESOURCES INSTITUTE



Learn more at [OregonForests.org](https://OregonForests.org)



## OFRI MISSION

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute supports and enhances Oregon's forest products industry by advancing public understanding of forests, forest management and forest products.

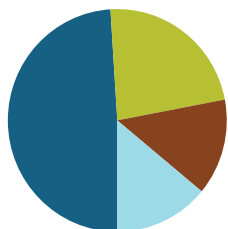
## OFRI BACKGROUND

- The Oregon Legislature created the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) in 1991.
- OFRI is governed by a board of directors made up of 11 voting members appointed by the state forester, plus two non-voting members. Board members represent timber producers, small woodland owners and industry employees. Non-voting members include a public representative and the dean of the Oregon State University College of Forestry. An Oregon Department of Forestry liaison assists the board.
- OFRI is funded by a portion of the forest products harvest tax, at a rate set annually by the board.
- The Institute's annual budget is between \$3.5 and \$4 million, depending on harvest tax receipts.
- OFRI has eight full-time staff based out of two offices, in Portland and at The Oregon Garden in Silverton, where the Institute manages the 15-acre Rediscovery Forest for educational purposes.
- Staff includes professional foresters, environmental educators and public outreach professionals.

## CORE PROGRAMS

OFRI fulfills its mission through three core programs that educate the general public, K-12 teachers and students, and landowners.

## PROGRAMS AS PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET



49%	■ Public Education
23%	■ K-12 Education
14%	■ Landowner Education
14%	■ Administration

## PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

OFRI's public education program consists of forest tours, publications, research, websites, videos and other educational media content covering a wide range of forest-related topics, including:

- forest sector economic impact
- Oregon forest facts
- water quality
- wildfire
- carbon
- Oregon Forest Practices Act
- reforestation
- fish and wildlife protections

Key elements of the public education program include:

- annual forest tours highlighting current forest practices
- publishing one special report per year on a topic of public interest such as wildfire, water quality or carbon
- commissioning scientific research with leading institutions including Oregon State University, University of Washington and University of Idaho
- publishing the bi-annual Oregon Forest Facts booklet with information about Oregon's forests and forest industry
- maintaining three core websites intended for the general public, educators and landowners
- running an annual statewide educational





## PUBLIC EDUCATION (cont.)

media campaign to educate Oregonians about the state's forest sector

- commissioning research to gauge public awareness of Oregon's forest laws and practices
- operating social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube that share content on forestry-related events, news and information

Public awareness, replanting laws



Public awareness, protections for water resources



Overall approval, forest management activities



## K-12 EDUCATION PROGRAM

OFRI's K-12 education program focuses on professional development for teachers, in-class educational programs for students, field trip transportation reimbursement, and grade-level publications for teachers and students that meet or exceed state science standards. All materials are provided free of charge.



Key programs:

### **Oregon Natural Resources Education Program:**

Housed at Oregon State University (OSU), this program provides free professional development for natural resources education to more than 700 teachers across Oregon annually.

**Talk About Trees:** This in-class forestry education program for pre-K through eighth grades reaches more than 100,000 students annually.

**Career technical education:** Working with the Oregon Department of Education, OFRI supports forestry and natural resources education programs at more than 30 Oregon high schools. The Institute also offers a professional development conference annually for high school teachers, and provides the sole financial support for the Oregon Envirothon, a skills-based natural resources knowledge competition engaging up to 200 students annually. These programs are closely affiliated with National FFA Organization and Future Natural Resource Leaders.

## LANDOWNER EDUCATION PROGRAM

OFRI's landowner education program is designed to extend the reach of key forestry education programs throughout Oregon, and to meet the evolving needs of the state's forestland owners and managers.

Key programs and partnerships:

**Partnership for Forestry Education:** Brings together 17 forestry education programs from around the state and centralizes and maintains information for landowners on one website, KnowYourForest.org.

**Wildlife in Managed Forests:** OFRI summarizes scientific information about forest wildlife and habitat and disseminates it through publications, workshops and tours.

**Resources for Family Forestland Owners:** OFRI provides a complete listing of local and regional resources for family forest landowners.

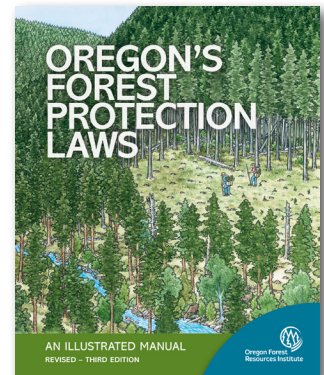
**Master Woodland Manager program:** OFRI provides the sole funding for this program, which is delivered through the OSU Extension Service.

