Poised for Change

Oregon Forest Resources Institute 2017 Strategic Plan











Acknowledgements

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OFRI Partners

Every day, Oregon Forest Resources Institute relies on the commitment and contributions of its many partners. Creative partnerships and collaborations are indispensable to the success of OFRI's programs. Current partners include foundations and other funders, state and federal agencies, city and county governments, forest scientists and educators, school districts and teachers, Oregon State University and other higher education institutions and faculty, family forest landowners, forest operators, forest sector companies and associations, forestry professionals, conservation groups, soil and water conservation districts, professional contractors, other private sector partners, non-profit organizations and many volunteers. Thank you!

Executive Summary

The OFRI Story

Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) was created by the Oregon Legislature in 1991 to improve public understanding of forests, forest management and forest products, and to encourage sound forestry through landowner education. Activities spelled out in OFRI's legislative mandate:

- Support educational and cooperative efforts to improve stewardship of forest lands.
- Encourage and assist private forest landowners to "meet or exceed" forestry regulations.
- Communicate public expectations of forest stewardship to private forest landowners.
- Conduct research and disseminate information about modern forest land management practices.
- Increase public understanding of the benefits of wood products.



Twenty-five years later, OFRI continues to pursue its statewide mission and strives to be a clearing-house of information and research on forest issues – the "go-to place" for Oregon forest facts.

But OFRI's world is changing. In 2016, Oregon was the sixth fastest-growing state in the nation. There are now 4 million Oregonians – twice as many as when OFRI began – and the vast majority

(83%) live in metro areas. More than half of today's Oregonians weren't born here. Overall, the state's population is becoming younger, urban and more diverse. Fewer residents are connected to the state's rich rural history, culture and reliance on forestry, fishing, agriculture and ranching. These and other factors contribute to a clash of urban and rural values, an increasing challenge for OFRI.

Some of OFRI's key audiences are also growing. There are more than 575,000 K-12 students in Oregon and 26,000 teachers. Some 62,000 forest landowners own 10 acres or more of forest land – and that many more own fewer than 10 acres.

Clearly, there's an ongoing need for OFRI to set priorities. With a 13-member Board of Directors and a small, efficient professional staff, OFRI continuously reshapes and sharpens its programs.

Currently, OFRI operates more than 40 public education and communication programs covering seven program and administrative categories.

OFRI's primary funding is revenue derived from a portion of a state tax on timber harvest. In recent years, OFRI's Board has adopted an allocation formula that can be adapted to various funding levels. Current target budget percentages for OFRI's major program and administrative areas are shown below.

OFRI Budget Targets

Program Area	Target
Public Education	50%
K-12 Education	23%
Forest Landowner Education	11%
Forest Products Promotion	3%
Forest Interpretation	2%
New Opportunities	2%
Board Support and Administration	9%



2017 Strategic Plan

From its earliest years, OFRI has developed a tradition of planning ahead. In mid-2016, OFRI began a process to update the organization's strategic plan in consultation with forest sector representatives and other key stakeholders.

Strategic planning for 2017 and beyond encompassed these key elements:

- In-depth interviews with forest sector leaders and other observers who are knowledgeable about OFRI
- Two online surveys drawing contributions from a range of participants
- An inventory and assessment of OFRI's current programs
- Strategic planning workshops with OFRI's Board of Directors and staff

A summary of the research appears in the Appendices.

OFRI retained Barney & Worth, Inc. to assist with the strategic plan update. The firm's assignment was to support OFRI's Board and staff in facilitating the agency's long-term strategic direction setting and decisions.

Looking Back: OFRI's 2012 Strategic Plan

In 2012, OFRI leadership adopted 12 strategies to further contribute to OFRI's mission. Seven of the 12 strategies cross several program areas:

- I. Providing leadership
- 2. Educating opinion leaders
- 3. Engaging new partners
- 4. Building on grantsmanship success
- 5. Defining headline topics
- 6. Distilling key messages
- 7. Extending public education statewide

The remaining five strategies are specific to a single OFRI program area:

- 8. Raising forest literacy
- 9. Streamlining OFRI's communications
- 10. Reshaping and marketing the website
- 11. Experimenting with social media
- 12. Increasing Board participation

A review of implementation momentum for OFRI's 2012 Strategic Plan demonstrates progress on each of the 12 strategies. Highlights include:

