

# Communities for Healthy Forests

## Annual Report 2010

In 2010 it seemed the forest issue was on the back burner with Congress and the State of Oregon this year as the economy spiraled down and revenues decreased dramatically. The focus of State and Federal government was on budgets and jobs. This overshadowed everything including forest issues. Today after mid term elections, the political scenario has changed. The change in balance of power in Congress could move dialogue about forests to a more moderate level especially as Congress looks at revenue, jobs and climate change opportunities. That in addition to new forest scientist's proposals of Franklin/Johnson from OSU that admit the failure of the Northwest Forest Plan and revise processes to restore and thin failing forest systems. The new thinking is more in line with the CHF message, (although it is disturbing that the scientists do not want to apply the same processes to restoration after catastrophic events- more education about long term neglect is needed). The most significant change in attitudes of Oregonians is in the importance of the forest industry and jobs. There is a significant recognition that these two factors are important to the future well being of the State of Oregon. The 2005 and 2010 surveys confirm that trend. So while 2010 felt more like a holding pattern, the year 2011 promises to be far more active. However, the purpose of this report is to look at the major accomplishments of Communities for Healthy Forests in the past year. First is a review of the Davis Hibbits and Midghall Survey of 2010 compared to the CHF Survey in 2005.

Communities for Healthy Forests (CHF) considered updating the information from the CHF Survey conducted by Davis, Hibbits and Midghall . When the Board learned that Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) had conducted a very similar survey completed in June of 2010, the CHF Board decided to review the new survey and compare results to see if our educational effort was paying off. Of course OFRI is doing a superb job of forestry education as well. Comparison of the two polls methodology showed that many of the questions were similar, in fact the summary included comparisons with the 2005 survey on values, knowledge, and forest management. Survey methodologies were similar enough that we can compare results with confidence.

The information from these surveys along with new political developments and developing scientific viewpoints, CHF might conclude our message and accomplishments are aligned with the values of Oregonians and also find indicators that suggest productive next steps for 2011. First take a look at the polling information.

The comparison of the 2005 and 2010 surveys show some remarkable similarities in beliefs and values of Oregonians, but there are a couple of areas of shifts in values that should be examined. For the most part Oregonian's values are very consistent over the past 5 years. They value the forests for the multiple uses, supplying social, environmental and economic contributions to the State. In 2005 it was 47% and in 2010 78% agreed that forests should be managed to balance the social, economic and environmental values. The 2010 survey found that 63% of Oregonians support wood

products as a better environmental choice and 69% think their wood products should come from Oregon

The number of people believing they are knowledgeable about forests has increased from 46% to 58% however, in 2005 when asked about the federal government owning 50% of the land in Oregon only 52% of respondents believed that was true. The same question was not asked in 2010. In answer to the statements about forest industry jobs, importance rose from 87% in 2005 to 92% in 2010. Replanting trees and water quality remain the top concerns in both surveys, but interest in a strong timber industry and jobs seemed to be of greater concern in the 2010 survey which was a change. In the 2010 Survey, 92% said that jobs were the most important concern and 89% said water quality was one of their top forestry concerns. In 2005 98% said water quality was a top concern and jobs were only 86%.

Fifty eight percent of Oregonians support timber harvest and a resounding 91% respondents support the timber industry to make Oregon's economy strong. Fifty eight percent of respondents believe rural communities could not thrive without a strong industry. Areas that seem to be lacking in information is about the significance of federal forest ownership in the State of Oregon and knowledge about current federal forest management, especially after catastrophic events. CHF could improve the numbers with our presentation.

***The issue we were most interested in was the support for restoring forests after catastrophic events. The 2005 survey showed 77% of Oregonians support restoration of forests and in 2010 support rose to 85%. Supporting active management after fires grew to 88% in 2010 from 76% in 2005. Supporting active management after fires grew to 88% in 2010 from 76% in 2005***

There was an interesting difference in knowledge about the increase in catastrophic forest fires. In 2005 45% of Oregonians thought there was no increase in wildfire nor would there be in the future. The 2010 survey found that 85% believe that significant fires were a concern.

The 2010 survey found that 75% of Oregonians support developing the biomass industry although few knew details about it.

In the 2010 survey there were questions about what global warming would do to forests, but no questions in either survey about forest impacts on global warming or climate change. However climate change continues to be a concern that federal agencies are mandated to take into consideration when planning for future actions.

The surveys lead us to believe that Oregonians want more and better information about current conditions of forests. The University forest scientists are most trusted to do this as are family forestland owners and state forestry officials. The survey didn't mention community leaders who follow forestry issues, but we know that our presentations have very good reception in all the communities, and that our scientific sources have great credibility.