**Women Owning Woodlands/Tree School:** OFRI provides supplemental funding to support these two OSU Extension Service programs.

**Oregon's Forest Protection Laws –**

### **An Illustrated Manual:**

This OFRI-produced manual serves as a go-to reference for forestland owners, managers and operators to understand and follow the Oregon Forest Practices Act.



# OREGON FOREST RESOURCES INSTITUTE FUNDING PRIMER



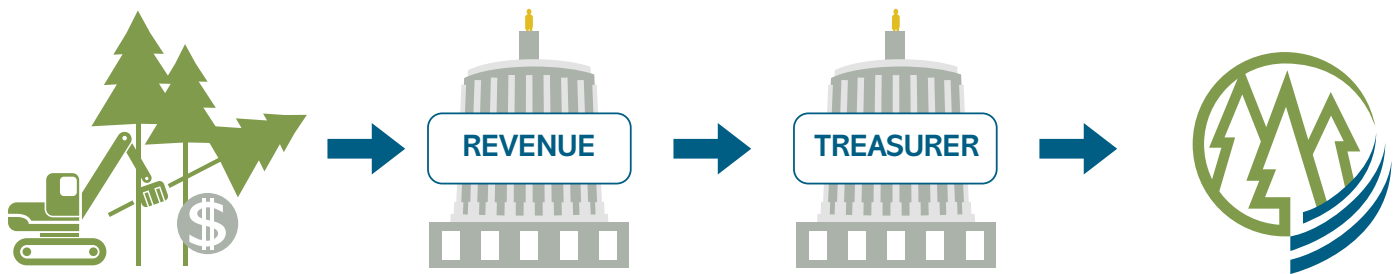
Oregon Forest  
Resources Institute

Learn more at  
[OregonForests.org](https://OregonForests.org)

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) is a state agency, created by the Oregon Legislature in 1991, to support Oregon's forest products industry and the wise stewardship of natural resources for the benefit of Oregonians (ORS 526.605). The State Forester appoints members of OFRI's governing board of directors and certifies that the agency's annual budgets are prepared and adopted in accordance with statute (ORS 576.416).

The agency does not receive state general fund money. Instead, revenue to support OFRI's K-12, landowner and public education programs comes from a portion of the Forest Products Harvest Tax (FPHT). This is a tax levied on forestland owners based on the amount of timber they harvest, and it is the agency's sole source of funding. Over the past decade, annual harvest tax revenues collected to fund the agency's budget have been between \$3.17 and \$4.04 million.

The OFRI Board of Directors determines the tax rate for the specific portion of the FPHT that is dedicated to funding the agency. The rate applies to each thousand board feet of timber harvested greater than 25,000, and is currently set at \$1.12. These tax revenues are collected by the Oregon Department of Revenue, transferred to the state treasurer, and then deposited into the OFRI Fund for agency operations. Tax revenue deposits to the OFRI Fund occur on a quarterly basis, and go up or down consistent with regular fluctuations in timber harvest activity.



Landowners or log purchasers pay FPHT on timber volume greater than 25,000 board feet. The current OFRI portion of the FPHT is \$1.12 per 1,000 board feet. This tax rate is set by the OFRI Board of Directors annually.

Harvest tax is collected by the Oregon Department of Revenue.

Tax revenues are sent to the state treasurer for distribution to harvest tax recipients.

The state treasurer transfers the revenue specifically collected for the Oregon Forest Resources Institute into the OFRI Fund on a quarterly basis.

Unlike most state agencies, where general funds are approved for a two-year budget period at the start of each biennium, OFRI is structured under a projected annual budget that relies solely on the quarterly receipt of FPHT revenues to support operations. Because FPHT projections are made a year in advance, actual revenues in any given quarter are not always adequate to cover actual quarterly expenditures. To viably manage its budget, OFRI maintains a continuous balance in the OFRI Fund to periodically draw from during quarters where FPHT revenues are less than quarterly expenditures. During quarters where FPHT revenues are greater than expenditures the OFRI Fund balance is replenished for future quarters.

<sup>1</sup> Complete details on the Forest Products Harvest Tax laws can be found at:  
[https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills\\_laws/ors/ors321.html](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/ors/ors321.html)



TO: Krystine McCants, Secretary of State's Office  
Ian Green, Secretary of State's Office

FROM: Jim Paul, Executive Director

DATE: December 2, 2022

SUBJECT: **Status Update for OFRI Audit Report #2021-21**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the OFRI Audit Report #2021-21. Please see the status of the recommendations and an overview of steps taken to-date to address them below.

