

# DCR Forest Futures

## Technical Steering Committee

### April 21, 2008

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#### **Meeting Materials**

- 1. Proposed Agenda**
- 2. Goals**
- 3. Process Map**
- 4. Proposed Ground Rules**
- 5. Framing Questions for Discussion**
- 6. Technical Steering Committee Suggested Work Plan**

**Forest Futures Technical Steering Committee  
Proposed Meeting Agenda – April 21, 2009**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Who</b>
<b>10:00 – 10:20</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	Committee members will introduce themselves
<b>10:20 – 10:40</b>	<b>Overview of goals</b> for the Committee and anticipated work product	DCR Chief of Staff Stephanie Cooper Committee Chair Lisa Vernegaard Facilitator Bill Logue
<b>10:40 – 11:05</b>	<b>Roles</b> within the Public Participation Process – Technical Steering Committee, Advisory Group of Stakeholders, Technical Advisors, Site visits and Public Forums, Committee Technical Coordinator, DCR, Facilitators	Facilitators Lisa Vernegaard Tom Walker
<b>11:05 – 11:30</b>	<b>Consensus process orientation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in consensus process</li> <li>• Communication and negotiation tips</li> <li>• Proposed ground rules</li> </ul>	Facilitators and Committee
<b>11:30 – 11:45</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
<b>11:45 – 12:45</b>	<b>Discussion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framing questions</li> <li>• Organizing early approach to the work of the committee, organizing work</li> </ul>	Lisa Vernegaard and committee members
<b>12:45 – 1:00</b>	<b>Next steps:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule of future meetings</li> <li>• Harvard Forest Forum</li> <li>• Proposed Agenda for second meeting</li> </ul>	

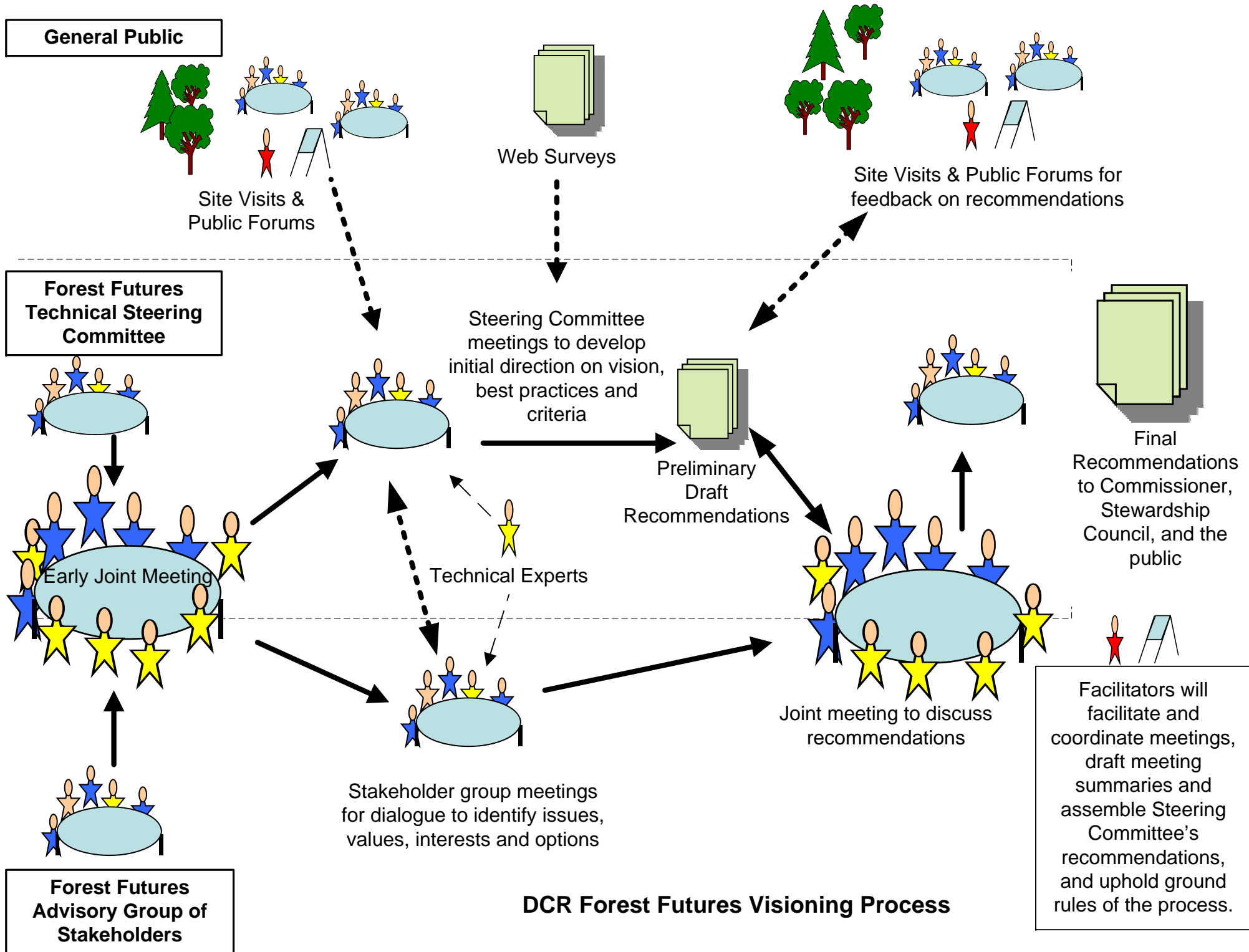
## **Renewing a Commonwealth Vision for DCR Forests Public Involvement Process**

