

## DRAFT

State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

### **Effectiveness Monitoring Committee—**

## **Why Do We Need This New Approach in California?**

### **Introduction**

There is no dispute among stakeholders in California that forest practice regulations that have been developed by the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) have been strongly influenced by public concerns and political factors in the past. These external influences have often not resulted in the Board's utilization of the best available science as a basis for new regulations. Indeed, California's "track record" for applying scientific research findings to generate science-based forest practice regulations has been poorer than in other west coast states, particularly Washington (Cafferata et al. 2007).

For the past four years the Board has been attempting to move in a new direction to remedy this situation. As a first step, the Board formed a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in the fall of 2006 to oversee a literature review of scientific studies pertinent to riparian buffers and functions. The TAC was mandated to provide professional expertise and guidance to the Board to ensure the literature review provided credible, comprehensive and relevant information about anadromous salmonids needs and forest management activities for the Board's rulemaking process.

The TAC served as a pilot for establishing a formally constituted long-term group, known as the Research and Science Committee (RSC), that will be charged with providing scientific information for Board rule development. Dr. Richard Standiford, UC Cooperative Extension Forest Management Specialist, will chair the RSC and the committee is expected to have its initial meeting in the next one to two months. We anticipate that one of the first goals of the RSC will be to help form and provide oversight for a new Board **Effectiveness Monitoring Committee (EMC)**.

The EMC would ensure that a collaborative science-based monitoring effort would be used to credibly evaluate the effectiveness of the Forest Practice Rules related to water quality and aquatic habitat. The main goal would be to advise the Board on how to build a water quality-related monitoring program that can provide an active feedback loop to policymakers, managers, agencies, and the public. The EMC would attempt to use scientific findings consistently in the future by applying an approach similar in concept to that utilized by the Adaptive Management Program in the state of Washington (WFPB 2005, Quinn 2007).

### **Why do we need an Effectiveness Monitoring Committee?**

As has been discussed over the past two years at Board Monitoring Study Group (MSG) meetings, the amount and types of water quality-related monitoring on private timberlands in California has greatly expanded since 1990. However, in

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spite of the large amount of monitoring that is currently undertaken, it is clear that: (1) agency-required monitoring needs to be better coordinated and reported, (2) increased trust is required by the public for the extensive monitoring work being conducted by the timber industry, and (3) a process is needed that provides a feedback loop allowing the existing forest practice rules to be modified based on credible, verifiable monitoring results. A recent review of existing monitoring programs in California did not provide evidence of a consistently effective feedback loop between monitoring data and decision-making, except at relatively small organizational and spatial scales (Coe 2009).

Implementing a statewide adaptive management program in California will require an integrated political, social, and scientific framework to address the various adaptive management implementation criteria. The Washington Timber/Fish/Wildlife Adaptive Management Program offers the best template for implementing a statewide adaptive management program here (Coe 2009).

As discussed at MSG meetings, the main objectives of a Effectiveness Monitoring Committee are to:

- A. Involve credible representatives of key stakeholders that are publicly trusted.
- B. Identify critical research questions to address the goals, using input from all stakeholders.
- C. Select priority projects to jointly monitor.
- D. Develop effective partnerships to share the costs of evaluation.
- E. Provide for social time to develop partnership relationships and trust.
- F. Promote joint fact-finding at local, regional, and state levels.
- G. Spread awareness of results to partners, decision-makers and the public through field tours, internet exposure, workshops, and other user-friendly formats.

We envision that the EMC will be a Board-appointed committee with 12 members having voting privileges. These members will represent the main stakeholder groups (i.e., forestry trade organizations, timber producers, non-government organizations, state and federal agencies, university/extension, and resource consulting firms). Members will be well respected scientists representing each stakeholder group, and appointed by that group. Co-chairs are to be appointed by the Board. Strong leadership is critical for successful adaptive management (Gregory et al. 2006).

The basic EMC process outlined in a draft “strawman” outline discussed at several MSG meetings includes the following steps (BOF 2009):

1. Require EMC members to follow modified Washington Timber/Fish/Wildlife ground rules, which includes an attempt to reach consensus (WFPB 1987).
2. Members are required to attend meetings and decisions are to be made by consensus.
3. The EMC will prioritize monitoring-related questions that require scientific investigation.

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4. Funding for the highest rated projects will come from a combination of state and private sources, as well as grants.
5. The EMC and agency staff will be responsible for ensuring that the investigations are completed, securing peer review, and synthesizing the results into final reports for the Board.
6. Implications of the reports are to be discussed by the RSC, including possible rule language options based on study results. Discussion is to continue until consensus is reached, possibly using facilitation. A recommendation for rule change is then to be sent to the Board.

### **Timeline and More Information**

The goal is to form the EMC in 2010. For an example of a recent effectiveness monitoring project completed in the state of Washington, see Dube et al. (2009). Additional information on adaptive management and effectiveness monitoring is provided in the references that are listed below. Please do not hesitate to contact George Gentry at [george.gentry@fire.ca.gov](mailto:george.gentry@fire.ca.gov) or Pete Cafferata at [pete.cafferata@fire.ca.gov](mailto:pete.cafferata@fire.ca.gov) for additional information about this new monitoring concept for California.

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