**RECOMMENDATION 1**

Revise and clarify OFRI's enabling statute to be consistent with principles of good governance. This includes:

- a. Providing greater specificity and direction around the agency's purpose, authority, and objectives.
- b. Increasing non-industry voting representation on OFRI's governing board to ensure a balance of public views.
- c. Instituting an oversight function to ensure that quality information (objective, accurate, reliable) is being developed and shared by the agency.
- d. Clarifying the statute's prohibitions on influencing or attempting to influence legislation, and provisions such as increasing public understanding, to reduce the risk of conflict or confusion.

**Status:** N/A (This recommendation is directed at potential statutory revisions and clarifications under Oregon's Legislative Branch.)

**Explanation:**

- a. The following are existing relevant sections of OFRI's governing statutes that articulate the agency's current purpose, authority, and objectives:

**ORS 526.605 Findings.** The State of Oregon recognizes that the forest products industry is one of the largest industries in the state. It provides monetary returns to labor, forestland owners, mill owners and operators, public timber purchasers, timber harvesters, investors and others. It is a source of local and state taxes. It is a major supporter of many secondary businesses that supply goods and services in our communities. The welfare of the state is therefore largely dependent on the health and vigor of the forest products industry. The Oregon Forest Resources Institute's objectives support this important industry and the wise stewardship of natural resources for the benefit of Oregonians. [1991 c.949 §3; 2003 c.423 §1]

**ORS 526.640 General authority of institute.** The Oregon Forest Resources Institute shall enhance and provide support for Oregon's forest products industry. In achieving these objectives the institute may:

- (1) Increase public understanding of the practice of forestry and the use and benefits of forest products.
- (2) Support education and cooperative efforts among private forest landowners and within the forest products industry to:
  - (a) Practice good stewardship of the land, and protect water and other public resources to the maximum extent practicable;
  - (b) Encourage the conversion of underproductive rural lands to forest uses, and provide information to private landowners on the means to facilitate such conversions;
  - (c) Encourage, facilitate and assist private forest landowners to meet or exceed state and federal regulations governing forest operations;
  - (d) Evaluate and communicate to private forest landowners the stewardship responsibility expectations of the public; and
  - (e) In cooperation with the State Forestry Department, Oregon State University and other appropriate government or private entities, serve as a clearinghouse for the dissemination of information to private forest landowners, through conferences, workshops and other means, about modern land management practices.
- (3) Conduct research and help facilitate continued improvement in wood utilization and in secondary wood products manufacturing.
- (4) Publish and sell publications and other materials relating to any program or function authorized by ORS 526.600 to 526.675. The institute may contract for the publication of the materials described in this subsection, including the research, design and writing of the materials. The contract may include, among

other matters, provisions for advance payment or reimbursement for services performed under the contract. The price of such publications shall include the cost of publishing and distributing the materials. All moneys received by the institute from the sale of publications shall be deposited in the Oregon Forest Resources Institute Fund. [1991 c.949 §11; 1997 c.15 §1]

**ORS 526.645 Additional powers.** In addition to the functions listed in ORS 526.640, the Oregon Forest Resources Institute may:

- (1) Conduct research and disseminate reliable information based upon such research.
- (2) Sue and be sued as an institute without individual liability for acts of the board of directors within the scope of the powers conferred upon it by law.
- (3) Enter into contracts which the board of directors considers necessary to carry out the duties, functions and powers imposed upon the institute by law.
- (4) Borrow money in amounts not to exceed 50 percent of the board of directors' estimate of the institute's revenue from the current year's harvest.
- (5) Appoint subordinate officers and employees of the institute and prescribe their duties and fix their compensation.
- (6) Adopt, rescind, modify or amend all proper orders, regulations, rules and resolutions for the exercise of its duties, functions and powers. [1991 c.949 §12]

- b. The following are existing relevant sections of OFRI's governing statutes that articulate requirements for the make-up of the board of directors. These requirements are in the context of OFRI's primary purpose articulated in ORS 526.605 (above) of supporting the forest products industry and the wise stewardship of natural resources for the benefit of Oregonians:

**ORS 526.610 Oregon Forest Resources Institute; board of directors; eligibility.**

There is created the Oregon Forest Resources Institute. The institute shall be governed by a board of directors appointed by the State Forester. In making the appointments, the State Forester shall take into consideration any nominations or recommendations made to the State Forester by producers or organizations that represent producers. The board shall consist of 11 voting members plus two nonvoting members appointed as follows:

- (1) Three voting members to represent small producers of 20 million board feet or less per year.
- (2) Three voting members to represent medium producers of more than 20 million board feet but less than 100 million board feet per year.
- (3) Three voting members to represent large producers of 100 million board feet or more per year.