**Through an open, interactive dialogue with experts, stakeholders and the general public, develop a renewed vision for stewardship and management of DCR forest lands. The Forest Futures Technical Steering Committee, with input from stakeholders and the general public, will formulate recommendations that can be implemented to ensure a balanced integration of public values and ecological and social benefits for today and into the future.**

### **Key Goals**

- **Review the myriad public benefits and values of DCR's forestlands and examine their inter-relationships. These include: recreation, tourism, aesthetics, renewable forest products, habitat diversity, local economies, landscape ecology, water quality and climate change mitigation and adaptation.**
- **Develop recommendations to ensure forest stewardship on DCR lands in the context of the broader forested landscape that is coordinated and implemented consistently with public benefits and values and DCR's legal mandates. Review and identify conditions and criteria under which forest management practices should be prescribed or prohibited on DCR lands.**
- **Develop strategies and processes for continuing to strengthen public dialogue and understanding of forest management principles and practices that support public benefits and values.**

**The desired outcome of this process is two-fold: first, to build a common framework for stewardship of DCR forest lands based on the public benefits and values involved and the productive sharing of information and varying points of view; and second, to generate recommendations regarding forest stewardship that are informed by this common understanding, respect public values, and are consistent with widely accepted science.**



# Technical Steering Committee – Proposed Ground Rules

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In processes where groups of people come together to discuss difficult issues it is easiest to hold productive dialogue and deliberation where the group adopts a set of behavioral and decision making norms at the outset of the discussion. The goal is to create mutually shared expectations and a common understanding and vocabulary for interactions and decisions. These proposed ground rules are ones that are common to group processes. They are intended to assist the committee in performing its work and act as a model for other groups involved in the DCR Forest Futures process.

## Ground Rules Governing Behavior of Participants

1. One person speaks at a time, no interruptions.
  - a. Use tent cards to cue, try to defer to an existing discussion thread.
2. Avoid dominating the discussion so as to provide everyone with an opportunity to contribute.
3. Express your own views and do not speak for others at the table.
4. No personal attacks. Challenge ideas but not people. Listen as an ally, focus on the merits of what is being said and seek to understand. Ask clarifying questions.
5. Make every effort to stay on track and on task to move deliberations forward.
6. Avoid surprises by sharing information and concerns.
7. Take into account information and advice from stakeholders and technical advisors and make recommendations based on the best available scientific information that will result in improved implementation and the use of best management practices.
8. Seek to identify options or recommendations that represent common ground, without glossing over or minimizing legitimate disagreements. Should a member have a serious disagreement, they will work with the facilitators to develop methods for productively bringing forward and addressing or resolving the disagreement with the Committee as a whole. Each participant agrees to take into account the interests of the participants, stakeholders, general public and the forest environment.
9. Meetings of the Technical Steering Committee will be open to the public. Any member may request that the Committee meet in closed session to discuss or deliberate. Work Group meetings will be held as needed and may be closed to the public at the discretion of the Members. A brief summary of the deliberations of any closed Committee session must be prepared and made available within a reasonable time.
10. Each person will speak to the public or others only about their own views. No member will speak on behalf of other participants or the group as a whole.
11. Members of the public and other observers may attend open meetings when the Committee is in working session and must abide by these ground rules. Other public forums and stakeholder