Areas that seem to be lacking in information is about the significance of federal forest ownership in the State of Oregon and knowledge about current federal forest management, especially after catastrophic events. There also is lack of information about overstocking and the current condition of 80% of federal forests, which could significantly affect the intensity and number of catastrophic forest fires in the near future. However, 77% agree forests should be thinned to reduce the risk of severe wildfire. Of the respondents, 73% agree that lack of thinning or harvesting dense forest stands makes them vulnerable to destructive fires.

## 2010 Accomplishments

Highlights of 2010 include KPIC a Fisher Station and CBS affiliate had an entire half hour TV show featuring the CHF, DVD, "The Forest Factor". Besides the many presentations given by staff and Board members, we were able to secure a place on the agenda for the Pulp & Paperworkers' Resource Council in Milwaukee Wisconsin May 19<sup>th</sup>. At this meeting they agreed they continue to support the resolution in support of CHF mission that they signed in 2006. The organization represents unions including USW, AWPPW, IAM, IBEW, IBT, and UBC (United Brotherhood of Carpenters-Jeannie Weakley's union). Representatives were there from Arkansas, South Carolina, Georgia, Minnesota, Texas, New York, and Virginia. They all requested and were sent packets of materials for presentations at their local and state meetings. They believe that the CHF message is vitally important to educate the general public about forest management, even if they don't have large federal forests in their states.

One of the most active and knowledgeable groups presented to were the members of the board of Project Wildfire in Bend. We sent 400 brochures and other DVD's so they could show the DVD at their respective meetings. This meeting came out of a meeting Kupillas had with the County Commissioner Dennis Luke and Katie Lighthall, Program Coordinator for Project Wildfire. The Bend Rotary meeting was also arranged after the meeting with Commissioner Duke.

In total, CHF gave presentations to about 12 groups, many of them new to our organization. These presentations represented over 360 participants. Considering the fact that in 2009 we gave over 30 presentations representing over 1000 participants and mailed dozens of DVD's when the DVD first came out, it is with considerable effort we found the audiences who had not seen the presentation. This next year we will work more in the Willamette Valley and with members of the Oregon Legislature and the Governor's office.

We sent a quarterly newsletter, timed when significant events happened and we had something really newsworthy to report. We applied for and got a Title III grant from Douglas County so we could continue with our forestry education. We partnered with Douglas Forest Protective Association in staffing our booth at the Douglas County Fair. We were able to show our DVD as well as theirs and hand out materials from each of our organizations. Many people stopped to ask questions about fires and federal forests.

The leadership of the Cow Creek Tribe changed in 2010. This prompted a meeting with the new leadership. Ron Doan, Lee Paterson and Sue Kupillas met with Lonnie Rainville and Michael Rondeau from the Umpqua Band of the Cow Creek Tribe, to discuss the work of CHF and to continue the Tribal support for our educational efforts. They suggested they could introduce us to other Tribes in the Northwest where we might give presentations. Michael suggested he would like to get meeting notices and will attend whenever possible.

The distribution of DVD's was nation wide. CHF developed contacts in New Jersey, Louisiana (The LA Forestry Assn), as well as in many of the states in the Northwest. In addition, Joe Laurence took packets of materials to all of the members of the oversight committee of the House Sub-committee for National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands as he testified regarding rural employment opportunities with regard to federal forests.

It was an election year and we were able to meet with several local candidates and Ted Wheeler, State Treasurer candidate, who won his statewide race. (He sits on the State Land Board so deals with forest issues). Even though CHF did not meet with the candidates for Governor, Both candidates were given "The Forest Factor" DVD as were other candidates. We were able to talk with Kitzhaber and Dudley at various campaign events. CHF invited guest speakers the first of which was Michael Carrier, Governor Kulongoski's Natural Resource Policy Director, who spoke at our January meeting. November 30 Dr. Norm Johnson spoke about the failure of the NW Forest Plan and current thinking at OSU about forest management and his work with Dr Jerry Franklin in looking at restoration of Federal Forests, strategies and management implications. Dr. Johnson was preparing for a meeting with Secretary of the Interior on December 8 which also included Commissioner Doug Robertson. Dr. Johnson made sure Commissioner Robertson was able to speak to Secretary Salazar at the meeting.

The CHF Board will use the comparative results of the two surveys, as well as new statistics on unemployment and the role of our federal forests in creating or maintaining jobs in our rural communities. Each year and with each audience, the educational message is refined to address the most urgent concerns. In 2011, with jobs on the minds of communities, CHF will work hard to do presentations to labor unions as well as other community groups. We believe there is a more urgent need for the public to understand the critical need for healthy, multiple use forests. CHF message is still right on target and still a great need for good forest education.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Kupillas, Executive Director

