

2022-2023 Report: Small Forestland Investment in Stream Habitat Program



Background

During the 2022 legislative session, Senate Bill 1501 a comprehensive policy and funding bill was passed. The bill made substantial changes to the Forest Practices Act and required the recommendations of the Private Forest Accord (PFA) Report be incorporated into Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) administrative rules. As a result of both SB 1501 (2022) and the PFA Report, the Small Forestland Investment in Stream Habitat (SFISH) Program was established.

SFISH is a grant program that will fund road repair projects on lands owned by small forestland owners (SFOs) resulting in environmental benefits to fish species addressed in the PFA Report and mitigate risks to natural resources arising from forest roads. The rules establishing the SFISH program are first effective January 1, 2024 and during the 2023 legislative session the legislature allocated \$6.67 million from the General Fund to the program.

ODF is required to publish an annual report that details each SFISH funded project that was completed during the prior calendar year, including their costs and the mileage of streams improved and provide this report to the legislature. This report covers September 2022 through August 2023 and focuses on program design and implementation efforts as grant funds have not been distributed.

Major Milestones

- In September 2022, ODF hired a coordinator for SFISH.
- In October 2022, the board adopted revised Forest Practice rules directing ODF to establish the SFISH program manage the program in consultation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).
- In Fall 2022, ODF began consulting with ODFW on the development of SFISH.
- In January 2023, ODF hired an information system specialist to support SFISH.
- In July 2023, through the passage of House Bill 5020, the legislature provided a one-time \$6.67 million General Fund appropriation for the program.





Program Accomplishments

- Developed a project prioritization framework that includes a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based decision support tool. The decision support tool will be used to score projects based on their environmental benefit to fish species addressed in the PFA Report. The tool will integrate field assessment data with GIS data to generate a project score. The score will not be a rigid prioritization of the project, but rather a filter that ranks a project based on its ecological uplift potential in comparison to other projects being considered for funding using a standardized set of attributes. Additional factors such as local or regional importance, available funding, time waiting for an SFISH grant, other high-conservation value objectives, and potential efficiencies gained through coordinating grant-funded activities with other activities at a project site will also be integrated into the review and selection process by a project review committee.
- Developed a GIS-based field data collection tool to support ODF field staff when conducting SFISH site assessments.
- Developed a draft SFISH grant application form and grant agreement template.
- Developed a public outreach brochure ([link](#)) and SFISH web page ([link](#)).
- Delivered program presentations to Associated Oregon Loggers, ODF Committee for Family Forestlands, and Partnership for Forestry Education.
- Developed and delivered internal training for ODF field staff.
- Developed draft Forest Practices Technical Guidance that describes the essential information and methods used to ensure projects are eligible for the program and that funding is prioritized for the greatest environmental benefit to fish species addressed in the PFA Report. Technical Guidance is currently being reviewed by stakeholders.
- Developed draft Forest Practices Technical Guidance to serve as a resource as SFOs complete Road Condition Assessments (RCAs). Technical Guidance is currently being reviewed by stakeholders.

