

Appendix A- Breakout Session I Notes

Table 1

Kamran Abdollahi (Note Taker for oral presentation) & Michael Buck (Facilitator)

Summary notes by Michael Buck

Breakout Sessions I and II

Participants: Joel Holtrop, Ann Hairston-Strang, Rick Swanson, William Connelly, Kamran Abdollahi, Sherri Wormstead

- Need to refine recommendation based on the lack of agreed upon economic valuation protocol and science.
- Need to consider trees within watershed not just forested watersheds.
- Need to define what criteria to use for priority watersheds.
- Need to link efforts with EPA, TDML process, and local land use planning.
- Need to link with Vilsack focus on water “the metric for success is water”.
- Need to identify benefits of watersheds .
- Need to connect existing data layers (e.g. EPA – Source Water Protection).
- Need update on what the USFS is doing in regard to water – link to Forest to Faucet.

Potential language for new recommendations:

Sponsor a national symposium on “valuing the benefits of forests within large scale watersheds” with an emphasis on water quality and quantity.

Who: USDA, FS, RSF, SWRR, EPA, USGS, ASF

Use case studies/synthesis – Hawaii , Colorado, Maryland

Identify the nation’s priority forested watersheds (define priority) and link with existing forest health conditions

Ensure that forest watershed and water issues and values are integrated within the USFS National Forest Planning rule and possibly State Assessments

Table 2

Discussion lead – Nadine Block

Note taker - Dick Brinker

- Audience for SFAS? – potential: federal USDA, OMB; state and local agency; private landownership organizations
- Reflections on Draft II
 - Forest fragmentation
 - Urban forests – need a separate category/action strategy
 - How do we define the urban to the rural forest habitat?

- Need to make urban people aware of forests – reach people in the cities about the importance of forests to their life
 - WOW factors – loss of forest acreage to development; forest fire control costs;
 - Needs to be elevated to engage the reader
 - Valuation of ecosystem services
 - Develop a better basis for informing the public about benefits they are receiving from forests
 - Provide extremely important public good and services
 - Need to develop economic measures/impacts for these services; ex: value of water provided from forests
 - Markets for land-owners – need multiple opportunities
- Does the approach and criteria used to make recommendations make sense?
 - Needs broad distribution
 - Versions for knowledgeable users; one for “novice” or public
 - Understand the forest is more than the trees, but all components of the forest or ecosystem
 - Do these foundational ideas make sense?
 - Need to be clearly stated
 - Beef up SFAS with diagrams and charts
 - These are some of the problems we have
 - What does the public see, esp. on the TV news
 - Choice of objectives needs to have some degree of community involvement
- What is missing in Draft SFAS?
 - Urban forestry
 - Forest systems
 - Communication to urbanites
 - Integrate with other round-tables to leverage other work
 - Group strategies together to reduce overlap –
 - Combine 4 & 5; 1 & 8?
 - 1 has dearth of credible, monetary values; 8 refers to development of existing markets

3 highlights:

- Need for communications to be infused in the other action strategies as a mechanism to accomplish that action;
- Urban forestry needs greater recognition – both through a focus on the forests within urban/suburban areas and through a focus on connecting urban residents with the benefits of forests;
- The action strategy as a report needs to more strongly emphasize the “wow” factors right up front to convince the audience of the need for these actions – use visuals.

Table 3

Discussion of Draft II

- Document was focused on the C&I
- Communication recommendation is difficult; not specific; so much communication that is done by everyone on every topic that its hard to break through.
- Making linkage between Vilsack, the SFAS, the USDA Forest Service response, USDA Forest Service planning rule – the connections aren't present/obvious; as projects may move forward, operationalization of terms such as adaptation policy will be interesting to see how they are actually done; tends to focus on water a bit; is this about all types of ecosystem services or just water. How does the valuation affect policy?
- Makes sense of progression from draft 1 to 2; appreciate the difficulty in figuring out where to start; need to just get started.
- Targeted outreach strategy – not really an action item; it's overarching; need a very integrated approach and how other groups talk and interact; needs to be very very specifically targeted; communication and marketing is always targeted and it needs to be constantly re-visited and re-targeted
- A lot of references to sustainable forest management, but SFM is a slippery term and the report doesn't address this.
- Not a lot of reference to federal lands; not strong federal lands "buy-in"; that's not in the report; disappointed that the Presidential Commission dropped off. We need a national discussion. The power of the Office of the President is huge! It can draw attention and motivate. It doesn't require a lot of political capital to create a movement about forests and their sustainability.