engagement processes will be utilized to gather input and feedback from interested parties. At the discretion of the chair and the facilitators, and as time is available, the public may be recognized to raise questions that they would like the Committee to consider as the process moves forward.

## Ground Rules for Group Decision Making

1. Each person agrees to fully and consistently participate in the process unless that person withdraws. If a person is thinking of withdrawing, they agree to explain their reasons for doing so and provide others with an opportunity to accommodate their concerns.
2. Consensus is reached when the participants agree they can “live with” the package of recommendations being proposed. Some participants may not agree with every feature of the package as proposed, but they do not disagree enough to warrant opposition to the whole package.
3. The facilitators will use the following scale to test whether consensus has been reached. Using straw votes, participants will express their level of comfort and commitment by indicating:
  - a. Wholeheartedly agree
  - b. Good idea
  - c. Supportive
  - d. Reservations – would like talk
  - e. Serious concerns – must talk
  - f. Cannot be part of the decision

If all participants fall between a and c, consensus on the item is assumed. When someone falls between d and f, that person must state their concerns clearly and offer a constructive alternative.

4. If consensus is not reached, the participants agree to document the consensus reached, clarify the reasons for disagreeing, and indicate how the remaining disagreements might be resolved.

## Role of the Facilitators

The facilitators will manage the meetings and assist the Chair. They will work with all of the Members to ensure that the process runs smoothly. The role of the facilitators usually includes developing draft agendas, focusing meeting discussions, working to resolve any impasses that may arise, preparing meeting summaries and a draft of consensus work products, assisting in location and circulation of background materials and documents the Committee and its Technical Coordinator develop, and other functions as the Committee requests. The facilitators and the Committee’s Technical Coordinator will work together to support the work and deliberation process of the Committee.

The facilitators will also be facilitating and managing meetings of the Advisory Group of Stakeholders and the Public Forums and will coordinate communication and information flow among the groups.

The facilitators will be responsible for coordinating with DCR the posting of meeting summaries and other information on a portion of the DCR website dedicated to the Forest Futures Vision Process. Meeting summaries will contain brief overviews of any presentations and summarize the central elements of discussions and articulated issues, interests and recommendations. In general the summaries will not attribute comments to specific individuals in order to focus on the content of the discussion.

### **Role of Steering Committee Technical Coordinator**

The Steering Committee Technical Coordinator will provide support as identified by the Committee chair, including conducting independent research to inform the committee in fulfilling its charge and working with DCR to provide the Committee with timely information concerning plans, policies and other information desired by the Committee. The Technical Coordinator will liaise with the facilitators in assisting the work of the Committee.

### **Role of Advisory Group of Stakeholders**

The role of the Advisory Group of Stakeholders is to engage in a dialogue to surface and discuss the issues, develop ideas and suggestions for the Technical Steering Committee and provide feedback to the Technical Steering Committee on draft recommendations. The Group will brainstorm ideas and make suggestions based on the framing questions agreed up by the Committee and other specific questions which may be posed by the Committee and may pose questions that they believe should be addressed by the Committee in its deliberations.

## Draft Framing Questions for DCR Forest Futures Technical Steering Committee

### OVERVIEW

In order to help the Technical Steering Committee focus and organize its work, the following proposed framing questions pose five fundamental questions followed by six topic questions for deeper exploration. They are intended to be considered, amended and a set adopted by the Committee. The questions may also be used to identify areas of specific input for the Advisory Group of Stakeholders.

### PROPOSED FRAMING QUESTIONS

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation seeks a unified vision for its forestry and land management policies that takes into account a diverse set of values and opinions. At a broad level, the recent dialog between DCR and a broad range of stakeholders has focused on five fundamental questions.

