

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item No.:	E
Work Plan:	Administrative
Topic:	Board Governance Performance Self-Evaluation
Presentation Title:	2024 Board Governance Performance Self-Evaluation
Date of Presentation:	June 6, 2024
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SUMMARY

The Board of Forestry has completed its annual self-evaluation for 2024 using its adopted governance performance measure.

CONTEXT

The governance performance measure for state boards and commissions, “percent of total best practices met by the board” was enacted by the Oregon State Legislature and adopted by the Board in 2006. The measure includes fifteen standard best practices criteria tailored to meet the Board’s specific needs and interests. The Board added an additional criterion relating to public involvement and communications, and open-ended summary questions to the evaluation. The measure is included in the agency’s annual Key Performance Measures and has been conducted every year since 2008.

In spring, board members annually complete their individual self-evaluations utilizing the Board Governance Performance Measure Best Management Practices Self-Evaluation Criteria. A summary of the 2024 self-evaluation is attached. The Board is asked to consider the alternatives in their review of the evaluation and agree upon a rating for submission in our agency’s *Annual Performance Progress Report*. Further discussion on the Board’s annual performance review has traditionally occurred during the board’s planning retreat.

ANALYSIS

The evaluation survey was open to board members for one month during April and May with regular updates of completion status shared. Three of the seven board members serving in the 2023 calendar period completed the evaluation. This is a significant shift from the prior five years where one or two board members did not participate annually in the evaluation, and the last year where all seven board members completed theirs. Two board members serving in 2023 have recently resigned from their seats.

Results of the evaluation suggest that the three participating board members see the board functioning in a less than satisfactory manner, further amplified by the minimal participation and recent resignations. The Board was unable to meet their performance measure target of 100% for the 2023 evaluation period. Participating respondents on the Board found common agreement in reaching 84% of their best practices as compared to the prior year’s evaluation of 92%.

The participating board members found common agreement in meeting best practices of governance consistent with past evaluations related to:

- defined performance expectations for the State Forester and recent evaluation,
- review of the agency’s annual key performance measures, biennial budget, key financial information, and audit findings as they are released,

- agency adherence to accounting rules and financial controls,
- board members responsibly serving as public representatives, attending appropriate training and technical information sessions, and utilizing outreach and engagement of stakeholders and special interest committees.

However, further improvement in board governance best practices is desired by participating board members related to:

- completion of the Board's strategic plan with current agency mission, high-level goals, and defined strategic initiatives and priorities,
- appropriate involvement in review of the agency's key policy communications,
- increasing involvement in the Private Forests Accord policy-making activities,
- aligning the agency's policy option packages with their mission and goals through the biennial budgeting process,
- accounting and briefing on Human Resources trends and issues, with considerable improvement desired relevant to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI),
- engaging in collaborative coordination and efficient work where responsibilities and interests overlap with other state and federal agencies and tribal nations, and
- implementing adaptive management effectively to ensure best practices are utilized beyond the planning and evaluation cycles.

Reflections from the participating board members indicate polarization and challenges associated with controversial forest policy issues, interference within the Executive Branch, and operating without a completed strategic plan with shared vision to guide decision-making is affecting the Board's results.

ALTERNATIVES

There are three alternatives to be considered for the Board's completion of this year's self-evaluation process:

- 1) Approve the self-evaluation summary report as-is, agreeing to a performance rating of 84% in meeting best practices criteria, with further discussions to be held in a future retreat setting.
- 2) Remove this item from the consent agenda and discuss the areas of concern prior to approving a performance rating. Results of this discussion could lead to the same approval and agreeing to the 84% rating as-is or could lead to changes in their agreed-upon collective rating. Further discussion on the criteria will be held in a future retreat setting.
- 3) Remove this item from the consent agenda and provide the non-participating board members additional time to complete their performance evaluation with results presented through the consent agenda at the September board meeting prior to submitting the comprehensive agency Key Performance Measures report to the Legislature on October 1. Alternatives 1 and 2 would also be presented for consideration during the September board meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends the Board proceed with the first alternative and approve the summary evaluation report as the conclusion of the 2024 self-evaluation process.

NEXT STEPS

The Board will further discuss this year's collective self-evaluation in a future retreat setting. Results of the collective self-evaluation will be included in the Department's *2024 Annual Performance Progress Report* submitted to the Department of Administrative Services and Legislative Fiscal Office.

ATTACHMENT

- 1) 2024 Summary of Best Practices Performance Evaluation (*Oregon Board of Forestry*)

**Oregon Board of Forestry
Governance Performance Measure
2024 Summary of Best Practices Performance Evaluations**

Performance Measure: Percent of total best practices met by the Board.

Target: 100%


Period: Annual




ODF Key Performance Measure: #2

Board Adopted: September 6, 2006

Summary of Individual Board Member Evaluations – May 9, 2024

Key: Within Each Criteria:





#’s
 = Board member tally count
 = range of ratings

Oregon Board of Forestry Best Practices Criteria	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<p>1. Executive Director’s performance expectations are current. <i>The Board understands this to mean that the State Forester’s Position Description is current.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u> none</p>	1 	2	0	0
<p>2. Executive Director’s performance has been evaluated in the last year. <i>The Board understands this to mean that the State Forester’s Position Description is current and that the annual performance appraisal has been completed.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are required to do a full review every two years. We did a “light” review in 2023 and will do a full review in fall 2024. 	1 	2	0	0
<p>3. The agency’s mission and high-level goals are current and applicable. <i>The Board understands this to mean that the Board’s <u>Forestry Program for Oregon</u> and <u>Oregon Forest Practices Act/Rules</u> are current.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision is almost complete While the Board’s Forestry Plan for Oregon has been long overdue for an update, the work to create the new plan is almost complete and should be adopted in June 2024. The Vision document being developed should address this. 	0	2 	1	0




