

Concepts for Stakeholder Group from Conservation Representatives

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I: BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

This document was produced following discussions with several other conservation organizations. We worked to include a variety of strategies for modeling that will help gain greater knowledge of the effects of amended conservation strategies. We alone, of course, are responsible for this document.

Our approach seeks to address issues in several key areas:

- The continued threatened status of coho salmon. NOAA has recently reviewed their status and determined that coho are still at a moderate risk of extinction, with spawner returns at about 10% of historic levels, and freshwater habitat not displaying an improving trajectory in spite of stream restoration work.
- Compliance with the Clean Water Act, Coastal Zone Act, and Endangered Species Act.
- The need for a Habitat Conservation Plan to address recovery and protection of multiple listed species and other species of concern, as well as to provide insulation from litigation.

Summary:

- Conservation improvements can be made via larger stream buffers, reducing road connections to streams and retiring legacy roads, protection for older forests and other special habitats, increased protection of steep slopes, and larger patches dedicated to conservation.
- Moving any significant portion of state forests to FPA standards and intensive forest management will decrease conservation values on state forests. In particular, intensive management eliminates key elements of biodiversity in both young and old stands, and there is little evidence FPA stream standards will restore properly functioning aquatic habitat, as required by the greatest permanent value rule.
- Diversifying forest revenues deserves the greatest attention, including recouping revenues swept from ODF accounts, attaining a general fund match for fire protection, and recreation program funding from lottery dollars.

II: CONSERVATION IMPROVEMENTS

We have identified below a variety of conservation values to be modeled to inform our decision making.

Aquatic Values:

- *Model Request A1:* Apply federal NWFP Aquatic Conservation Strategy. We make this request primarily to understand what a very strong conservation strategy looks like.
- *Model Request A2:* Apply stream protections used on Washington State Trust Lands under Department of Natural Resources Habitat Conservation Plan. These lands are very similar ecologically to the state lands in Oregon under discussion. More details of their strategy here:

http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience/Topics/TrustLandsHCP/Pages/lm_hcp_rfrs_strategy_main.aspx

Both these strategies and others are summarized in the document titled *Riparian Buffers Table*, provided separately.

- *Model Request A2*: Adopt a low risk strategy for timber harvest and road construction on steep slopes:
 - Restrict activity (per High Landslide Hazard Location [629-623 OAR] guidelines) where shallow rapidly moving landslides would affect perennial streams.

Other Strategies to Protect Aquatic Values:

- Inventory legacy roads and create a plan to eliminate negative effects.
- Change performance measure target to reduce hydrologic connectivity of roads to below 10%, with dedicated funding to plan and attain within 5 years.
- Prioritize and accelerate restoration on both public and private lands in Aquatic Anchor Watersheds.

Terrestrial Values

We also request the modeling of several scenarios/actions to assess their effect/impact on other values. We are happy to discuss the details of this modeling with ODF and others as needed.

While the list below addresses more location-specific strategies, broader evaluations will be needed to judge whether sufficient connectivity is provided between areas conserved.

- Add Terrestrial Anchors.
 - Gods Valley, Lower Kilchis, Lower Wilson, Aldrich Point/Gnat Creek. Expand Sweethome and Buster Creek Anchors. Consult with USFWS on location.
 - Ensure Terrestrial Anchor management allows timber harvest only to advance ecological goals.
- Increased protection for high value forest stands, including the following:
 - High quality nesting habitat for Marbled Murrelets and Northern Spotted Owls, including buffers to reduce wind damage.
 - Stands over 80 years old, including buffers to reduce wind damage.
 - Diverse, naturally regenerated stands that include significant components of spruce, cedar, or bigleaf maple.
 - Existing stands of layered and older forest structure.
- Establish recreation/conservation zone for Kings/Elk Mountain Area.

III: REVENUE AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY

We suggest further exploration of the following:

- Recapture revenues swept from Forest Development Fund in last 10 years.

- Transition recreation program and Tillamook Forest Center to State Parks, or manage in partnership with increased lottery funds.
- Adopt fee program for all utility right of ways.
- Include cost share in state forest fire funding.
- Sale of scattered, isolated state forest parcels with low conservation and recreation value.
- County-by-county agreements to allow increases in ODF funding from timber revenues in order to enable specific management projects (not a permanent formula change).
- Prioritization of trade/acquisitions that deliver net benefits to financial viability, conservation, and other values.

IV: INTENSIVELY MANAGED FOREST PLANTATIONS AND STATE FORESTS

The conservation community does not support any significant portion of state forests being dedicated to intensive forest plantations managed under FPA guidelines. Intensively managed forest plantations dramatically truncate stand development and thus detract from forest biodiversity, by eliminating both more complex, older forest types while also failing to provide historic early successional forest types.

There is also clear evidence that the FPA does not adequately protect streams, as evidenced by Board of Forestry’s finding in the Ripstream study. We also know of no evidence that FPA rules adequately provide for wood recruitment needed to maintain, enhance, and restore properly functioning aquatic systems.

We have supplied separately several articles that deal with these topics, including the following:

Burnett, et. al. 2007. Distribution of Salmon-Habitat Potential Relative to Landscape Characteristics and Implications for Conservation.

Hayes, et. al. 2005. Environmental Consequences of Intensively Managed Forest Plantations in the Pacific Northwest.

NOAA/EPA. 2013. Oregon Coastal Nonpoint Program NOAA/EPA Proposed Finding.

Spies, et. al. 2007a. Potential Effects of Forest Policies on Terrestrial Biodiversity in a Multi-Ownership Province.

Spies, et. al. 2007b. Cumulative Ecological and Socioeconomic Effects of Forest Policies in Coastal Oregon.

Swanson, et. al. 2010. The forgotten stage of forest succession: early-successional ecosystems on forest sites.

We have also prepared a summary of some key points from the 2012 NOAA Fisheries review of the status of coho salmon. Our summary is called “NOAA Coho Assessment – Summary.”