

# CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

## Study Session Worksheet

Presentation Date: October 18, 2011      Time: 1:30 PM      Length: 60 min.

Presentation Title: Forest Stewardship Council Certification Question

Department: County Parks and Forest, BCS

Presenters: Gary Barth, Jeroen Kok, Dan Green

### ISSUE & BACKGROUND

Late last year the BCC instructed the County Forest Program to stop timber sales until the BCC agreed upon forest management standards, specifically whether or not to pursue the Forest Stewardship Council's (FSC) certification standard. The County issued an RFP and subsequently contracted with Scientific Certification Systems to assess the degree to which the County Forest Program met or failed to meet FSC standards. SCS has provided its pre-assessment summary of County management (copy attached).

The report includes 30 pages of standards and the County appears to meet the vast majority of the requirements for FSC certification. Most of the deficiencies are documentation requirements. Some key deficiencies would affect how much timber we could harvest each year (increased stream buffer and tree retention requirements), and whether we could sell or change the use of our park and forest land.

Staff will provide the commissioners with a brief history of the forest program, a summary of events leading up to the FSC certification pre-assessment, details regarding the pre-assessment, and the likely impacts of potential certification to the County's Forest program. Staff will also present options for discussion and consideration, and will provide recommendations to the Board.

### QUESTION(S) PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Should staff continue pursuit of FSC certification or instead move forward with previously directed changes to improve the County's Forest Management Plan?
2. Should staff start harvesting timber again to fund the operation of County Parks and Forest?
3. If the County further pursues FSC, does the BCC have a means to backfill the budget loss to the County Parks and Forest system?

### OPTIONS AVAILABLE

- 1a. Direct the Forest Program to proceed with FSC certification.
- 1b. Direct the Forest Program not to proceed with FSC certification.
- 2a. Direct the Forest Program to proceed with timber sales under FSC standards

2b. Direct the Forest Program to proceed with timber sales under our existing management plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff respectfully recommends Options 1b and 2b. Options 1b and 2b will preserve 11 family-wage jobs (social benefit), provide higher economic return to the County (\$250,000 annually over 1a.), provide forest openings in an area where that habitat is limited, and provide admirable protection of streams and water quality, and other important environmental considerations.

Options 1a and 2a would leave more trees to grow old in an area where old trees are common, provide wider stream buffers and require much more documentation and reporting. Current abilities to sell or exchange forest lands would also be curtailed. Additionally, jobs would be lost and revenue would decline sharply while annual administrative costs increase.

FSC certification serves a purpose in many areas of the world where deforestation is a threat, but it appears to be quite costly for minimal benefit in the County's unique situation.

**SCHEDULE FOR STUDY SESSION**

Division Director/Head Approval   
Department Director/Head Approval   
County Administrator Approval \_\_\_\_\_

For information on this issue or copies of attachments, please contact Jeroen Kok @ 503-742-4421