Does the approach and criteria used to make recommendations make sense?

- A lot of actions are pretty open-ended and lots of things can fit under them.
- The operationalization of C&I needs to happen.
- Need to make the second report relevant.
- Surprised that climate is not mentioned as a framing tool, given the Administration's agenda.
- Carbon policy is ubiquitous but if you don't [but specifics on it, its meaningless.
- The Administration's agenda could/should have been used as a criterion for thinking about and drafting the recommendations.
- The "measuring sticks" (i.e., the C&I) for the recommendations were not identified. If we've identified the real issues and needed actions, then the C&I should be used to determine progress. Another action could be articulating desired national trends for the indicators. These can also be used to report progress and/or promote more actions. This keeps us from just taking about "general impressions."
- The SFAS provides a framework for doing things more efficiently (e.g., forest inventory programs that states and feds do).

Do the recommended actions strike an appropriate balance:

- There are a lot of people interested in climate; need to provide people with “hand-holds” such as the conservation and environmental community. Things need to be framed in order to interest certain sectors, such as NGO’s.
- How will these recommendations change federal land management?
- Needs to talk about the federal lands in states and what their contribution is to the state.

Suggestions:

- Must be climate relevant to other audiences, needs to be used as a forest policy source document.
- Promote the use of C&I into federal land management, state forest assessments, etc. as the set of measuring sticks to assess progress/change (which direction should the trend arrow go?)
- Re-visit the Presidential Commission recommendations, or at least push for Presidential acknowledgement. Maybe use an existing standing committee, such as CEQ attention to SFM.

Table 4

Biggest concern is the need for collaboration, within the forestry community and between forest community and related ones, must find more avenues to network, for example, find ways to fit forestry into clean air act, clean water act, climate change debate

No one from EPA or NOAA is here at this Roundtable, or USGS, BLM, DOI, FWS, National Parks. We must involve other players, learn to talk to these people

We should also be talking to HUD, DOT, EPA. Forest Service can work closely with them on sustainability and livability, e.g., Federal standards for ozone and smog will make all metro areas out of compliance, but they exclude forestry solutions. We need green infrastructure solutions, engage the forest service to talk with other agencies at a high level

- How do we reach across the inter- and intra- agency boundaries?
- Pilot landscapes may be the best way to focus discussions on integrated solutions
- Do we have the right set of topics or do we need a broader selection?
- Agree this is a good list of topics/actions but collaboration and integration are crucial
- Can we use maps as the tool for discussion
- Communication element is essential for all of these actions listed
- Need a framework communications strategy for all these actions taken together.
- Forest Service cannot do this alone. Extension Service is most skilled at this
- This is not a forest service action list, this a Roundtable action list
- Agree with the criteria for selecting actions – achievable in two years, collaboration
- Can we link these actions to green jobs, jobs created?

- How will we know we are making progress on these actions? How can we link them to the criteria and indicators?
- We need indicators of success on a macro scale. Link success to the MP C&I.
- Balanced list: why does the list have to be balanced so long as we can garner support?

If we move at a snails pace you will not have support, it is a rate of progress question. As an example, assessing the economic value of a watershed, is this achievable in two years? Or does this mean we have to have a mechanism to assess watersheds available in two years?

Must include social marketing, meet people where their values and interests lie

Must connect economic valuation to social marketing where decisions are made, for example, connect action 6 to economic valuation, stepping down to the local level

Summary:

- Collaboration is missing, we must get others to carry our messages, must find other avenues to communicate, not just about the forest community
- We have no new action to add to the list, great topics, we like the approach and the criteria
- Must integrate the actions, e.g., #6 with #1 and #5
- Must be integration of Forest Service with all other federal agencies under a sustainable communities/green infrastructure idea
- Where is wilderness protection in this list, and where are urban forests in this discussion?
- Mapping is a tool to integrate discussions, use GIS, and this is also a scale issue
- Why do we need a balanced list of actions, what does this mean?
- Need a communications element built into each action
- How do we link this all to green jobs? How many people will this action list put to work?
- How do we know if we are making progress and how do we link this to the MP C&I?
- Story telling is crucial: people learn from stories, so this should be a communications tool
- Can we make forest data – FIA – relevant to local government actions, make it valuable information for local government decision-makers on a pilot watershed scale/project?
- Just where does citizen monitoring fit in all these actions?
- Do we need a national sustainable forest commission? We certainly need a national sustainable forests policy.

