Notes from IMAP Policy Oversight Group Meeting - February 2, 2007

Attendees:

Policy Group

Steve Hobbs (Oregon State University and Oregon Board of Forestry) – co-chair

Joyce Casey (USDA Forest Service, Region 6) – co-chair

Ted Lorensen (Oregon Department of Forestry)

Jamie Barbour (USDA Forest Service, PNW Research Station)

Jerry Beatty (USDA Forest Service, Western Wildlands Environmental Threats Center)

Angus Brodie (Washington Department of Natural Resources)

Cathy McDonald (The Nature Conservancy)

Cindi West (USDA Forest Service, PNW Research Station)

Staff and presenters

David Morman – ODF

Tom DeMeo – R6

Theresa Burcsu – PNW Research Station

Miles Hemstrom – PNW Research Station

Gary Lettman - ODF

Melinda Moeur – R6

Jim Alegria -- (Oregon/Washington State Office, USDI Bureau of Land Management)

Key points and decisions

1. Budget, including new Joint Fire Sciences proposal Discussion
Lead: Miles

Background was provided on IMAP (contact Miles for PowerPoint presentation). COLA is working towards testing broad scale, mid-scale, and project-level capabilities. Jamie suggested a paper documenting the IMAP components is needed. Angus said it will be important to document the feedback loop between VDDT and FVS. **Melinda responded that information on the relation between VDDT and FVS will be written up in a General Technical Report.**

The GNN vegetation layer work is done for Eastern Oregon, but there are still issues regarding serving the data and quality control (see Item 7 below). Beginning to run Blue Mountains models for current and historic conditions. Latest roll-up includes agreement on WUI boundaries.

The BLM may be a potential client for future IMAP coverage of non-forested lands in Eastern Oregon and Washington. No agreement yet. Cindi emphasized the need to coordinate with BLM range inventory work in these same areas. Ongoing is work investigating the feasibility of integrating NRI and FIA protocols for range lands.

Two papers are being developed on COLA and COLA Version 3 is incorporating development zones, Darius Adams work, FVS linkage, and fire probability modeling.

Social and economic effects are included in IMAP to the extent they can be linked to vegetation and disturbance.

An IMAP time line was presented. Out-year products are subject to budgets and partner negotiations. Budget needs increase in out-years.

It is time to start talking about moving from research and development to implementation.

Steve expressed excitement at the progress being made.

Cathy emphasized the need for ODFW to be a partner as wildlife modeling is part of IMAP. Wildlife and fire relationships are an important issue and IMAP can help us better understand short term impacts and long term benefits of restoration work.

Steve said we need a concerted effort to get key partners like BLM and ODFW fully engaged.

2. Role of CLAMS in IMAP/Assessment work

Discussion Leads: Tom Spies/Miles

This agenda item was not addressed.

3. Private Forest Landowner and Tribal representation on the POG Discussion Lead: Gary

IMAP overview has been presented to members of the Oregon Forest Industries Council Management Committee. OFIC supports having representation on the POG. Dan Newton of Roseburg Forest Products may be asked to serve. Oregon Tribes have also been contacted and invited to participate in the POG. No response yet. IMAP presentation is planned for the March meeting of the Oregon tribes/State of Oregon natural resources work group.

Cindi noted that there were two sets of clients/users: agencies and users such as forest industry.

Angus said that Washington private landowners and Tribes should also be contacted. **He will provide David with contact names.**

Federal partners expressed concerns about potential FACA issues if non-government parties are added to the POG and open up a public involvement process. Cindi suggested there may be a need for different oversight processes at different scales, since IMAP products may be relevant to different clients at these different scales.

Steve suggested that a decision on additions to the POG may be premature right now. We do not want to lose the synergy that has been developed. Joyce will investigate FACA issues and how they may relate to the charter wording. Steve said we need recommendations regarding working under FACA before inviting non-government parties to join the POG.

Angus pointed out that Tribes and private landowners may be most interested in local scale analyses. Data resolution may not always be useful at such scales. Be clear with clients about data limitations when working at smaller analysis scales.

Ted noted that local governments, particularly counties may have a strong interest in IMAP products. State representatives can be liaisons to local governments. We also need to engage the executives of Institute for Natural Resources at OSU. Ted also noted that once we have agreed on the policy questions we want IMAP to help answer, it may become more evident who needs to be part of the POG.

Jamie cautioned that we not confuse oversight on the development of IMAP tools with oversight of the use of IMAP tools. IMAP's purpose was to develop tools, not analyses

4. Discussion of specific questions the project will answer (using indictors, etc.) and scenarios to be run

Discussion Lead: Steve

David presented a summary on the Oregon Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management and additional background on the vegetation indicator. The Oregon Indicators may provide a foundation for identifying the questions we would like IMAP to answer.

Steve said this agenda item is really about the process we want to use to reach consensus among POG members on the highest priority questions.