- Should any cutting of trees for commercial uses be allowed on DCR lands, and if so, how much wood should be harvested each year?
- How important is it that DCR's land management practices focus on the re-establishment of native species, for example through removal of plantations of non-native species like red pine and Norway spruce?
- What should be the role of even- versus uneven-aged management on DCR forests?
- Is active forest management needed to promote the abundance and diversity of wildlife, and if so how?
- How should the context or geographic setting (e.g. rural, suburban, etc) be taken into account in establishing DCR's land management practices and what should be the relative priorities for providing public benefits such as aesthetics, historical or cultural values, and recreational use based on the type of context?

These questions raise a wide array of scientific, economic and public policy issues that are best addressed through an evaluation process that first articulates a long-term vision for the forests of Massachusetts and then defines the role of DCR lands within this vision. Only within that context will it be possible to understand whether DCR's planning and implementation approaches are designed to effectively promote the vision. With this in mind, the Technical Steering Committee proposes to frame its deliberations and recommendations around the following five issues.

1. **Vision for DCR Forests:** What do we want the forests of Massachusetts to look like over the long term (e.g., in 20, 50 or 100 years) and what role should DCR's lands play in the broader context of the forested landscape of Massachusetts and the region?

2. **DCR Planning & Implementation:** In order to implement the vision, are there changes that DCR needs to make to its state forest management policies at the planning and implementation levels?
3. **DCR Public Process:** As DCR implements the vision, are changes needed in how it manages consultations with and outreach to the public?
4. **Implications for DCR Oversight of Private Forest Lands:** What are the implications of the vision for current or future DCR initiatives that affect or could affect privately-owned forests in Massachusetts? As the State Forester, what actions should the DCR Commissioner be taking to ensure a fully-integrated vision for all the forested lands in the state?
5. **Legislative Mandates:** Is the vision for managing DCR forests consistent with DCR's legislative mandates? If not, what kinds of legislative, organizational, or regulatory changes will be required for the state to implement the vision?
6. **Resources and Timing:** Broadly speaking, does DCR have the resources needed to implement the vision? If not, what new resources will be required? What is a reasonable time frame for DCR to make substantial progress in implementing the vision?

## **Forest Futures Technical Steering Committee – Suggested Work Plan** **Organizing Initial Work and Coordinating with Advisory Group of Stakeholders**

### **Overview**

The Forest Futures Technical Steering Committee (TSC) is being asked to develop recommendations for a renewed vision for stewardship and management of DCR forest lands that reflect a balanced integration of public values and ecological and social benefits for today and into the future. The work of the Committee needs to be integrated with other aspects of the public involvement process including input from the Advisory Group of Stakeholders (Advisory Group) and public forums. This document, in combination with the proposed framing questions, is intended to set forth an initial approach for the work of the Committee over its first few meetings. Those meetings will then inform the remaining structure of the work of the group. The hope is that the Committee will be prepared to issue final recommendations late in 2009. Meetings will average 3-4 hours long. Occasionally at agreed upon points meetings might be longer to accommodate input from technical experts, the stakeholder group or additional time for deliberations.

### **APRIL**

#### **April 21 – TSC Meeting 1: Overview of Issues, Framing the Discussion and Outline of Work**

- Organizational meeting – proposed agenda attached.
- Meeting Goals: Committee understanding of charge and process; clarity on roles; agreed upon ground rules, framing questions and initial work plan; long-term schedule for future meetings. The proposed agenda for the Forum (below) will be reviewed.

### **MAY**

#### **May 18 Harvard Forum: Background and Framing of Issues**

Day-long Forum at Harvard Forest for TSC, the Advisory Group, and as space is available, the public. The Forum will provide an overview of the history, the present state, and the possible futures of the forests of Massachusetts. The Forum will present a focused perspective on the geography and ecological conditions of DCR forestlands – properties which will be key in shaping the uses, size and condition of the forested landscape in Massachusetts over the next 100 years. The discussions at the Forum will offer participants the opportunity to look across both time and types of ownership (public, private and non-profit), allowing Committee members to gain a perspective that should inform their work in advising DCR regarding forest policy in months to come.