- ✓ Participating in the Federal Forest Working Group and helping draft the legislative concept for the Oregon Federal Forest Health Plan
- Organizing/facilitating the Oregon Wood Products Working Group
- ✓ Building new collaborations with The Nature Conservancy, Sustainable Northwest and Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project
- ✓ Winning multiple grant awards to support teacher professional development, landowner education, and wood products promotion and education
- ✓ Narrowing the list of special report topics to two per year, containing concise, repeatable messages
- ✓ Continuing OFRI's statewide program of educational advertising, with messages believed by more than 75% of those viewers surveyed
- Expanding K-12 educational programs in Southern and Central Oregon
- ✓ Offering more than 100 videos on OFRI's YouTube channel and attracting more than one million views
- ✓ Introducing OFRI Facebook and gaining 3,000 followers
- Creating a new architecture for oregonforests.org and launching four additional websites
- ✓ Involving Board members in working groups to obtain Board input on staff initiatives, across the entire spectrum of OFRI programs

Stakeholders who are closest to OFRI have noted the progress and consistently mention these activities:

- OFRI's emerging leadership as convener/facilitator for forest sector issues, statewide and nationally
- Expansion of K-12 education programs: reaching 1,110 teachers and nearly 300,000 students in 2015-16
- Training more forest land owners: 4,000 in 2015-16
- Addition of forest products education and promotion – an exciting new venture for OFRI
- A strong, growing digital presence: website traffic has grown four-fold over the past five years

Strategic Plans for OFRI Program Areas

In 2016, OFRI Board members and staff developed strategic plans for two of OFRI's leading program areas: K-12 education and forest landowner education. Highlights of those program area plans appear below.

K-12 Education

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute is dedicated to increasing the public's understanding of how forest stewardship meets the social, environmental and economic needs of both present and future generations.

OFRI's goals for the K-12 education program:

- Lead professional development for K-12 teachers in the areas of forestry and natural resources.
- Provide Oregon teachers with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to help students learn about Oregon forests.
- Provide Oregon K-12 students with forestry education opportunities during their school career.
- Provide students with connections to people who work in Oregon's forest sector and information on forest-sector career choices and pathways.
- 5. Provide leadership in K-12 forestry education.

Strategies to achieve these goals are:

- Ensure professional development delivered by OFRI and partners adheres to best teaching practices, current education standards, and the Oregon Forest Literacy Plan (OFLP), and highlights current scientific research.
- Identify and support priority teacher audiences.
- Use both traditional and new media to connect educators to resources.
- Provide relevant and engaging forestry education materials for educators.
- Provide support for the Oregon Garden Natural Resource Education Program.
- Provide support for forestry education partner programs.
- Connect educators and students to people who work in forest-related jobs.

- Encourage educators to engage students in exploring forest-related careers.
- Provide support and leadership for forest education partners.

Forest Landowner Education

OFRI's legislative mandate directs the organization to "encourage environmentally sound forest management through training and other educational programs for forest landowners".

Landowner education encompasses three key audiences:

- family forest landowners
- forestry professionals
- forest operators.

For each of these groups, OFRI has identified priority educational topics and learning methods.



OFRI's goal for landowner education is to provide forest landowners with training and education in forestry topics and silvicultural methods that meet their learning needs while also addressing issues that are important to the public.

OFRI's strategies to achieve this goal include:

- I. Lead the Partnership for Forestry Education and support the partners' collaborative efforts.
- Focus on the nexus between landowner education and public values.
- Develop and implement educational programs, publications and videos on high priority landowner topics.
- 4. Engage the unengaged forest landowners.
- 5. Be an innovator in forest landowner education.

Looking Ahead

Forest sector leaders and other close observers who contributed to the 2017 Strategic Plan continue to acknowledge OFRI's unbroken string of successes in fulfilling its core mission.

In a word, OFRI has remained credible. While taking on tough issues, it has become the "single most trusted source for all things forest." OFRI's approach is balanced, and thanks to its internal discipline, the organization and its communications stay on-message. Other words/phrases these observers use most often to describe OFRI: unbiased, neutral, science-based, collaborative, helpful, professional, highly effective (substantiated by polling results), laser focused, incredibly useful, important and excellent programs, "voice for Oregon forests". One contributor concludes: "OFRI has reversed the forest sector's image and acceptance." Words of praise spring from many sources.

