Oct. 13, 2014

For immediate release 14-23

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Essential salmon habitat maps to be discussed at public meeting

Changes in stream designations will affect state wetland and waterway permits

Charleston – Staff from the Oregon Department of State Lands' removal-fill permit program will present information, answer questions and take formal testimony at a public meeting regarding proposed new rules to change state maps designating "essential indigenous anadromous salmonid" habitat (ESH):

Oct. 21, 2014
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Port of Coos Bay
Charleston Marina Complex
63402 Kingfisher Rd.
Charleston

The first hour will be an informal discussion and information exchange; the second 30 minutes will be a formal, recorded rulemaking hearing.

The Department of State Lands (DSL) works with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to update statewide maps designating ESH. Changes in the maps, which affect DSL's removal-fill permit program, are adopted through formal rulemaking. At the meeting, ODFW staff will be available to discuss the maps, and DSL staff will cover definitions and policy implications of the proposed rules.

ESH streams are identified as such because they and their tributaries provide critical spawning and rearing habitat for fish listed as threatened or endangered by the federal government, or sensitive by ODFW (for example, chum, chinook and coho salmon, and steelhead and cutthroat trout – all known as "salmonids").

If a stream is designated ESH, it means a permit from DSL will be required for any non-exempt activities regardless of the amount of removal or fill in the waterway. This includes adjacent wetlands that are seasonally connected to the ESH stream.

Exemptions to permit requirements in ESH streams include routine agricultural and state forest management activities, emergency road repair, and voluntary stream restoration. Exemptions will be discussed at the meetings, along with expedited permits that may be used for regulated activities in ESH.

The public comment period for the new ESH rules opened on Sept. 1, and will close at 5:00 p.m. on Nov. 28, 2014. Comments received outside this 90-day period will not be considered. The public may provide comments in person at the meeting, or by sending comments to DSL:

rulemaking@dsl.state.or.us; Department of State Lands, 775 Summer St. NE, Suite 100, Salem, OR 97301-1279

More information, including the new ESH maps, is available on the DSL website: http://www.oregon.gov/dsl/Pages/Rulemaking-Activity.aspx. Additional meetings will be held in Salem, Tillamook, Charleston, Grants Pass and Klamath Falls. The agency hopes to adopt the new rules by March 2015.

The State Land Board consists of Governor John Kitzhaber, Secretary of State Kate Brown and State Treasurer Ted Wheeler. The Department of State Lands administers diverse natural and fiscal resources. Many of the resources generate revenue for the Common School Fund, such as state-owned rangelands and timberlands, waterway leases, estates for which no will or heirs exist, and unclaimed property. Twice a year, the agency distributes fund investment earnings to support K-12 public schools. The agency also administers Oregon's Removal-Fill Law, which requires people removing or filling certain amounts of material in waters of the state to obtain a permit.

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