(4) One voting member who is an owner of between 100 and 2,000 acres of forestland and who has no direct financial interest in any forest products processing activity.

(5) After consideration of the recommendations of the other appointed members in subsections (1) to (4) of this section, one voting member who is an hourly wage employee of a producer or a person who represents such employees. The member appointed under this subsection need not comply with the requirements of ORS 526.615 (3) to (6).

(6)(a) Two nonvoting members:

(A) The Dean of the College of Forestry at Oregon State University.

(B) An individual jointly appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives to represent the public. The public representative may not be a member of or significantly affiliated with any organization of or business in the timber industry or any organization or business known to support or promote environmental or conservation issues. A person appointed under this subparagraph serves at the pleasure of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(b) Members referred to in this subsection are not subject to ORS 526.615 to 526.625. [1991 c.949 §4; 1993 c.584 §3; 1995 c.225 §3; 1999 c.40 §1; 2003 c.423 §2]

**ORS 526.615 Qualifications of voting members.** Except as provided in ORS 526.610 (5), each voting member of the board of directors of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute shall have the following qualifications:

(1) Be a citizen of the United States.

(2) Be a bona fide resident of this state.

(3) Be a producer in this state, an employee of such a producer or own between 100 and 2,000 acres of forestland in this state on which harvest taxes are paid, but have no direct financial interest in any forest products processing activity.

(4) Have been actively engaged in producing forest products for a period of at least five years.

(5) Derive a substantial proportion of income from the production of forest products.

(6) Have demonstrated, through membership in producers' organizations or organizations representing landowners who meet the requirements of ORS 526.610 (4), a profound interest in the development of Oregon's forest products industry. [1991 c.949 §6; 1995 c.225 §4; 1999 c.40 §2; 2003 c.423 §3]

Existing statute also provides the Oregon state forester the authority to remove any member of the board of directors that neglects to carry out their duty consistent with this dual forest products sector/public interest purpose (re: “neglect of duty” clause):

**ORS 526.625(2)** The State Forester may remove any member of the board of directors for inefficiency, neglect of duty or misconduct in office, but not until after a public hearing thereon and service upon such member of a copy of the charges together with a notice of the time and place of such hearing. Service shall be made not less than 10 days prior to the hearing. At the hearing the member shall be given an opportunity to be heard in person or by counsel and shall be permitted to present evidence to answer the charges and explain the facts alleged. [1991 c.949 §8; 2003 c.423 §5]

- c. The following is an existing relevant Oregon Government Ethics statute for public officials, which includes OFRI staff and board members (also see related response in recommendation 2):

**ORS 244.010 Policy.** (1) The Legislative Assembly declares that service as a public official is a public trust and that, as one safeguard for that trust, the people require all public officials to comply with the applicable provisions of this chapter.

(2) The Legislative Assembly recognizes and values the work of all public officials, whether elected or appointed.

(3) The Legislative Assembly recognizes that many public officials are volunteers and serve without compensation.

(4) The Legislative Assembly recognizes that it is the policy of the state to have serving on many state and local boards and commissions state and local officials who may have potentially conflicting public responsibilities by virtue of their positions as public officials and also as members of the boards and commissions, and declares it to be the policy of the state that the holding of such offices does not constitute the holding of incompatible offices unless expressly stated in the enabling legislation.

(5) The Legislative Assembly recognizes that public officials should put loyalty to the highest ethical standards above loyalty to government, persons, political party or private enterprise.

(6) The Legislative Assembly recognizes that public officials should not make private promises that are binding upon the duties of a public official, because a public official has no private word that can be binding on public duty.

(7) The Legislative Assembly recognizes that public officials should expose corruption wherever discovered.

(8) The Legislative Assembly recognizes that public officials should uphold the principles described in this section, ever conscious of the public’s trust. [1974 c.72 §§1,1a; 1987 c.566 §7; 2005 c.22 §185; 2007 c.865 §28; 2009 c.68 §1]

Pertinent to this recommendation, on May 20, 2022 the Oregon Government Ethics Commission adopted the following aspirational code of conduct as recommended by

an Oregon Secretary of State 2021 Audit. As public officials, OFRI staff and board members are subject to this code of conduct and OFRI will be including this in its policy and procedures manual referenced in the response to recommendation 5:

*As an elected, appointed, employed, or volunteer public official, I acknowledge that I am subject to compliance with Oregon Government Ethics law as set forth in ORS Chapter 244. In the conduct of my official duties as a public official, I will act ethically when I:*