Other comments from the group on this topic:

- Need to be clear what scale is relevant to questions; data must be used at appropriate scales.
- The value of this management/research partnership is the ability to ask questions and get answers.
- We need monitoring information in order to develop meaningful models.

Prior to the July meeting, each POG organization will be asked to submit four key policy questions they would like IMAP to help answer. Questions should be run by each organization's decision makers before submitting them to the POG. Technical team members will be given the chance to react to these questions from the standpoint of technical feasibility and the capabilities and limitations of IMAP. At the July meeting we will have a facilitated discussion based on the questions and technical input to develop a consolidated and prioritized list of policy needs for IMAP. It will be important to remember that what IMAP can deliver may vary by scale.

5. Discussion on how to move beyond research and build institutional capacity for assessment and indicators

Discussion Lead:

Joyce

IMAP partners need data. How best can the IMAP development effort also become a strong implementation function (data development, data distribution, data maintenance and updating, validation, quality control, training, links to policy questions)? Currently, there is no "data steward." We want to avoid creating a cumbersome bureaucracy.

Jerry stated the WWETC may have a role linking IMAP to people involved in the data management business. He also pointed out the need to link to other similar efforts elsewhere in the West; however, others noted that unlike IMAP these other initiatives have less of a state/federal partnership. He also noted the need to define and look at the big picture.

Keeping the vegetation layer current should not be a role for either the researchers or WWETC. A first step is gaining broad understanding, acceptance, and support for keeping the vegetation layer current.

Ted said we need to seek a business agreement on updating the vegetation layer. We must also make sure validation monitoring is completed. That step is often overlooked. States can help to build capacity. Ted also noted the need for connections from mid-scale to smaller scale.

CALFRAP's budget cut making linking with it difficult.

James emphasized the need to remember national perspectives and national goals. Cindi said there may be a need for national capacity to address this production need if IMAP goes west-wide or larger. Regional, state, and local modeling would still occur. IMAP is connected with FIA and FIA has national standards.

Steve emphasized the importance of Bov, Linda, Ed, Marvin, and State of Washington counterparts becoming involved in institutional capacity conversations. We need to move forward into any national forums with a united front. No single organization has the capacity to move forward alone.

A decision will be needed on this issue within six to nine months. The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition may be a useful forum. We need to have products to show, endorsements in place, and a communication strategy. Maintain an emphasis on IMAP retaining its interagency team approach. Journal Jamie, and Gary will develop a paper for the July POG which provides a per statement and recommendations.

Comment: Something is missing here. A word and a connection to the above statement?

6. Washington COLA-like demo opportunities

Discussion Lead: Miles

Ongoing discussions about a COLA-like initiative in Washington. Gary expressed concern about IMAP staff being diverted to other details. Cindi emphasized that IMAP is now a high priority for PNW and it is less likely resources will be diverted. Angus said he appreciates the need to stayed focused on COLA first or at least clearly evaluate the resource impacts on COLA of before starting a Washington equivalent. **Planning for a Washington counterpart can continue to go forward, but delay decision on implementation.**

7. Availability of Eastern Cascades GNN vegetation maps Discussion Lead: Miles

Data is becoming available. 20 VDDT models ready too. How will data access be managed? Some QA/QC is done, but more is needed. Need to take this responsibility off Janet Ohmann's plate to she can work on other things. A short-term solution is in place by a longer term strategy is needed. Federal portal system will be a big help in providing efficient data sharing. Need to develop a more comprehensive QA/QC plan for the whole process. Theresa, Becky, and contractors will develop problem statement, background, and recommendations for July POG meeting. Miles may be involved also.

8. Marketing IMAP

Discussion Leads: Joyce and

Steve

Believe this topic has already been covered by previous agenda items. We need to resolve FACA questions. Develop compact and compelling communication tools (one-pagers, web pages) describing the IMAP partnership and what IMAP does. Use INLAS products as templates. We may need different communication tools and messages for different audiences (some just need to know, others need to understand, and still others need to support). Need to develop communication plan and process with FACA issue rolled in (Responsibility: Cathy McDonald?). ODF and Washington DNR will identify other key partners in Washington and Oregon state governments that need to be informed about IMAP and start communicating information about IMAP to build policy and financial support.

Angus noted that Washington Fish and Wildlife will be building a statewide F&W model. Question: How does IMAP link to this and other efforts?

Jim Alegria expressed concern about IMAP scope creep. Recommends revising second sentence of vision statement in the IMAP charter to read:

"The IMAP project will produce facilitate consistent, landscape-wide vegetation mapping across Oregon and Washington."

Next meetings: July 20 (plan for meeting to run through the afternoon) and February 1, 2007.

Key topics for July:

Finalize Charter
Finalize MOU
Report on FACA
Facilitated discussion on submitted policy questions and IMAP priorities
Discuss institutional capacity recommendations
Discuss data QA/QC recommendations
Discuss communication planning
Review current project status