Table 5

[Missing notes]

Table 6

- Concern over people in the room having the same mind set and not sure that roundtable members prioritizing of these actions will be reflective of the actual needs.
- Question about who will do the work—some will really take some work, e.g. tracking system for local governments to characterize the status of local forest protection through land use mechanisms.
- It is difficult to get traction and support from others outside the current members of the roundtable.
- Need to do more outreach and work to connect to existing priorities—difficult to see that in the strategy.

Does the approach and criteria used to make the recommendations make sense?

- Still need to do a better job of engaging others in this process—other Fed. agencies, other stakeholders, etc.

Need to identify the “trains” and who is involved in those...and show that in the strategy.

The more of those existing efforts we have up there are important to address as the action plans for each of the 8 are developed.

Communications and outreach needs a two pronged approach...one overall and a part of each of the 8 recommendations.

In the strategy document: has issues presented (e.g, page 4 forest fragmentation)...the tie between those and the strategies.

Edit for #6: needs to be broader (current wording is one piece of the strategy for the broader need to deal with the issue of forest fragmentation. Also some concern over the way this is phrased—suggest changing from “develop” to “implement.”

Suggestion for #6: “Develop and implement an action strategy to address forest conversion and fragmentation. (local government piece is part, but so is state government). Also need to include the role of urban forestry as a piece of that.

Suggestion for #2: add “and integration with other data gathering efforts”

Suggestion for #1: question why this is not focused on ALL watersheds, not just priority watersheds? Phrase that we are starting with priority watershed...we are doing this by “initially focusing on priority watersheds.”

#5. Need to clarify what is meant by “support” these. Need to ID the efforts, YES, but what about the support piece...what does that mean?

#3. We really may not need to keep this one on the list.

Other actions:

May need to have a separate overarching strategy for landowners...to help them keep forests as forests. Leveraging (e.g., for forest landowners. #7 & 8 may be part of strategies for the overarching need to support private forest land owners).

Presentation of the Strategy: Need a better connection of the challenges (framing the issue) and the list of 6 bulleted recommendations and the 8 strategies.

There are Ecological Society of America—there are some

What aspects/perspectives/interests are not adequately reflected?

- Non-forestry community
- International forestry community (e.g., watershed stewardship efforts we can learn from others)
- More local government involvement

Table 7

There are a lot of important areas where we need to make progress. Number 3, if addressed with FLAME act, what do we need to do? Expand the program. Are they looking at prescribed fire? Yes. Need to look at overall forest health including invasive species. What strategies need to be in place? There are existing invasive species programs, use them to move it forward. Funding is currently one year behind the issues. Forest health and invasive issues are not addressed with the eight action strategies.

Purpose is to address trends found in between the 2003 and 2010 report. Trends include forest health/invasives, loss of forest land, and domestic timber consumption. Don't think the action strategies adequately address invasives. Number six is a part of it.

Not much of a difference between SFAS I and II. Agree with shift to SFAS II.

There are topics missing – invasives, biofuels, prescribed burning. Add fire suppression and management to #3.

Get a tighter framework in place. Lot of good ideas which are scattered. Add headings with a logical flow. Tie more directly to the trends in the sustainability report (forest health, loss of forest land, and domestic timber consumption). Not a clear linkage between recommendations and the three trends.

New idea – emerging forest health trends (too much timber in the west, invasives in the east).

Communicate information to forest woodland owners, community planners. Hope what happens in 1, gets a better message for 6. Have the information on air, need to add water, climate change, ecosystem services to public information. Forest conservation benefits to communities and limiting community growth.

Create #9 to address forest health, invasive species as well as impacts and adaptation to climate change/extreme events. Local level does not understand climate change, do understand at national level. Need to educate at the local level and make link to extreme events.

Tie economic valuations to benefits of forests for local land use goals. When looking at 1 (economic valuation), look at 6 (local forest protection efforts) to determine what to value. Economic valuations need to be relevant to local communities in their land management planning strategies. Water supply is important in the west. Surface water and ground water supply and forest connection is important in the east. Valuations need to have a local focus. Have mandates that local government make it easier to take forests into account when developing strategies. Responding to policy needs. Clean water act requirements.