- Uphold the public trust by safeguarding the public money and resources
- Behave in an **open, honest, and transparent manner** [emphasis added]
- Conduct the public's business **fairly and objectively** [emphasis added]
- Disclose financial conflicts of interest
- Do not use my public position for personal gain
- Observe limits on the receipt of gifts

d. The following are existing relevant statutes of both OFRI and Oregon Government Ethics law, articulating the meaning and scope of the prohibition on influencing or attempting to influence legislation:

**ORS 526.650 (2)** No funds shall be expended by the institute for the purpose of influencing, or attempting to influence, any legislation or any rulemaking or other administrative activity of any state board, commission or agency. [1991 c.949 §13]

**ORS 171.725(8)** "Lobbying" means influencing, or attempting to influence, legislative action through oral or written communication with legislative officials, solicitation of executive officials or other persons to influence or attempt to influence legislative action or attempting to obtain the goodwill of legislative officials.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop a policy to provide guidance to staff and board members on ways to avoid engaging in activities prohibited by statute. The guidance should include under which circumstances the agency will seek legal or ethical advice.

**Status:** Partially Implemented

### Explanation:

- a. OFRI requested assistance from the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Oregon Ethics Commission (OEC) in identifying and developing specific internal policies



and processes to provide guidance to staff and board members on ways to ensure it avoids engaging in activities prohibited by statute, and under what circumstances the agency will seek legal or ethical advice. In response to this request, the DOJ provided in depth attorney-client-privilege advice to the agency on how to proceed. OFRI will be finalizing internal policy and guidance for staff and board members consistent with this advice. This is anticipated to be completed in the first half of 2023.

- b. Ethics training was provided to the staff and board members by the OEC on April 21, 2022. OFRI will be including the expectation of a periodic ethics training review in its employee handbook along with the updated additional policies and procedures referenced above.
- c. OFRI will be recruiting for an additional administrative support staff person in early 2023 that will provide the capacity needed to complete this and other remaining work resulting from the audit recommendations in a timely manner.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

Improve internal controls, including:

- a. Adopting a single mission statement consistent with the agency's statutory requirements.
- b. Updating the agency strategic plan to align with a clear mission and goals tied to specific performance measures.
- c. Adopting and documenting standards and internal processes for developing, reviewing, and disseminating quality information.

**Status:** Partially Implemented

#### Explanation:

- a. OFRI has selected a primary mission statement consistent with the agency's statutory mandate, which was approved by the board of directors in April 2021:  
**The Oregon Forest Resources Institute supports and enhances Oregon's forest products industry by advancing public understanding of forests, forest management and forest products.**  
OFRI has posted this mission statement in multiple places on its websites, in new OFRI publications, and in its educational media.
- b. After operating for about a year without a permanent executive director, the board of directors completed an extensive public recruitment process and appointed a new executive director that assumed the role in September 2022. Under this new leadership, OFRI is now moving forward with reaching out to qualified firms under DAS's price agreement for assistance in updating its strategic plan. It's anticipated that a successful contractor will be selected in early 2023 and the strategic plan will be

completed by summer 2023. This strategic plan work will also include the development of agency goals and objectives explicitly tied to specific performance measures.

- c. OFRI has developed a Quality Information Policy, which was formally adopted by the board of directors in July 2022 after public review. The policy is provided as an attachment to this memo. In addition, staff have developed comprehensive desk guides for each of OFRI's three major program areas and the executive director position.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

Improve transparency around its mandate, functions, and public communications and involve a broader array of stakeholders outside the industry. For example, the agency should:

- a. Share its mission and strategic plans on the website.
- b. Engage a broader array of forestry stakeholders, including conservation and environmental groups, in its ongoing work and decision-making processes.
- c. Communicate the agency's statutory mandate in public messaging efforts, such as advertisements or educational materials.

**Status:** Implemented

#### **Explanation:**

- a. OFRI's mission statement and 2017 Strategic Plan have been posted on its website, [OregonForests.org](https://oregonforests.org), under the "About OFRI" tab. The new 2023 Strategic Plan will be posted after it is developed by mid-2023.
- b. OFRI has developed the OFRI Stakeholder Checklist process, provided as an attachment to this memo. This process identifies how a broad array of stakeholders both inside and outside the industry is identified, recruited, and engaged. This process works in concert with OFRI's Quality Information Policy to involve these stakeholders in Project Steering Committees (PSC). The PSCs work with OFRI staff in providing input and advice towards the development of educational materials, providing subject matter expertise and public-audience perspective.