Yet, with all of this success, there's a growing appetite among followers for OFRI to do more. Stakeholders say the foundation for the organization's remarkable track record is the professionalism of its people and projects. In these observers' eyes, OFRI's passionate, energetic, multi-talented ("cross-laminated") staff are capable of still greater accomplishments.



Another factor contributing to OFRI's success is its nimble enlistment of partner organizations to share in its forest education initiatives. Today, OFRI collaborates with a network of more than 75 partner groups: state agencies, trade associations, non-governmental organizations, OSU and other higher education institutions, public and private schools, Oregon Garden,

World Forestry Center and many other partners. These partnerships can further expand OFRI's potential reach for the future.

When asked to specify the program areas where OFRI should place more emphasis, observers most often suggest focusing public education on the youngest audiences. By working to reach young people – from K-12 students to Millennials – OFRI can have the greatest influence on the next generation.

Another audience suggested is new Oregonians. With a growing percentage of residents who are urban dwellers and new to the state, there's little familiarity with Oregon's rural areas, forests or forest issues. This is a segment of the population who still have much to learn about forests.

And finally, OFRI should consider its outreach to forest sector employees. New research by private forest companies reveals that many of their employees, particularly those engaged in forest products manufacturing, have little understanding of forest management. With 61,000 people directly employed in forestry and forest products manufacturing, there is a golden opportunity to develop ambassadors throughout the state who can help tell the story of Oregon's forests.

Poised for Change

For the 2012 Strategic Plan, stakeholders generally advised OFRI to "stay the course." They applauded the organization's excellent programs, staff and direction. Suggested improvements were most often characterized as fine tuning.

Five years later, the forest sector leaders and others who are closest to OFRI advise the organization to be "poised for a change". OFRI's success has created an appetite for even more, extending the reach of statewide forest education to encompass new audiences. Poised for change also implies a need to anticipate and respond to new issues and forces.

At Board and staff workshops OFRI leadership explored the extent of change in forest sector education and the degree to which future trends might impact the organization's programs. The results suggest there's enough time for OFRI to adapt, with a 5- to 10-year time horizon anticipated for transition in most program areas.

The program areas where more profound and faster change is expected are K-I2 teacher and student education, and wood products user education. OFRI leaders feel moderately well prepared to deal with the anticipated changes.

One trend that affects all of OFRI's program areas is the "new world" of media. Research shows that newspaper readership has significantly declined. Most Oregonians no longer subscribe to a daily newspaper – until recently a primary channel for in-depth coverage of most statewide issues, including Oregon's forests. OFRI will need a continuously updated media strategy to take advantage of emerging opportunities. New media not utilized at present by OFRI that the Institute may want to consider in addition to social media include the growing popularity of podcasts, and the fledgling field of 3D and virtual reality video.

In considering strategies for 2017 and beyond, the seven strategies adopted in the 2012 Strategic Plan that crossed several program areas are still remarkably fresh and resonate with stakeholders' advice. All of these strategies can be renewed as key elements of OFRI's 2017 Strategic Plan:

Provide leadership: continue to position OFRI as a convener, coordinator and catalyst to advance forestry and natural resources education statewide (and beyond) with an emphasis on how forest management decisions affect the vitality of Oregon's rural, forest dependent communities.

Educate opinion leaders: raise awareness of forest matters for elected officials, media representatives, business leaders and others.

Engage new partners: build new collaborations outside the forest sector with conservation organizations, youth programs and schools, Business Oregon and trade associations, architecture-engineering-construction community, minorities, and others.

Build on grantsmanship success: expand on OFRI's notable success, seeking opportunities for grants, donations and volunteer service.

Define headline topics: continue to focus OFRI communications each year on one or two key

topics or themes (e.g., wood products are a smart choice for the built environment).

Distill key messages: renew OFRI's work to provide simple phrases, consistently delivered, that communicate vital forest issues to the public.

Extend public education statewide: reach metro and rural audiences across Oregon with OFRI's Speakers Bureau, forest and building tours, and educational advertising and outreach programs.

In contrast, the five strategies in the 2012 Strategic Plan that were specific to a single program area have largely been implemented, or are well underway (see below). While these remain integral to OFRI's communication program, they have been largely internalized and therefore are not called out as specific strategies in this update.

While not identified as a strategy in the 2012 plan, a key OFRI strength to include as a continuing strategy is OFRI's reliance on public opinion research into the values, attitudes and beliefs of Oregonians to inform program priorities, content, and feedback to forest landowners.