Table 8:

Introductory history & comments from AI Sample

Andy – Co-Authoring a paper looking at Agricultural & Urban forests being part of the equation – wants to focus on needs and options for inventorying these forest pieces – fits into the “all lands” approach.

Stan Hopkins – Keep the conservation issue in mind. He is trying to find a way to insert conservation information into each action items. e.g. classify and set aside conservations (#1) for water conservation; Looking at the conservation component to all eight action items. Looking eliminating what is perceived as a neglecting of the conservation component. Some question over conservation set asides versus integrated approaches to conservation.

AI Sample – All of the conservation organizations are working at their limit, yet we are still loosing 6,000 acres of forested lands each year to conversion to other uses. What institutional arrangements are needed to stop this trend, beyond what the NGO’s are capable of.

Meg Roessing – Working on the Economic state of the Forest sector, as highlighted in Action #8. Key trends in the report that the report focuses on are lacking. Highlight the trends which the recommended actions are based more in the document. Some recommendations are widely accepted (FLAME Act) – Need to recognize the status of where progress is on several of the recommended actions.

Federal Tax policies – Where do you go with the tax policy drivers that are of moving toward TMOs, for example, and the closing of Forest Products industry all across the US. How do we bring the forest benefits and values into the tax discussion. Use tax policy more effectively with shared goals of sustainable forest management. How does tax policies effect integrated forest products industries.

David Gerhardt – Last of private sector standing in the room. As a company tries to say heavily involved into the new policy discussion developing. Working on two lines of business – forestry & real estate. 4th Roundtable gather Dave attended. Really likes what has been put together. Particularly feels the whole approach has been advanced by recommended actions #7 & #8. These help to make the Strategy. Action Items #7 & #8 – since they were developed out of the review process, one is unsure of what the group at large thinks about these action items. Buys into the two-year time frame, but recognizes that needs to be more work done beyond the two-year time frame. Doesn’t have any large criticism of the strategy document.

Is this the outline that will carry us forward after the two-year window? We’ll have the 2010 Report which call also help propel these recommendations actions forward, and develop some of these actions into more robust actions.

Recommended Action #8 is very important in that having a viable forest products industry which can assist in advancing sustainable forest management. An economically viable forest products sector – what is a definition of that? What is the forest products sector? How do we define these terms in today’s environment? Is an biomass energy producer the same as a 2x4 producer.

David Gerhardt - Really likes the biomass piece. That is a critical piece. How does the biomass emphasis impact the forest product sector? The emphasis on Biomass can be a threat and an opportunity – depending on the perspectives being held.

Stan Hopkins - Add a conservation & preservation perspective to each of these recommended actions. Need to recognize these uses.

Question of Balance – Question #3

Stan Hopkins – Conservation & preservation perspective not well balanced in these. Not seeing it – if it is implied, it is not readily available, not coming through in the text. E.g. – what would be the purpose of not having fragmented forests.

Andy Mason – The 60% of forested land and the American fabric creates a unique balance of how we balance the public / private forested landscape, and the forest parcel size. How do we achieve the benefits that forests provide given the increasingly diverse forested landscape? Not any real forest stakeholder capacity to be reviewing the data that comes out of (Carlton Owens) the data and studies that looking into the fragmentation and parcelization work – this is a role and opportunity for the RSF to engage in. Which agency is going to head this up.

Lots of family woodlands are standing and acting as health savings accounts for the elderly family owners. The detaching of the forest land owners from the land creates less ownership and valuation from forested lands.

David Gerhardt - What is not up there? Presidential Sustainable Forests Commission – It is not in there now. This whole line of thinking dropped out. It is so fundamental and should be in there. We have this piece in #8a – we are protection water, air, wildlife – why are we not protecting forests in a similar fashion. This still remains an open question that should be discussed and considered.

Al Sample - Something as broad as “keeping forests as forests” could go a long way toward making this conceptually a recommendation that has traction. Could this be part of the communications recommended action (#4)?

Editorial Comments – Recommended action #8 actually has “recommendations” – but #actions 1-7 do not specifically state they are recommendations. Work on the wording. Be more specific of what the recommendations are – including, for example in #5, who will be committing and

making the implementation. They could use a little more meat of the bones – “select and evaluate pilot landscape projects”. Perhaps the “proof of concept” is needed – once we define what is needed.