OFRI has also developed the OFRI Public Review Process, formally adopted by the board of directors in July 2022 after a public review. This policy is designed to ensure meaningful public participation in the development of OFRI educational materials, future strategic plans, and other projects and initiatives. Implementation of this policy included the role-out of a dedicated webpage to help facilitate this engagement (<https://oregonforests.org/public-review>). A copy of the OFRI Public Review Process Policy is provided as an attachment to this memo.

- c. OFRI now communicates the agency’s statutory mandate in all public messaging efforts primarily through the dissemination of its primary mission statement, which was approved by the board of directors in April 2021:

**The Oregon Forest Resources Institute supports and enhances Oregon’s forest products industry by advancing public understanding of forests, forest management and forest products.**

OFRI has posted this mission statement in multiple places on its websites, in new OFRI publications, and in its educational media.

**RECOMMENDATION 5**

**Conduct a comprehensive review of its statute and determine which statewide policies apply to OFRI in consultation with the Department of Administrative Services and the Department of Justice.**

**Status:** Partially Implemented

**Explanation:**

- a. OFRI worked with the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to conduct a comprehensive review of the OFRI governing statutes and original statutory intent, and to understand which statewide policies apply to OFRI. Findings were provided to OFRI by the DOJ in a privileged and confidential attorney-client communication memo. The DOJ also provided a policy and procedures manual template document as an available resource.
- b. OFRI will use the DOJ information and resources provided to complete a comprehensive policy and procedures manual for staff and board members in 2023. The additional administrative support staff OFRI will be recruiting for in early 2023 will provide the capacity needed to complete this project in a timely manner.

## Oregon Forest Resources Institute Quality Information Policy<sup>1</sup>

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute's (OFRI) mission is to *support and enhance Oregon's forest products industry by advancing public understanding of forests, forest management and forest products*. OFRI achieves this mission primarily by disseminating information on various aspects of forestry to various audiences.

It is the policy of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute that the information it disseminates is "Quality Information." Quality Information is defined in Federal Information Guidelines released in 2002 by the Office of Management and Budget as information that has utility, objectivity and integrity. Utility refers to the usefulness of the information to its intended users. Objectivity includes whether information is accurate, reliable and unbiased, and is being presented in an accurate, clear, complete and unbiased manner. Integrity refers to the protection of the information from being compromised through corruption or falsification. Through this Quality Information Policy, OFRI adopts the federal definition of Quality Information described above and outlines how quality information is produced by the agency.

The processes described in this Quality Information Policy show how OFRI generally produces educational materials for the public, K-12 teachers and students, and landowner audiences. Specific standards and internal processes for developing, reviewing and disseminating Quality Information for each of these audiences will be created as necessary.

The following policies are key elements of the Quality Information Process:

- Desk guides are being developed for each staff member or program.
- A public review process is being developed.
- A stakeholder checklist is being developed to identify the categories of stakeholders that will be sought in planning, reviewing and developing informational resources.

### Quality Information Advocate

As part of developing the Quality Information Policy, OFRI has established the position of Quality Information Advocate, or QIA. The QIA will be an OFRI staff member who serves on the Project Steering Committee for all specific projects, whose main functions are to be an information resource for the OFRI Quality Information Policy and to advocate for following this policy. OFRI's manager of public outreach will commonly serve as the QIA, except in cases where he or she is the project lead and thus chairs the Project Steering Committee (PSC). It is important that the QIA is asked to focus primarily on the QIP for a designated project, and not have other responsibilities. The QIA for each project will be assigned by the executive director.

Duties of the OFRI **Quality Information Advocate** include:

- keeping the Quality Information Policy up to date
- advocating for OFRI's QIP
- advising project leaders on membership of Project Steering Committees
- serving on Project Steering Committees
- sharing and reviewing OFRI's QIP with members of Project Steering Committees, with an emphasis on the Quality Information Questions found in the QIP
- reviewing documents and manuscripts developed for the project, to evaluate if the QIP is being followed
- document the QIP process for the project

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<sup>1</sup> The OFRI Board of Directors voted on and approved this policy in July 2022.

## Quality Information Process

This Quality Information Process has been based on the steps for developing OFRI science reports, as documented in the Director of Forestry Desk Guide. Science reports represent one of the major information-gathering projects OFRI undertakes. It is essential that the information developed in these reports is Quality Information and seen by users as having utility, objectivity and integrity.

Not all projects OFRI undertakes are subject to the entire process outlined in the Quality Information Policy. Short educational media spots, social media posts, fact sheets and pamphlets cite information from more in-depth OFRI materials that have already been developed using the QIP and therefore do not need to also go through the same process. However, all OFRI materials should be held subject to the Quality Information Questions listed at the end of this policy.