**Oregon Board of Forestry
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Oregon Board of Forestry Best Practices Criteria	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<p>4. The Board reviews the <u>Annual Performance Progress Report</u>. <i>The Board understands this to mean that the Board reviews the report annually as a meeting agenda item.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u> none</p>	0	3 ↔	0	0
<p>5. The Board is appropriately involved in review of agency’s key communications. <i>The Board understands this to mean agency and Board communications at a policy level, versus a day-to-day operating level.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree, but could be improved. 	0	3 ↔	0	0
<p>6. The Board is appropriately involved in policy-making activities. <i>The Board understands this to mean those policy activities that particularly have a statewide perspective, including holding Board meetings at different geographic locations around the state.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be good for the board to have more of a role in the Private Forests Accord rulemaking going forward. • No meaningful involvement in any of the Private Forests Accord efforts. 	0	2 ↔	1	0
<p>7. The agency’s policy option packages are aligned with their mission and goals. <i>The Board understands this to mean the packages included in the biennial budget process as part of the Agency Request Budget.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are in an off year with the new vision/strategic plan almost finished, so this question is hard to answer. • They need to align with the vision document that is being developed. 	0	1 ↔	2	0
<p>8. The Board reviews all proposed budgets. <i>The Board understands this to mean the Department of Forestry’s biennial budget at the Agency Request Budget level.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u> none</p>	1 ↔	2	0	0

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Oregon Board of Forestry Best Practices Criteria	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<p>9. The Board periodically reviews key financial information and audit findings. <i>The Board understands this to mean significant financial issues and as audits are released.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u> none</p>	1	2	0	0
				
<p>10. The Board is appropriately accounting for resources. <i>The Board understands this to mean critical issues relating to human, financial, material and facilities resources by providing oversight in these areas. This means that the Board receives briefings on such issues as succession management, vacancies, the budget, and financial effects of the fire program.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial accounting is good. Human Resources accounting, especially relevant to DEI needs considerable improvement. 	0	2	1	0
				
<p>11. The agency adheres to accounting rules and other relevant financial controls. <i>The Board understands this to mean the receipt of the annual statewide audit report from Secretary of State which highlights any variances in accounting rules or significant control weaknesses.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u> none</p>	1	2	0	0
				
<p>12. Board members act in accordance with their roles as public representatives. <i>The Board understands this to mean that they follow public meeting rules, the standard of conduct for Board members, and the public input process. Members received training and information from the Governor's Office upon appointment.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u> none</p>	0	3	0	0
				

**Oregon Board of Forestry
Governance Performance Measure
2024 Summary of Best Practices Performance Evaluations**

Oregon Board of Forestry Best Practices Criteria	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<p>13. The Board coordinates with others where responsibilities and interests overlap. <i>The Board understands this to mean other public agencies and boards with statutory authority connections or overlaps, e.g. the Forest Trust Land Counties, the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission/Department of Environmental Quality; the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission/Department of Fish and Wildlife; the State Land Board; local fire districts; the United States Forest Service; the Bureau of Land Management.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is definitely room for more engagement with other agencies in order to work collaboratively. • Cross agency coordination and efficiency needs improvement with other state and federal agencies and with Tribal Nations. 	0	2 	1	0
<p>14. The Board members identify and attend appropriate training sessions. <i>The Board understands this to mean the workshops, symposia, and field tours that accompany some Board meetings, and that the Board receives adequate technical information.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u> none</p>	1 	2	0	0
<p>15. The Board reviews its management practices to ensure best practices are utilized. <i>The Board understands this to mean carrying out this self-evaluation on an annual basis, conducting the annual Board work plan status check, and by conducting the periodic scan of issues on a biennial basis.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptive management is incorporated in planning but rarely implemented effectively. 	1 	1	1	0

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Oregon Board of Forestry Best Practices Criteria	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>Listed below is an additional best practice for the Board of Forestry; not included in calculating the percentage adherence to best practices.</i>				
<p>16. The Board values public input and transparency in conducting its work through outreach to and engagement of stakeholders and by using its work plan communication tools. The Board also values input and communications with its standing advisory committees, special ad hoc committees and panels and external committees with board interests.</p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also a continuous process, with the initiation of surveys. • Appreciate that this topic will be explored during retreat including whether any revised or new advisory committees could be helpful. 	0	3 ↔	0	0
Total Number (Criteria 1-15)	7	31	7	0
Percentage of Total in Each Evaluation Category (Criteria 1-15)	15.56%	68.89%	15.56%	0%
Percentage of Total in “Agree” and “Disagree” (Criteria 1-15)	84%		16%	

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Summary Questions for Consideration:

1. How is the Board doing?

- Pretty good.
- Rough year with the HCP controversy. Looking forward to working on other policy issues.
- It is a board where majority voted is often an outcome and unanimity is less likely. The board polarization reflects societal polarization.

2. What factors are affecting the Board's results?

- The HCP took up so much time, not enough time for other issues.
- Societal polarization and interference from the Governor's Natural Resources Policy Director.

3. What needs to be done to improve future performance?

- No suggestions at this time.
- Completion of the Vision document and agreement to follow it as a guide to decision making based on peer reviewed science rather than letting political expediency influence the decisions.