At the program level, K-12 and landowner education programs have adopted programspecific strategic plans to guide their work. OFRI's forest products promotion program is engaged in a similar process. Growing public interest in advanced wood products will create new and exciting opportunities for OFRI to build partnerships and engage the public through the Institute's public education programs.

2012 Strategies Accomplished!

Strategies implemented from OFRI's 2012 Strategic Plan:

- ✓ Raise K-12 forest literacy
- ✓ Streamline OFRI's communications
- Reshape and market the website
- Experiment with social media
- √ Increase Board participation

Poised for Change

OFRI's direction for 2017 and beyond

The following presents a synopsis of program priorities and strategies for the Strategic Plan.

Continuing Strategies Provide leadership

Educate opinion leaders Engage new partners

Build on grantsmanship success

Define headline topics Distill key messages

Extend public education statewide

Use research to inform programs, content and feedback to landowners

Priority Audiences Influencers, policymakers and opinion leaders

Next generation: K-I2 students to Millennials

"New" Oregonians

Diverse audiences reflective of Oregon's changing demographics

Architecture, engineering and construction community – both in-state and beyond the state's borders – as customers for Oregon-made products

Forest sector employees

Key Messages Forest management – good for forests, great for Oregon.

Oregon has strong laws that require landowners to replant, protect water

quality, conserve wildlife habitat and protect other forest uses. Wood products are a smart choice for the built environment.

Forest sector careers are good choices for high school and college grads. Oregon's forests are a vital contributor to Oregon's rural and urban

economies, making the entire state stronger economically.

Priority Partnerships Youth programs and schools, especially Outdoor School and Career &

Technical education programs

Business Oregon and trade associations

Architecture, engineering and construction community

Conservation groups

Tactics Collaboration – on tours, seminars, workshops, etc.

Electronic communications/social media

New, non-traditional media

Grantsmanship

Opinion research to guide education program design and messaging

Media relations

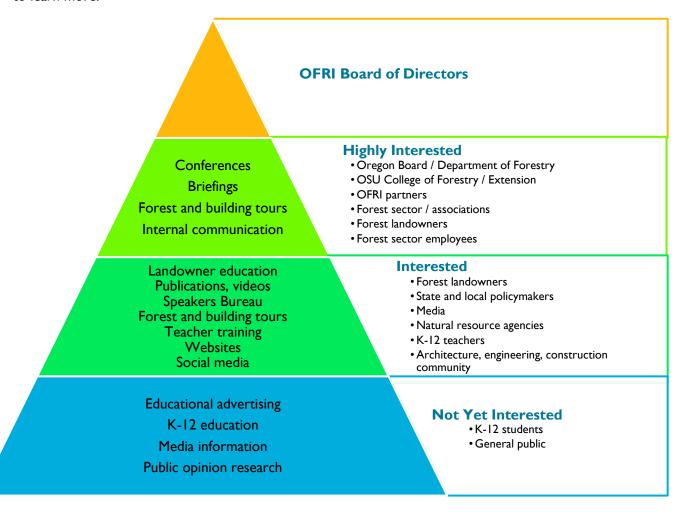
Other Strategies Continuity plan for OFRI staffing

Strategic utilization of contractors to expand OFRI's capabilities

How to Reach Key Audiences

Telling 4 million Oregonians the story of Oregon's forests and forest products? Training forest landowners – now 62,000 strong (who own over 10 acres) or 120,000 (all forest landowners) – to "do the right thing"? Exposing 575,000 K-12 students and 26,000 teachers to forest facts? Those are among Oregon Forest Resources Institute's meaty assignments under Oregon law. But how is that possible?

OFRI's approach uses a variety of education methods and tools aimed at different segments of the public. The OFRI Public Education Pyramid shown below illustrates how this works. OFRI reaches members of the public representing each layer of the pyramid using the appropriate information and tactics: at the top levels where the target audience is "highly interested"; all the way to the very bottom layer where the audience represents millions of Oregonians who are "not yet interested" and are not ready to invest the time to learn more.



OFRI Public Education Pyramid

OFRI 2017 Strategic Plan Stakeholder Interviews

HIGHLIGHTS

In late 2016, Barney & Worth interviewed a cross-section of eleven forest sector leaders and others to gain their contributions to OFRI's 2017 Strategic Plan. The following reflects highlights from the interviews. A list of participants follows.