For those interested, following the Forum there will be an informal walk at DCR's nearby Federated Women's Club State Forest or in the Harvard Forest.

## **May 19 Morning – TSC Meeting 2:**

- Meeting Goals:
  - Capture lessons and thoughts from the Forum.
  - Sketch a possible vision for Massachusetts forest at a time in the future and articulate the role of DCR lands in this proposed vision. This vision would be reviewed by the Advisory Group and others and revisited later in the process.
  - Discuss implications of the draft vision for relative priorities for public goods and ecosystem services.
  - Identify additional information needs of the Committee.
  - If desirable, pose specific questions/issues the Committee would like the Advisory Group to address.

## **JUNE**

### **Early June – Advisory Group Meeting 1**

- Organizational meeting.
- Meeting Goals: understanding of charge and process; clarity on roles; orientation to productive dialogue processes; agreed upon ground rules, framing questions and initial work plan; long-term schedule for future meetings. Comment on draft vision – if available. Identification of areas where the Advisory Group believes it can be most helpful in informing the deliberations of the TSC.

### **Late June – Joint and Parallel Meetings Advisory Group/TSC + Public Forum**

#### **Joint meeting TSC/Advisory Group – First half**

- Meeting Goals: Understanding DCR management policies and practices. Through presentations by DCR and possibly from technical advisors who are knowledgeable about DCR practices the Department will explain its mandates, current practices and their basis, and then answer questions.

#### **TSC Meeting 3 – Second half**

- Discussion of implications of mandates and practices for the draft vision. Broad discussion of framing questions and identification of areas needing technical presentations, work groups or additional research. Identify priority topics for presentation at the July meeting.

#### **Advisory Group Meeting 2 – second half**

- Ask each stakeholder interest group to collaborate with other groups that share similar interests on a presentation of their primary issues and suggestions for the future of DCR forests, addressing wherever possible the questions and issues raised by the TSC at their May and June meetings.

## **(OPTION) Public Forum & Site Visit**

If the groups choose to meet on a Saturday, in the afternoon broader public input could be sought through a site visit at a DCR forest followed by a public forum. Local legislators might act as conveners and brief presentations made by DCR staff, Advisory Group or TSC members. Participants would then engage in small group discussions to elicit their hopes and concerns about the issues.

## **JULY**

### **July (first half) – TSC Meeting 4**

- Meeting goals: continue broad discussion of framing questions; review any lessons from Advisory Group and public forum; identify areas where there is a high level of agreement in principle; determine approach and division of work (work groups, technical advisors, etc.) to develop recommendations; identify specific questions for input by Advisory Group. To be determined: if technical presentations on specific topics are desired by the TSC.

### **July (mid to second half) – Advisory Group Meeting 3**

- Meeting goals: articulate issues and suggestions and possible recommendations based on questions posed by TSC and the framing questions.

### **July – to be determined – Public Forum 2**

Second site visit and public forum in a different location conducted in a similar format to the first site visit and public forum with any adjustments and improvements based on lessons from forum 1.

## **AUGUST**

No formal meetings of the TSC or Advisory Group. If working groups have been formed they will use this time to begin to determine how to best frame the issues, posit possible preliminary recommendations for discussion and consideration by the TSC. Areas needing further inquiry or technical advice would also be identified.

## **SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER**

**TSC-** The TSC would meet perhaps twice in September and once in October, November and December. The goal of the meetings will be to develop preliminary recommendations, and revisit the draft vision. From this the Committee would share the drafts with the Advisory group and the public for feedback before finalizing its recommendations. Before the draft is finalized the group will discuss the potential implications of its recommendations for other public and private forest lands, and identify whether these necessitate any related recommendations to the DCR Commissioner in his role as State Forester.

**Advisory Group** – Early in the fall the Advisory Group would continue to provide input and articulate their interests for the TSC. Later in the fall they would provide feedback and comment on the draft

recommendations. One of the fall meetings could be a joint meeting where the TSC would provide an overview of the draft and engage in a dialogue with the Advisory Group.

**Public Forums** – As the recommendations start to take shape two additional site visits and forums will be scheduled to gain feedback from the general public.

**Final Step** – Delivery of final recommendations to Commissioner Sullivan and the Stewardship Council.

DRAFT