The steps in OFRI's Quality Information Process include:

1. **Develop a proposal for the OFRI board** to approve funding and initiate the project. This proposal includes a description, an audience, a timeline, a budget and a list of partners. Developing these proposals is an iterative process that involves review and input by OFRI staff, board members and key partners. Note that board proposals are not developed for projects that have already been earmarked in the annual OFRI budget approved by the board.
2. **Develop a Project Steering Committee (PSC)** for the project. The PSC provides input on the project in several ways, including scope of work review, request for proposals (RFP) review, RFP dissemination, contract/agreement review, proposal review and contractor selection, report review and outreach dissemination. Membership of the PSC is based on the knowledge and diversity necessary to fully examine the topic and produce Quality Information. Members are commonly from OFRI's science partners, including Oregon State University and the Oregon Department of Forestry, but should also include individuals from other appropriate agencies, companies and organizations. OFRI's Stakeholder Checklist should be consulted in developing a broad-based PSC. OFRI's executive director is an *ex officio* member of all PSCs.

Project Steering Committees are generally composed of 6-12 members depending on the complexity and scope of the project. PSC members are invited by the project leader with input from the Quality Information Advocate and the Executive Director.

A Quality Information Advocate will be assigned to each PSC by the executive director. OFRI's Quality Information Policy will be shared with all members of the PSC by the QIA. At the first meeting of the PSC, the QIA will go over the QIP and make sure the steering committee is aware of, understands and agrees to follow OFRI's Quality Information Policy.

Selecting the PSC is critical in ensuring the information developed has utility, objectivity and integrity. Subject matter experts are identified and recruited for the PSC by the project leader with input from the Quality Information Advocate.

3. **Develop a scope of work** that clearly and completely identifies the steps for completing the project. This scope is developed iteratively with a subset of the PSC. This scope of work, along with the included timeline and possibly the budget, is included in any subsequent intergovernmental agreement or the request for proposals, if deemed necessary for the project. The scope of work could be attached to a project production checklist for internal OFRI projects.
4. **Develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) and contract/agreement** for the project as appropriate, in conjunction with OFRI's senior manager of business operations.
5. **Select a contractor**, if necessary, by working with a proposal review committee (usually a subset of the PSC). Note that in cases where an academic institution such as Oregon State University, University of Oregon, University of Idaho or Portland State University are to be selected, there is not a formal RFP process; instead the agency works with the potential contractor and the PSC to finalize a scope of work and an intergovernmental agreement for the project.
6. **Develop an outline of the report** in conjunction with the PSC and the contractor/writer.
7. **Develop a complete bibliography** for the project as it develops.
8. **Have draft reports and the bibliography reviewed by the PSC**, reconciling comments and communicating the reconciled comments to the writing team.
9. **Subject the final draft report to OFRI's public review process**, if appropriate. The PSC and the subject matter experts on the PSC will be asked to help the Project Leader address comments received in the public review process and develop the final document.

### **Quality Information Questions**

At all steps in the process, the following questions should be asked by writers and reviewers in order to ensure Quality Information is being developed and disseminated:

1. Do the PSC members and any additional reviewers represent a broad range of perspectives on the information OFRI is presenting? Are there important voices missing?
2. Does the information and the way it is presented have utility or usefulness for the intended audience(s)?
3. Is the information accurate, reliable and unbiased?
4. Is the information being presented in a manner that is accurate, clear, complete and unbiased?
5. Are the bibliography and cited sources complete? Are there any key sources missing?
6. Has the information been compromised through corruption or falsification?

## OFRI Stakeholder Checklist<sup>1</sup>

A key feature of OFRI's Quality Information Policy is developing Project Steering Committees (PSCs). Each PSC provides input to the project in several ways, including the scope of work review, request for proposals (RFP) review, RFP dissemination, contract/agreement review, proposal review and contractor selection, report review and outreach dissemination.

OFRI's Quality Information Policy (QIP) should be shared with all members of the PSC. Selecting the PSC members is critical to ensuring the information developed has utility, objectivity and integrity. Ensuring the PSC understands and follows OFRI's QIP is crucial to the success of the process.

Membership of the Project Steering Committee is based on the knowledge and diversity necessary to fully examine the topic and produce quality information that has utility, objectivity and integrity. Members are commonly from OFRI's science partners, including Oregon State University and the Oregon Department of Forestry, but should also include individuals from other groups that possess necessary subject matter expertise and relevant perspectives.

OFRI's Stakeholder Checklist has been developed so it can be consulted in building a broad-based Project Steering Committee. Stakeholders from the groups listed below should be considered for participation in PSCs. Not every PSC will contain members from each stakeholder group. For example, PSCs for public education, landowner education and K-12 education projects will likely have different compositions.