- 1. **In a word, OFRI is <u>credible.</u>** True to its educational mission and despite a forest industry that is "fragmented", most observers say OFRI has eschewed advocacy and remained science-based, unbiased, open to all opinions. Words to describe OFRI include: research-oriented, strategically focused, on-message, highly effective, believable. Observers say they don't know details of most OFRI programs but they like what they see: "Money well spent."
- 2. The key to OFRI's success has been its professional staff. Along with a stable budget, OFRI's greatest strength is its people. Individual staff members are often mentioned by name and described as uniquely skilled, passionate, an important resource to the forest sector trusted and "irreplaceable". Some anxiety is expressed about continuity in the future as staff transitions may occur.
- 3. Looking into the future, most observers think OFRI will need to change to stay relevant. Most interviewees say they don't have any great insights and that OFRI stays on top of emerging issues. But some point out that more than half of Oregonian's 4 million residents are "new" to the state and know little about forests. And there are new opinion leaders hatched with every election and corporate baton passing. Another trend mentioned for OFRI's radar is the increased activity of out-of-state environmental organizations.
- 4. K-12 teacher/student education is the program area mentioned most often to receive more emphasis. Young people are Oregon's future, and still impressionable. With 26,000 teachers and 576,000 students across the state, this represents an important opportunity and daunting challenge. OFRI's acknowledged achievements in this area have emboldened stakeholders to ask for more.
- 5. Most stakeholders are aware of OFRI's new wood products initiative. A few interviewees have been involved, and most others say they have read or heard something about it. For some, this is "OFRI's most important program." These observers say OFRI is finally paying attention to "demand side" issues and exciting new products (cross-laminated timber). A few others question whether the new wood products program duplicates other organizations or if it might detract from OFRI's other program areas.

- 6. **Partnerships more is better.** There is a shared understanding that successful partnerships have been one of the keys to OFRI's success. Suggestions for new partnerships include more partnerships with programs targeted at youth: the new Outdoor School initiative (expected to be expanded with voter support), Children's Museums in Portland and Eugene, and other groups. The other frequent suggestion is to partner with credible environmental organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy.
- 7. **OFRI's websites serve as a library for the forest sector.** The websites are generally viewed as easy to navigate. Users are able to short-cut their research by getting current and reliable facts from the websites. They also download publications to distribute to their customers, employees and students. OFRI's increasingly strong digital presence is also acknowledged.
- 8. **OFRI's publications are also widely known and used.** The biggest hit is still Forest Facts and Figures, but most other publications are also recognized and used by key stakeholders. An exception is OFRI's electronic newsletter. Only half of the interviewees recall seeing the newsletter and every one of those confesses they never read it. Also, a few observers wonder whether there are readers/users any longer for OFRI's more in-depth, well researched publications. Could these be replaced or supplemented by one-page versions?
- 9. **Final advice.** Observers offer balanced suggestions that juxtapose "stick to your knitting" and "stay the course" with "stay flexible" and "do the unexpected". Several participants think it is time for Oregon to adopt a statewide policy on using wood for new construction. Can OFRI play a role?

Stakeholder Interviewees

Lauri Aunan, Governor's Office
Adam Davis, DHM Research
Sara Duncan, Oregon Forest Industries Council
David Hampton, Hampton Resources
Nancy Hirsch, Oregon Department of Forestry
Jim James, Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Ray Jones, Stimson Lumber
Thomas Maness, Oregon State University
Ethan Martin, WoodWorks
Vince Porter, Governor's Office
Casey Roscoe, Seneca Sawmill Co.

OFRI 2017 Strategic Plan Stakeholder Survey

HIGHLIGHTS

A survey was emailed to OFRI followers requesting their evaluation of OFRI's programs and their advice for the future. Highlights of their responses appear below.

1. **Broad response** (29) responses received covering every stakeholder category. Most frequent participants:

