

**BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS REGISTRATION**

P.O. Box 944246
SACRAMENTO, CA 94244-2460
Website: www.bof.fire.ca.gov/licensing/licensing_main.html
(916) 653-8031

**OPEN SESSION MEETING OF THE
PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS EXAMINING COMMITTEE**

October 20, 2005

Held at
744 "P" Street, First Floor Auditorium
Sacramento, California

Members Present: Doug Ferrier, Chairman
Michael Stroud
Otto van Emmerik
Gerald Jensen
Hal Bowman

Staff Present: Eric Huff, Executive Officer
Terra Perkins, Office Technician

Guests Present: Chris Quirnbach, CLFA
Roy Richards, Jr., Consulting Forester
Arne Hultgren, Roseburg Resources
Dennis Hall, CDF Staff Chief

**THE OPEN SESSION MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN,
DOUG FERRIER AT 10:15 AM.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 22, 2005 MEETING

The minutes were unavailable for review and approval was therefore postponed until the next meeting.

**REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION'S
HARVEST PLAN (THP'S, NTMP'S, ETC.) FILING STANDARDS AND
PROCEDURES**

Chairman Ferrier introduced this agenda item (Agenda Item No. 2) and described the tasks to be completed at the request of Board Chairman, Stan Dixon. Chairman Ferrier then provided a summation of past efforts on this subject and a description of the binder contents assembled for public and PFEC review and use in the discussion.

Following introductions, CDF Staff Chief, Dennis Hall provided a summary description of how the harvest plan review process is carried out by the Department. Dennis covered the entire process from plan submittal to plan approval or denial.

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Chairman Ferrier questioned Hall as to use of the CLFA checklist, oversight of the various regional offices by CDF Headquarters Staff, and the manner in which planning documents are dispersed to reviewing agencies. Hall responded to those questions.

Consulting foresters, Roy Richards, Jr. and Arne Hultgren provided their experiences relative to plan filing following Hall's remarks.

Chairman Ferrier continued with questions of Hall as to how the chain of command operates and how much training review team personnel receive upon their hiring. Hall responded that training is essentially 'on the job', though there is Academy training and use of video for CEQA training purposes.

Member Mike Stroud asked Hall questions about statutory timeframes for review and the manner in which other reviewing agencies respond to the timeframes. Arne Hultgren again offered his experiences with the Redding CDF Office. Hall responded to Stroud's questions and Hultgren's observations. Roy Richards, Jr. again offered his experiences and asked questions about regional differences in review. Stroud continued his line of questioning.

CLFA Representative, Chris Quirnbach questioned Hall as to the impact of other agencies' comment in first review. Hall responded to the question.

Chairman Ferrier questioned Hall as to what sorts of materials are provided to plan reviewers by the Department for use in review of harvest plans. Hall responded to the questions.

Discussion continued amongst Hultgren, Ferrier, Hall and Richards, Jr. on reasons for plan returns experienced by various RPF's. Richards, Jr. expressed the opinion that plan filing standards are inconsistent from plan to plan. Chairman Ferrier followed up with questions of Hall as to the level of autonomy amongst CDF's first review staff.

Member Hal Bowman questioned Hall as to the trend in numbers of plan submittals by region. Discussion continued as to how staffing is utilized to accommodate workload during peak plan submittal periods. Hall presented the latest harvest plan statistics report to the Board and answered Member Bowman's questions as to overall trends. Discussion continued on plan review timeframes with participation of Chairman Ferrier, Quirnbach and Hall.

CLFA representative, Chris Quirnbach questioned the amount of internal rule interpretation by CDF first review staff and the lack of concurrent direction to RPF's as to those internal interpretations. Discussion continued on the subject of Department memos and overall communications with the regulated community in the recent past.

Hall explained that the Department intends to once again begin posting Director's memos to RPF's. Hall indicated that electronic outreach would be helpful in maintaining more timely communications between CDF and the regulated community.

Chairman Ferrier questioned Hall as to whether or not the THP form is outdated. Hall answered affirmatively and indicated that a revised form is in the works. Discussion about the THP form continued.

Consulting forester, Roy Richards, Jr. described a situation in which resubmittals generated additional first review questions. This was acknowledged and led to further discussion of delays in the receipt of other reviewing agency comments.

Chairman Ferrier questioned Hall as to whether or not the he and/or the Department believed that there was in fact a plan filing "problem." Hall responded that there is always room for improvement, but that a significant problem does not appear to exist. Hall offered that revision of the CLFA Checklist seemed like a good idea and pledged the support of his staff to complete that work. He further indicated that the Checklist might better serve all involved if it was viewed as a set of guidelines rather than a checklist.

CDF Staff Chief, Dennis Hall expressed a personal opinion that the first review process ought to be abbreviated in favor of increased and expedited field inspections. Discussion continued on this subject and evolved into the subject of electronic THP forms. Hultgren, Hall and Ferrier continued the discussion.

Executive Officer, Eric Huff questioned Hall as to differences in plan return strategies by region: above the line vs. below the line filing issues. The Santa Rosa and Redding offices appear to function differently in this regard. Hall explained the rationale behind the two approaches.

Chairman Ferrier asked for other process improvement alternatives. Richards, Jr. and Hultgren responded that greater transparency in Department internal policy would be of great help. Ferrier noted that the issue of underground regulation may prevent greater communication of internal policy.

CLFA representative, Chris Quirnbach questioned the level of rule interpretation amongst review personnel. He added that first review staff ought not to be in the position of offering rule interpretations. Rather, they should seek to clearly communicate well defined expectations to plan submitters. Huff echoed this thought. To that end, Hall offered that the Department could hold meetings with interested RPF's and landowners to clearly convey expectations and maintain consistent communications.

Executive Officer, Eric Huff questioned Hall as to the number of RPF's that participate in first review of their plan submittals. Hall responded that this seldom occurs. Discussion continued on the subject of Department offices and tasks.

Member Jerry Jensen asked the Chairman as to how further landowner input on the subject would be received. Discussion continued with the Chairman expressing the desire to see the return letters issued this year by region. Hultgren responded that this would give an incomplete picture. Ferrier responded that he would likewise like to see the letters of response from RPF's. Discussion continued as to how best to continue the review of the first review process. Ferrier offered the idea of visiting the review teams in person. Hall noted that electronically posted harvest plans are now available on the web and that this might be a good way of reviewing return related issues. This idea was supported by the Committee and CDF Staff Chief, Dennis Hall.

Chairman Ferrier asked Hall if he knew the average duration that first review staff remained on the job in that capacity. Hall responded to the question by region.

The Committee broke for lunch for one hour.

The meeting resumed following lunch with the provision of the Department's latest harvest plan filing report to the Board. Discussion continued.

Chairman Ferrier solicited the Committee's opinion of meetings with review team personnel. It was unanimously concurred that this was a good next step. It was agreed that subcommittees of the PFEC would meet with Redding and Santa Rosa review team personnel as soon as it could be arranged. EO Huff was directed to gather plan return information prior to the meetings. Staff Chief Hall said he would provide Huff with a list of returned plans that could be accessed on the CDF website.

Consulting forester, Roy Richards, Jr. reiterated the need for better communication between the regulators and the regulated. Discussion continued on this topic with a focus on greater collaboration and open lines of communication.

Chairman Ferrier concluded that he would anticipate providing a report of the PFEC's findings to the Board at their January 2006 meeting.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No new or unfinished business.

ADJOURNMENT:

Hal Bowman moved for adjournment and Jerry Jensen seconded the motion. The Professional Foresters Examining Committee adjourned the open session at 1:35 p.m.