Note that there may be other stakeholders who do not fit into any of the groups listed below who could be valuable members of a PSC, and so all relevant stakeholders should be considered when forming a PSC, to ensure its membership represents a wide breath of knowledge and perspectives on the topic each project covers.

### Stakeholder groups OFRI commonly works with include:

#### Educational institutions:

- **Oregon State University, College of Forestry** – The Dean of the OSU College of Forestry is an *ex-officio* member of the OFRI board, specifically to help ensure OFRI develops Quality Information.
- **Other universities** – The universities of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and California, Portland State University and Washington State University commonly have faculty members researching and teaching on topics OFRI is working on.
- **Community colleges** – Forestry and natural resources instructors are important stakeholders for OFRI's K-12 program, in particular for career and technical education (CTE) subjects.

#### Government entities:

- **Oregon Department of Forestry** – The Deputy State Forester serves as a liaison to the OFRI board. This helps ensure ODF staff are aware of and involved in OFRI projects.

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<sup>1</sup> This process was developed by OFRI staff and originates from OFRI's Quality Information Policy adopted by the Board of Directors in July 2022.

- **Other state and local agencies** – Oregon state agencies outside the Department of Forestry, as well as many county and local agencies, commonly work on topics important to OFRI.
- **U.S. Forest Service & Pacific Northwest Research Station** – The U.S. Forest Service manages more than 14 million acres of Oregon forest as part of the National Forest System. The PNW Research Station is part of the USFS and has researchers working throughout the region studying important forestry issues.
- **Other federal agencies** – Federal agencies outside the USDA Forest Service commonly have staff working on projects related to OFRI work.

#### **Citizens groups:**

- **Conservation NGOs** – There are a number of conservation non-governmental organizations active in Oregon forestry.
- **Grassroots organizations** – There are groups that represent local citizens who have an active interest in forestry and rural issues.
- **Nonprofit educational organizations** – There are a number of nonprofit educational organizations in Oregon that are involved in forest education, in particular for K-12 students, which commonly partner with OFRI.

#### **Forest landowner, products and contractor trade associations:**

- **Forest Landowner Associations** – There are a number of membership groups made up of large and small forest landowners including Oregon Forest & Industries Council, Oregon Small Woodlands Association and Oregon Tree Farm System.
- **Forest Landowners** – Individual small woodland owners, professionals working for forestry companies and professionals working for tribal forestry organizations.
- **Forest Product Associations** – There are a number of membership groups made up of forest product companies including American Forest Resources Council and the National Council for Air & Stream Improvement.
- **Forest Contractor Trade Associations** – including Associated Oregon Loggers.

#### **Professional organizations:**

- **Society of American Foresters** – SAF is a membership organization of natural resource professionals working in forests.
- **Teacher professional organizations** – Membership organizations for K-12 natural resource teachers.



## Oregon Forest Resources Institute Public Review Process<sup>1</sup>

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) values public involvement and feedback on our educational programs and materials. Stakeholder and public input is an important part of the process of developing a number of our projects and initiatives. These include:

- program plans
- strategic plans
- executive director hiring process
- major scientific research reports
- policies and procedures

The process for incorporating stakeholder and public comment into the development of a new project or the update of an existing plan, report or policy is shown and described below:



**Step 1: Initiate project.** OFRI staff identify the need for a project and seek board approval to budget the necessary funds to execute it.

**Step 2: Drafting and internal review.** Once the OFRI board has approved proceeding with the project, staff and/or a contractor begin the drafting and internal review process, involving the OFRI executive director and other relevant staff members.

**Step 3: Stakeholder review.** Staff assemble a diverse group of stakeholders to review an initial draft and provide input. Once the stakeholder review has been completed and staff have incorporated their feedback into the project, it goes out for public review.

**Step 4: Public notice and review.** OFRI issues a notice of the public comment period, lasting a minimum of 14 days, and makes digital and hard copies of the draft project available for the public to review. This notice could include announcements on the Institute’s website, in email newsletters, in a news release and on social media.

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<sup>1</sup> The OFRI Board of Directors voted on and approved this process in July 2022.

**Step 5: Collect public comments.** During the public comment period, public comments will be collected by email, online survey or mail.

**Step 6: Board approval.** The OFRI board reviews and approves a final draft of the project that takes into account the feedback received during the public comment period.

**Step 7: Publish and notify commenters.** OFRI publishes the project and makes it publically available on its website and to commenters.

**Step 8: Release public comment summary.** OFRI releases on its website a summary of the public comments received regarding the project.