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Timber company employee – 38%
Forest landowners – 28%
Current/former OFRI Board – 28%
Use OFRI publications – 52%
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- 2. **High marks** are given in most program areas*:
 - 6.08 Forest landowner education
 - 5.79 Public education
 - 5.67 K-12 teacher/student education
 - 4.77 Wood products user education (new program)
 - * On a scale of one (not effective) to seven (highly effective)
- 3. **More emphasis** is suggested for:
 - 49% K-12 education
 - 38% Public education
 - 34% Social media
- Wood products education program is well recognized by those who are involved (36%) and aware (57%). All participants say they are interested in the topic, and none question whether OFRI should be involved.
- Partnerships suggested include:
 - Continuing/expanding on existing partnerships e.g., K-8 schools, World Forestry Center, Oregon Small Woodlands Association, SAF
 - Forming some new partnerships: Outdoor School, OWEB, watershed councils, affordable housing groups
- 6. "Best sellers" among OFRI's publications continue to be: Oregon Forest Facts and Figures (100%!), Oregon's Forest Protection Laws (82%), Wildlife in Managed Forests (75%) and OFRI's monthly electronic newsletter (71%).
- 7. **Visual communication tools** are also being noticed, with the OFRI websites used by 79% of respondents, along with Forest Fact Breaks (63%), Find your Path (58%) and Day in the Woods (46%)

- 8. **Final advice** includes these themes:
 - Focus on future generations, investing in K-12 education statewide
 - Make forestry personal to Oregonians; improve understanding of forest management
 - Stay credible and relevant, science-based and neutral; continue to be a thought leader
 - Continue the great work; "stick to your current programs and do them well."

OFRI 2017 Strategic Plan Online Survey

HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to stakeholder interviews and an email survey, an online survey was also publicized in OFRI's newsletter. Highlights from surveys returned online appear below.

- 1. **Participants**: most are forest landowners (57%) and/or read OFRI publications (50%)
- 2. Effectiveness ratings are consistently high*:
 - 6.14 K-12 education
 - 5.54 Forest landowner education
 - 5.50 Public education
 - 5.45 Wood products user education
 - * On a scale of one (not effective) to seven (highly effective)
- 3. More emphasis is suggested for:

K-12 education (43%)

Earned media (36%)

4. Communications tools are all being noticed:

Monthly newsletter (100%), Forest Facts (85%), special reports (85%), other publications (62%-77%)

- 5. **Visual tools:** respondents' use focuses on the website (100%) and Forest Fact Breaks (67%)
- 6. Final advice centers on "keep up the good job." Other advice:
 - Continue current messages on benefits to Oregonians of good silviculture, and the Oregon Forest Practices Act requires sustainable forest management.
 - Keep focusing on public education in urban areas.
 - Develop a "buy local" campaign for wood products.
- 7. **Executive summary**: most say "yes", they would like to receive a summary of OFRI's 2017 Strategic Plan.



OFRI 2017 Strategic Plan Board and Staff Workshops

HIGHLIGHTS

To contribute to the 2017 Strategic Plan, Barney & Worth organized two workshop discussion sessions for the OFRI Board of Directors (October 5, 2017) and OFRI staff (November 7, 2017). Both sessions utilized electronic polling, which allowed some quantitative comparisons that supplemented the qualitative discussions. Priorities identified in both workshops are incorporated in the 2017 Strategic Plan.

Board Workshop

The OFRI Board revisited progress made implementing the 2012 Strategic Plan, and reviewed the recently completed strategic plans for K-12 teacher and student education, and landowner education.

OSU faculty member Dr. Laurence Schimleck offered insights on "Trends in Wood Products" to jump-start a facilitated discussion on OFRI's newest program area.

The Board's deliberations centered on their vision for the next 25 years, for OFRI (as an organization) and OFRI's programs. In considering now future trends will impact OFRI's program areas, Board members anticipate significant impacts, with wood products and K-12 education experiencing the greatest change. However, an overall moderate pace of change will give OFRI enough time to adapt its programs over the next 5-10 years.

In the view of current Board members OFRI should strive to continue its unique role as "thought leader" on forest issues, remaining at the center of policy discussions across Oregon and nationally – *poised for a change*. The advent of new electronic communications channels makes it possible for OFRI to do more-better-faster and reach new audiences including the younger generation and Oregon's many newcomers.

Staff Workshop

OFRI staff report significant accomplishments in all program areas since 2012. OFRI has launched one new major program area (wood products) and numerous programs and publications, while existing programs have become ever more popular. Many priorities from the 2012 Strategic Plan have been completed. This has been made possible, in part, through successful partnerships and the addition of new staff and expertise to the OFRI team.

Priorities discussed at the staff workshop mirrored many of those raised by the OFRI Board. Areas warranting renewed effort in 2017 and beyond include:

- Educating opinion leaders
- Engaging new partners
- Making forest education part of the curriculum for Oregon's public schools
- Outreach to the Hispanic community





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oregonforests.org
learnforests.org
knowyourforest.org
oregonforestlaws.org
whybuildwithwood.org